Cuba holds a special fascination for a behavioral psychologist because Cubans have solved so many human and social problems that our "helping" professions find so difficult to ameliorate. In the United States large numbers of specialists, psychologists among them, deal with the problems of education while literacy declines; alcoholism and drug addiction prove resistant to correction even with massive efforts toward curing addicts; high levels of crime prevail at every stratum of society with no evidence that professionally designed rehabilitation programs even slow crime's rise; adequate medical care becomes financially prohibitive to an ever larger portion of the public despite the efforts of richly funded health professionals; and a chronic condition of scarcity for the permanently poor and cyclically unemployed is helped little by social workers, counselors, and vocational training programs.

I have suggested in professional papers (1), directed to other behavior analysts, that behavior therapy, training, and rehabilitative programs which aim to correct allegedly "flawed" individuals are misdirected. People adapt to their circumstances and the very characteristics being "corrected" in the individual are natural adaptations to the individual's prevailing conditions. I have suggested that an analysis consistent with the basic tenets of a behavioral science will show that the widespread malaise in society — the alienation, depression, crime, alcoholism, drug addiction, and violence — are natural outcomes of the prevailing systems of reinforcing and punishing contingencies. Social problems persist because the contingencies which produce them are more or less permanent characteristics of our social practices and institutions. And these regularly involve hierarchical power forms coupled with competition and individualism.

Hence my interest in Cuba, where, since 1959, they had apparently changed the context from "each getting theirs at the expense of others" to one of equality where everyone's self-interest is met through collective and cooperative forms. It is said that the change in the system goes hand-in-hand with a change in the people. Or as Che said, "To build communism, a new man must be created simultaneously with the material base." (2). The creation of a socialist, cooperative person must go hand-in-hand with solutions to all those human and social problems on which North American psychologists so regularly break their picks with little more to show than dents.

Such was my thinking when I learned of the chance to apply to go to Cuba as part of the 10th Contingent of the Venceremos Brigade. I jumped at the opportunity.

The first brigades were originated in the height of the Vietnam War as an anti-imperialist project. Then they served as part of the anti-war protest because the Vietnam War at that point was the most visible example of U.S. imperialism. Brigadistas were, and are, stating solidarity with the third world socialist struggles, generally, and solidarity with the Cuban Revolution, specifically. The simple act of 250 U.S. citizens going to Cuba and breaking the blockade is such a statement. While in Cuba, the brigades do voluntary work. Recent contingents built housing and earlier contingents cut sugar cane.

The Venceremos Brigade was ideally suited to my special interest in learning first hand about Cuba's behavior change system. It was perfect for learning how the socialist person is created with the result of freeing society of the social ills endemic to a capitalist society.

Our five week trip was divided into a bit over three weeks of work and ten days of touring with enough unscheduled opportunities to mingle among the people on our own. (3).

For the organization of our work we were divided into sub-brigades of 25-30 men and women about one-third of whom were Cuban members of the Cuban delegation. In addition to these members of the work delegations were about 20 regular construction workers from Cuba who coordinated the overall work of the whole brigade and instructed us on the various tasks. The Cuban delegation was composed of Cuban men and women from a mix of occupations: factory workers, mechanics, medical students, a chemist, a nuclear scientist, two psychology students, store clerks, etc. It is noteworthy that no distinction is made between working with one's hands and working with one's mind; all are together in the brigade, and elsewhere apparently, as equals. The members of the delegation were chosen from their normal work places by their peers. To be chosen is an honor. Like frequent, similar decisions, the choice is based on the collective evaluation of the individual's "work." The highly valued criterion for an individual's work is not specifically the quantity of output but rather attitude and the reflection of dedication to the community and society. Since serving on the delegation is an honor, this means that the chemist's work is reinforced, through the decision of his or her peers, by the opportunity to do the hard manual labor, to lay bricks, to dig sewage ditches! Again to quote Che, "Our scholarship students do physical work during vacation or together with their studies. In some cases, work is a prize, while in others it is an educational tool; it is never a punishment. A new generation is being born." (4).

Building Apartment Buildings. We worked in the country-side about 40 kilometers from Havana, in the beginnings of a small town of four-story apartment buildings. The buildings were being built to house textile workers who worked in a plant located a kilometer away. For the most part, the international brigades, one of which was the Venceremos Brigade, would build the town. Some buildings had been completed several years ago and were occupied long enough to have a personal, lived-in look. Another set was quite new but occupied and a third set soon to be occupied.

The buildings are attractive with ample open spaces and they are arranged with the landscape in mind. Each of the rooms, kitchen included, opens onto a small, private patio-balcony. One of these patios contains the bathroom facilities. On this bathroom balcony an outer wall, over the necessary portion, reaches to the ceiling for privacy. The space between the wall and ceiling provide ventilation without fans. The arrangement of the building, doors, and windows that open onto patios insures good cross ventilation and a combination of indoor-outdoor living with at least some degree of privacy from other family members. The apartments are modern in style, with running water and electricity. The water is one temperature. Water tanks on the roof, under the warm Caribbean sun, provide water that is warmer than our cold water and colder than our warm. (I never adapted to what I considered "cold showers" and paradoxically I loved to swim in the sea that Cubans consider
too cold for swimming until the summer.) The kitchens accommodate a stove and a refrigerator. Clothes are mostly hand-washed and hung to dry on the back patios. The apartments were, then, modern, pleasant, but without gaudetry. This might be a virtue of necessity, but I hope it is a necessary virtue of working socialism. I did have a bad moment when someone told me with pride that his community would soon build some air-conditioned apartments.

We were to construct the fourth floor of one building, lay the foundation and construct the first floor of another. In addition, the Brigade began construction of the town monument to the Cuban role in the Angolan struggle. The buildings, including the beams in the ceiling and floors, were made from cinder blocks and prefabricated concrete construction. We produced the prefabricated beams and slabs in an outdoor factory at the work site. In Cuban fashion we rotated our jobs moving from constructing the prefab beams at the prefab factory, to building cinder block walls, to spackling the walls, mixing mortar, digging ditches through limestone with the help of a jackhammer. Such a rotation, among men and women alike, gave each of us a real sense of accomplishment and self-reliance. How could we have previously accepted the idea that we were not "skilled" in construction? In three weeks we were doing it all; the whole building belonged to each of us.

Our weekly production meeting itemized our progress. Each sub-brigade received a detailed, quantitative report for each of the many tasks members in the sub-brigade performed that week. These reports also indicated the percentage of the week's plan that the work team reached or more commonly exceeded. It was a time of mutual evaluation among members of the sub-brigades; one of the several times for "criticism" and "self-criticism".

This process, criticism and self-criticism, plays a key role in socialization, but it's label invites misunderstanding. These are not sessions loaded with derogatory comments and confessions of failings. Instead, they are most frequently a chance to acknowledge each other's contributions, and to share experiences, to plan, to solve problems, and when clearly indicated, give negative evaluations. With the accent on the positive, people grow in dedication, determination, and competence. Here is the reinforcement system that produces the socialist person and a socialist society, and of course, apartment buildings for the people.

Alamar: the New City. (5). The brigades worked in a manner modeled after the Cuban micro-brigades that successfully built the new city of Alamar in 1970 as a prototype of the people's solution to a critical housing shortage. In the early years after the revolution, higher priorities were given to solving problems of food, health, and schooling. Housing continues to be old and overcrowded, although nowhere did we see the miserable shanty towns, the "villas miserias" typically found on the outskirts of cities in most other Latin American countries.

When workers in a work place decide that they need better housing, volunteers of men and women form a micro-brigade to do construction work, full or part time, until the housing needs are met. (Remember, "workers" is not a class distinction. The nuclear laboratory sent a micro-brigade of physicians to Alamar.) Those workers who remain back at the factory, lab, or school, double-up on the work to cover for their missing compañeros or compañeras.

As buildings are completed the workers, both those who built them and those who maintain production at the regular work place, decide which families will move in. These big decisions (who gets new housing) and little decisions (who gets concert tickets) are made among peers, not by bosses or bureaucrats and not according to who can afford it. The criteria, while indefinitely adaptable to circumstances and the nature of the decision, usually hinge on the degree to which one's behavior reflects collectivist values. Has the person worked hard? Helped others at work? Taken initiative in solving problems? In addition, there may be considerations as to how the person might be expected to better serve the groups or society if chosen, and, no doubt, special needs are considered such as a worker with especially inadequate housing. And even when the chosen family moves into the new, modern apartment, the rent is kept at six percent of their income.

In this manner, Alamar has already provided new housing for 30,000 people and will eventually be the home of 100,000. This garden-apartment city consists principally of brightly painted, five-story, modern apartment buildings with some higher ones and a few twelve-story apartment buildings are now under construction. There is a modern shopping center, schools, numerous day-care centers, a large swimming pool (with concrete starting blocks), a 1000 capacity outdoor amphitheater (with concrete seating 6), and a polyclinic that provides what has become the typical, extensive medical attention given to the people. All the buildings at Alamar are arranged with ample green space and landscaped tropical plants on a sloping hillside that overlooks the Caribbean.

Micro-brigades conducted all of these facilities. They began with a dozen brigades of 20 to 30 people each and soon increased the numbers to 60 brigades. Since then, this model has been followed all over Cuba where presently there are more than 1000 micro-brigades active in solving Cuba's housing problem.

Health. (7) Immediately after the success of the revolution in 1959, the health needs of the people became a top priority. Before 1959 medical services were a big business, available to those who could pay and not the poor. This meant that most Cubans could not get medical treatment because of large scale unemployment and seasonal, marginal employment at cane harvest time. Doctors and hospitals were concentrated in the cities. Havana, with 22 percent of the population, had 61 percent of the hospital beds. Rural medicine just did not exist. Malnutrition hastened the death of thousands, especially infants.

Much of the food and medicine came from the United States as Cuba in its quasi-colonial status had become a one-crop country. Even that one crop, sugar, was owned by U.S. corporations and U.S. corporations likewise dominated the Cuban market.

When it became apparent that the new system would prevail in Cuba in which the ideal would be for all to participate equally — an equality of responsibility and with it an equality of status and wealth — most of the privileged class fled to the United States. Of the 6,000 doctors, 3,000 left.

At the same time the United States imposed the embargo in an attempt to quickly bring down the new government. The embargo not only cut off established sources of food and medicine but also pressured other nations into not trading with Cuba. Amazingly Cuba survived this arrogant and inhumane attack through trade with England, Japan, Mexico, China, and others as well as Eastern block countries. Even so, the immediate effect was to make the very bad health situation of pre-1959 worse and today's feats even more impressive.
No new doctors graduated from medical school in 1960. Since then graduates increased steadily until there were 1,124 in 1974, at which time Cuba had 10,000 young, idealistic doctors dedicated to the common good. Now there is one doctor per 989 inhabitants, and the goal of one per 750 is in sight. Other health professions, in many other technical areas, have seen similar growth.

But the real success of Cuban medicine is in the change in the relationships between people, the change in objectives, and in the men and women who practice medicine.

The backbone of the new health delivery system is the 339 new polyclinics built all over the country and another 100 to be built within the next five years. Only 67 of these are in Havana. Medicine has been taken to the people with one general practitioner for each 2,000 people in the polyclinic area as well as one pediatrician for each 1,000, a gynecologist for every 2,000. The polyclinic also includes psychological services, dentistry, technicians, and rotated visits by ophthalmologists and other specialists. Medical attention is not only available by location, and by the commonly made house calls, but also it is affordable. It is free. All medical services are free. Private medical practices do not exist.

More importantly, however, is the emphasis on preventive care and public health. Having a healthy population is everyone's gain. There is no profit in the sick when medical care is free. Thus there is regular prenatal care for all expectant mothers and doctors spend time in the community. Nationwide campaigns have eliminated or greatly reduced a number of public health problems. There had been about 300 cases of polio a year, but polio was eradicated in 1963. There were 3,000 cases of malaria a year: malaria was eradicated in 1968. Some 600 children a year formerly had diphtheria; it had been eradicated in 1971. The list goes on, but the bottom line is a reduction in life expectancy from 55 years to 70 years since 1953 and a decrease in infant mortality from 60 per 1,000 live births to 28.5 per 1,000. The principal, continuing cause of death are: heart problems, tumors, and accidents, in that order. The Ministry of Health recognizes that all these are public health problems yet to be dealt with. Cuba's smoking habit is implicated in the first two and there is as yet no serious program to correct this.

These impressive feats in public health were made possible by the direct involvement of the people through the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) which is the largest of several mass organizations. About eighty percent of Cubans over age 14 are members of the CDR which is organized at a small, local level. In the cities the unit of organization is one block. Many of their meetings are festive block parties among neighbors and friends. We divided into groups and were hosted by CDR block groups in Santiago and many of us, at other times, came upon CDR street meetings on our own and were invited in.

The CDR is a voluntary, civic and social group in which neighbors are responsible to each other for all sorts of socially important objectives. When it was organized in 1960 it had the important responsibility of being alert to counter-revolutionary activity and is still the main protection against the ever rarer street crimes and theft. In the health care area the CDR carried out the universal immunization programs mentioned above. The CDR, in cooperation with the local polyclinic, organizes health education classes, maintains sanitary conditions at the neighborhood level, arranges for blood donations and for visiting the old and assisting the handicapped, and it helps solve family problems. Important in public health, the CDR prevents mental health problems from developing.

On a free day in Havana I dropped by the Psychology Department of the University of Havana where I was able to discuss mental health problems. Cuba seems to generally lack many of the problems we have. It is said that there is no drug problem, no prostitution, and little alcoholism in Cuba. All these social maladies ended in the earliest years after the revolution. At that time brothels were closed, the mafia exited, and laws were enforced against drugs and gambling. Job training and placement was initiated for prostitutes without blame or shame for being past victims of the old regime. But here, as in all matters, the most important influence must have been the broad base of support and concern by large numbers of people organized into mass organizations. These people were prepared to criticize anti-social behavior and support pro-social behavior. Making a society work for the common good became people's business.

There is nearly full employment and personal esteem in all types of work which lessens the struggles of one group against another; there is an end to what Sennett and Cobb call "the hidden injuries of class." (8). And, yes, that means no sign of racism remains. Their mental health seems assured through these improvements, plus the community support (as through the CDR) for individuals who otherwise would have to shuffle off to special institutions.

Mental problems do still exist, however, One of the main problems in Cuba contributing to mental illness is the crowded housing; too many people living in too few rooms. Someday the continuing construction by the micro-brigades may alleviate this one source. The other potential stress source is the tremendous personal pressure to work. After a typical day at work, people pitch-in doing voluntary work; going to meetings, studying, etc. With the strong ideological commitment some may be doing all they can and still feel they are not doing enough. Psychologists still find things to do then; and they do their job by going into the communities and trying to correct the situation which is producing the problem. Prevention is important here as well.

Havana's Psychiatric Hospital. There are institutions for the chronically ill, psychotic patient. The Brigade visited the country's largest psychiatric hospital near Havana. It cares for 3,500 patients with 240 nurses (too few said the doctor who led our tour), 300 auxiliary nurses, and 85 doctors, 45 of whom are psychiatrists and 40 others of different medical specialties, principally internists.

The description we received of the pre-1959 hospital exceeded even the grossest charges, confirmed or not, leveled at North American mental hospitals. The appointment of directorship was a political plum and funds for its operation were diverted. Payrolls were padded with "paper" employees; food was grossly inadequate; patients often had no clothes and lived in filth, as savages. It was a place to die; and eighty-five died of dysentery in a single day.

Immediately after the "triumph of the revolution" in 1959, the place was transformed. Basic needs for beds, linen, clothing, and food were immediately met. All of the wards were unlocked and they remain unlocked. Bars have been removed from the windows. New housing has since been built and they are best described as over-sized ranch houses, made of red brick, each housing about 30 patients. Between these buildings are expanses of green grass and shrubbery. Patients are treated with respect and dignity and they act accordingly. There is a warm, cordial relationship between staff and patient.

During the day, patients are not found hanging around the
wards. The are all out at places of activity; either work, sports or other cultural activity. The key element to the therapy program is ergotherapy or work therapy. Work is an important part of being a participant in socialist Cuba. Employment is a basic, guaranteed right and vital to a person's pride as one who is of value. Everyone is a participant. No one suffers the scorn or lack of self-esteem associated with welfare. Thus ergotherapy is a part of the rehabilitation of psychotic patients, or, for the older chronic patients who will never leave the hospital, it is part of making their life as full and humane as possible.

The work therapy program is specially designed to get the patients functioning outside the hospital at home. For example, the hospital operates a modern chicken farm and has placed many ex-patients in this type of work outside. Much of the work takes place in two buildings nearby the hospital grounds. The tasks vary from the extremely simple, repetitive tasks for minimally functioning patients to skilled crafts such as cabinet making. When ready, the patient is placed in an appropriate job and watched carefully at first with regular follow-up checks.

The patients are paid for their work and the level of pay is determined less by the type or quantity or work they do than by how much they send home to financially assist their families. This keeps the patient a part of the family to which they are to return. They are neither forgotten by the family nor do they view themselves as having neglected their responsibility to the family.

Activities other than work also keep the day too full for psychotic episodes or deterioration. A group of patients performed a two hour musical variety show for the visiting Brigade and we saw patients working out on the athletic field. An annual patients' "olympic games" caps the year's sport program. The realization of the miracle of this place reached me as I watched an unguarded psychotic patient, with aliveness and purpose, practice throwing a javelin.

Education in Cuba. (9) The importance of education in creating a new classless society is apparent. A new morality must replace individualism and exploitation. Moreover, meeting the needs of the people requires a technically trained population. Education was, therefore, an early priority and continues to be so.

Before the beginning of the Cuban Revolution about a quarter of the population was illiterate and the numbers were growing. Of the school-aged children, many were not attending school. One and a half million persons over six years of age had never attended school; of those between 6 and 14, only 55.6 percent were attending school; of those between 15 and 19, only 17 percent attended and the average level attained for those 15 was below the third grade. For many schools were just not available; at the same time there were 10,000 unemployed teachers in Cuba. In short, education filled its role in the old Cuba and its role was to help maintain a stratified social system.

Quickly after the fall of Batista in 1959, new classrooms opened. The first were in the jails and military garrisons converted into schools and in the large homes of the monied elite who fled to Miami. In this first year education was carried to remote rural areas by 3,000 volunteer teachers (some lacking their own intermediate level education). An extensive building campaign for new schools followed until today seventy percent of the facilities are newly built. Today all education is free. All children between 6 and 12 attend school. Compared with 1958, there are 2.7 times the primary education enrollments; 6.1 times the intermediate enrollments; and the present 65,000 university students is 5.5 times the 1958 university enrollment. Today one of every three Cubans is enrolled as a student.

In recent years 310 large, modern secondary schools, grades 7th through 12th, have been built in the rural areas. In touring the countryside, one is never far from a school. Often several rise over a flat, country landscape as the only visible structures. In attendance are some 311,000 boarding-school children (called scholarship students) who receive free lodging, food, and school uniforms. Others whose homes are nearby commute to the schools.

The Omar Gomez School near Camaguey, visited by the Brigade is a beautiful, new school with 2,700 students. It is well equipped for all educational areas with art and sport facilities. Modern teaching techniques are used and a curriculum as varied as in our own best schools. Beyond the rich curriculum, there are varied cultural activities (dancing, plastic arts, music, theater, rhythmical band, choir, piano) and some 80 team sports (baseball, volleyball, swimming, chess, fencing, tennis, archery,) and over 30 special "interest circles" including such diverse things as computers, textiles, soil and fertilizer, sugar industry, Russian language, hydroponic crops, oil, and electricity. Cuban students are full of life and enthusiasm. They are full participants in creating the new socialist society and are aware of their role. They are knowledgeable in international affairs and informed of the struggles of people in other countries toward justice and freedom.

The unique and key feature of Cuban education is the work-study program. All students from secondary school and up through graduate and professional schools spend three hours per day in some form of manual labor. Typically this is farm work such as planting and caring for citrus groves (as was the case for schools near our own work site), or harvesting tomatoes, potatoes, corn and bananas as was done by students of the pre-university school we visited in Granma Province. This combining of manual work with study serves to develop a social conscience which values work. It also helps guard against developing intellectuals who are removed from manual laborers. Moreover, the students are earning their way through productive activity. Their free school, food and clothes are not charity or welfare, but the product of a collective society toward which they have already begun to contribute their labor. In addition, dividing the time between intellectual activity and manual work may produce better academic results. As the work-study was being introduced, it is said that those passing final exams increased from 70 percent to 95 percent. In a country where there is no longer an underclass, the work-study system must be a great help in taking care of some of the work drudgery on a part-time basis. (10)

Not only has work been brought to school but school is brought to work. Educational programs for adult workers are common and the older workers, victims of the old regime, are catching-up educationally. Last year, while we were there, there was a campaign to assure that every adult had at least the equivalent of a sixth grade education. The crowning achievement, though, was the solving of the basic literacy problem. In a single year, 1961, illiteracy was reduced from about a quarter of the population to a mere 3.1 percent.

The literacy campaign is an impressive example of what is possible when the social context changes to working for the collective good.

The literacy campaign was launched by closing the schools in April and having thousands of teachers and tens of
thousands of school children come forth as volunteers to teach reading. The program began by bringing the volunteers together in what had been a wealthy area on a resort beach. At this resort spot they were given materials and instruction on the teaching of reading. As least as importantly, moreover, they were prepared for what the poor working peasants would teach them of human dignity and of their role in building socialism. After this preparation, they lived in the homes of the people they would teach. Grants were made to the peasants to pay for feeding the literacy-campaign workers. The CDR had previously located and recruited illiterates into the program and these were often in rural, remote areas. (11) Che’s forecast was confirmed, “Society as a whole must become a huge school.” (12)

**Economic Life.** Both ends and means of social control are intermingled in the day to day problems of getting and spending. A social system should, I feel, be evaluated in terms of how well the full needs of all its people are met. At the same time, the attainment of goods is often the basis for much social control. Through economic planning of production, pay, and spending, all of the economy can be put in the service of the social policy to meet the needs of the people.

In Cuba there has been much discussion of the relative weights to be given to “moral” and material incentives. Since the failure to attain the 10 million ton sugar harvest in 1958, there has been some shift toward an increased use of material incentives.

Material incentives — pay for work — plays an important role and there are differential pay scales for different types of work. Pay ranges from about 80 to 500 pesos per month but typical pay for most work is in the 200 to 300 peso range. (One peso equals 0.80 U.S. dollars, but the more important basis for judgement is to consider the basic living cost itemized below.) Regular construction workers at our work site made 250 pesos a month and the skilled jackhammer operator who taught us to use the jackhammer makes 300 pesos a month. New doctors (those graduated since the revolution) make 300-350 pesos. An assistant professor at Oriente University in Santiago makes 400 pesos and a full professor makes 450 pesos. Fidel Castro is paid 750 pesos each month. There is, for many workers, frequent opportunities to earn more by working extra and through bonuses for exceeding quotas. The impression we received was that the people generally have plenty of money. No really poor were apparent and, of course, no signs of any wealthy either. The beggars, shoe-shine boys, street hustlers, and prostitutes that characterize other Latin American countries are not to be found in Cuba. There is full employment and employment is a constitutional guarantee.

The consumer side of the material incentive system serves social needs as well. Pricing is planned as well as pay. All medical services are free; education is free at all levels along with room and board for the thousands who win scholarships to the countryside, boarding schools. None of the worker’s pay is taken back in taxes — there are no taxes. Rent is free in newer housing; and the long range plan is to remove housing from the mercantile system altogether. The Housing we were building will be rent free — not, I trust, a commentary on our gringo workmanship. Concerts and sports admissions are free (and when baseball fans catch balls, they throw them back). During my window shopping, I found that bus fares, even over impressive distances are 5 centavos (equivalent to about 6 cents); newspapers are 5 centavos and devoid of advertising as is all media; food in grocery stores is quite cheap, but rationed; and restaurant food is moderately priced but not rationed. Ice cream cone (25-40 centavos) are popular, with Cuban ice cream one of the best in the world. Shoes are 5-20 pesos; shirts about 5 pesos; men’s slacks, 10-20 pesos; movies, 30-60 pesos (60 pesos for first run, urban, air-conditioned theaters). Books are inexpensive; three paperbacks cost me 2 pesos. In other words, necessities and wholesome entertainment are cheap. Luxury items, on the other hand, are very expensive. A medium sized, black and white television costs 400 pesos and a small, portable radio, 180 pesos. A record costs 10 pesos each, but the same record in a tourist shop costs 4 pesos. Run is 4 pesos bought on a ration card, 12 pesos if bought without the card and 2.50 pesos for tourists. In other words, too much drinking is discouraged among Cubans but Cuba remains a good host to its tourists. (13) Cigarettes cost 20 centavos for the one pack a week that is available on the ration card and 1-2 pesos bought without the rations card.

The impression one gets is that Cubans do have sufficient money for some luxuries. T.V.’s despite the high cost, are common. Through the open doors and windows of many Cuban houses, families can be seen gathered at night watching their television.

**Social Equality.** The question arises as to whether differentials in pay foreshadow a renewed basis for stratification. Might the technocrat be set apart in power and status over others? This is a clear danger, but there are reasons for optimism. Movement into different types of work appears not to be determined by race or class lines. There is no sign of racism in Cuba today. The country is considered Afro-Latin American and the mix is seen in all aspects of its art and music as well as in its concern for the emerging African socialist states.

The range of pay differentials is modest and little remains of private ownership of profit-making businesses. A small, dwindling number of landlords continue to rent housing, although at the lower rates required by law. Most of the landlords skipped out in panic after the revolution. Some farming is in private hands — 30 percent of the farming is done by small, private farms which are limited to 67 hectares by the 1963 land reform. The other 70 percent of the farming is nationalized, “peoples’ farms”. The conversion to peoples farms has had certain advantages and the trend continues increasing in that direction. However, even the private farmers are organized though their mass organization, the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP). Through ANAP each year’s production plan is initiated at the grass roots, coordinated at higher levels, and finally discussed and implemented. The plans include receiving fertilizer, herbicides, and farm machinery from the government. In short, the private farmer is hardly the basis for a new landed aristocracy. It is to a high degree collectivized even if these private farmers have not joined the peoples’ farm system.

All stores and commercial establishments are now publically operated. This is done by keeping managerial control of local stores at the local level. If the corner pub, pharmacy, or grocery store is not serving the people well, they can give detailed feedback through either the CDR or the Peoples’ Power representative to the Peoples’ Power Assembly. If the matter cannot otherwise be resolved the Peoples’ Power Assembly will replace the manager. Such controls at the local level eliminate any business or profit basis for a new elite.

Nor should the Peoples’ Power Assemblies be the basis for
a new elite. These assemblies are the unit of governmental organization recently created in the new constitution adopted in 1976. (14) Representatives are elected at a local level, beginning with nominations from the block level CDR meetings and eventually elections at a zone level. There are 168 local municipal assemblies responsible for representing the people in all community matters. They also elect from their number representatives to the fourteen provincial assemblies, one for each of the fourteen provinces in Cuba.

Members of the National Assembly are also chosen by the Peoples’ Power Assemblies. These National members appoint and oversee the heads of ministries — the national administrative offices. Peoples’ Power representatives hold regular open meetings with their constituents and one day a week they have office hours to receive their constituents. The representatives otherwise continue whatever type of work they did before elected to the Assembly. The receive no additional pay for their duties as representatives. They are paid for the time away from their regular job at the rate of pay normally received for that job. The close responsibility to the people and the lack of special privilege in this system holds promise at least for a continued socialist democracy in Cuba without a basis for a new elite class.

The Peoples’ Power Assemblies do dramatize one persistent, unsolved problem — women make up less than 10 percent of the assemblies. Equality for women has been a long sought goal in Cuba. A mass organization, the Federation of Cuban Women, is devoted to facilitating the integration of women into work and society. The new family code, adopted after mass grass roots discussion and inputs (a procedure followed for all new, important policy matters), recognizes complete equality among men and women. It even specifies that housework and child care responsibilities are to be equally shared. A man’s, or woman’s for that matter, failure to do so, at least in theory, could be grounds for divorce. But there is considerable difference between theory and practice. Removal of Latin machismo from the would-be new socialist man is slow. The change is taking place, however. Half of the doctors are women; the Cuban delegation to our brigade was roughly half men and half women; other micro-brigades that I noticed around the country were also mixed. However, the regular workers at our construction site were all men and at their insistence some of the more arduous and dangerous assignments, such as laying in place the heavy concrete ceiling beams, were off-limits to women. But progress continues and none less than Fidel has repeatedly called attention to the problem. The generation now in Cuba’s secondary schools may move toward completing the process of equality for Cuban women.

Discussion and Dissent. Problems such as the status of women, insufficient housing, continued heavy reliance on the sugar crop for foreign exchange, are but a few among a host of problems in Cuba today. A long list could no doubt be made or present shortcomings. Cuba is certainly not a utopian paradise nor has it reached many of its own goals. The revolutionary, change process goes on and may well solve those we might list. But beyond those there would, no doubt, be more problems to list.

I have presented a highly positive view of Cuba because that was my experience of it. I am coming from my own experience and I am truly impressed. I have traveled extensively throughout the Caribbean and some of Central America. The contrast with Cuba is striking; yet surely some people would be negative in their evaluation. Shortly after our return the first United States cruise ship entered Havana Harbor. The Newsweek reporter conveyed his impressions of the tourists’ impressions. A lady on the approach commented that it looked like Miami Beach. It didn’t to me. And her husband grumbled and asked if anyone could see any Russian subs. The clean streets seemed to suggest regimentation. The souvenir shops used well worn old U.S. coins apparently suggesting to Newsweek either that Cuba lacked sufficient minted coins of its own or that the U.S. dollar was prized above Cuban currency. In my experience I saw no use of foreign currency or coins in over 1,000 miles of travel. I do not doubt the Newsweek reporter’s experience as his own and wonder if it was but a courtesy arranged for the convenience of the tour-boat passengers. The Newsweek reporter described the tourists’ boredom because everywhere various bands played Guantanamera for them, hinting of sterility in music and art. Again my experience differs. I heard and saw rich variety in music and art, alive, vivid powerful.

In this land of the free press it is good that this reporter and I can both share our experiences. When several hundred return with experiences similar to mine and write pieces for the lower circulation publications that are available we might eventually reach as many persons as Newsweek reached with negative account of that reporter’s brief stop-over.

The high circulation publications regularly cast more serious aspersions. Castro is referred to consistently as a dictator as though it is a self-evident truth. If that means an absolute rule without dissent, without input from others and power held by police force, then the press proclamation is simply wrong. I saw almost no policemen in Cuba, except a few concerned with traffic. Castro often appears quite casually among people without troops of guards. (15) At the May Day Parade he was on a very large reviewing stand unshielded from the thousands who were chosen by their peers to share the reviewing stand with him. Our sub-brigade sent Lou Bortz of Pittsburgh. Castro seems to be a charismatic, respected and loved leader, not a tyrant followed out of fear.

There is centralized planning and policy making but this involves extensive inputs from grass roots discussion through the mass organizations (CDR, ANAP, Trade Unions, and the Young Communist League). After the policy is drafted and prepared for adoption, further discussion takes place through these mass organizations. For example, it is said that in the discussion of the first draft of the new constitution there were 160,000 meetings involving almost everyone in Cuba. From these meetings, 16,000 modifications were suggested and finally hundreds made in the final draft. Discussion and criticism is considered a part of being a responsible citizen. (16)

As a long time dues paying member of the American Civil Liberties Union, the reference to a lack of free press does bother me, even though I am aware that large circulation publications here present a narrow range of political viewpoints. That broader coverage is in fact found in a Cuban paper than in our own typical metropolitan newspaper is hardly adequate. In principle Cubans may not have a press supporting the overthrow of the government; we can, in principle, but not in fact. Neither is comforting to the civil libertarian.

The question of political prisoners is another difficult issue. But the issue is not presented straightforwardly to the American people. In the Barbara Walters interview, as aired, Castro said that there are 2,000-3,000 persons
imprisoned as a result of counterrevolutionary activity and
that the number had been over 15,000 at the height of U.S.
action against Cuba. He said much more but it was not aired
— lost to the cutting room floor. The high number was the
result of the Bay of Pigs invasion. Omitted too was the
following exchange:

Barbara Walters: Two or three thousand political
prisoners seems like a great amount.

Fidel Castro: They are not political prisoners, they
are counterrevolutionaries, people who
rose up in arms in the Escambray
Mountains by order of the CIA, people
responsible for sabotage, for different
crimes.

Also omitted was Castro’s description of their treatment as
prisoners. They, like common prisoners, have the oppor-
tunity to work and are paid at the same rate and have the
“same economic rights as a worker.” (17) Like the freedom
of the press question, I am left as uncomfortable by this as I
am by the continued jailing of the Wilmington 10, or the
Puerto Rican liberation fighters who fired shots in Congress.

What seems to be behind much of the press image about
Cuba is cold war thinking. They are friends of Russia. We are
to treat them as enemies because it is one less place for cor-
porations to turn to for cheap materials and labor. Individual
North Americans are not threatened by this small country
— about the size of Pennsylvania and with about half of
Pennsylvania’s population. The jaded cold war concepts and
the ideas, pro or con, from abstract school books on Marxist
theory and socialism blind us to the social miracle of Cuba —
a miracle of changing behavior so that a society of coopera-
tive people can emerge.

Summary: Behavior Change in Cuba. People behave,
change their environment and are thereby changed by
themselves. This is the general statement which character-
izes the workings of contingencies of reinforcement as
expressed in a science of behavior. Our social behavior
depends on the criteria for reinforcement dictated by our
institutions and cultural practices. The revolution can be
understood as a change in context to one in which the needs
of all are to be met through the collective action of all.
Values, the criteria for social reinforcement are changed to
meeting the human needs through cooperation and equality.
The change in these criteria was fast; the change in
behavior, the change in the psychology of the people is not.
It is a continuing process. The change involves specific
reinforcement contingencies for the many types of behavior
of each person.

Ultimately reinforcement takes place in face to face
contacts, but first people must accept the basis for evaluat-
ing behavior. Education, heroes and modeling, are important
in setting these criteria. In addition, collective work with the
output and gain depending on each other makes the rein-
forcement of cooperation real and material. So-called
“moral” incentives are not matters of spirit but of material
gain also. The greater fruits of collective effort, voluntary
work, and so forth reinforce collective work.

The most important part of the social change process
happens at the small group level, the production meetings of
co-workers, the CDR meetings, and informal social contacts.
In these contexts work attitude and the criteria for evaluation
— the basis for reinforcement. The participation of all, the
sharing of oneself and the product of one’s work are the basis
for creating the socialist person. If sharing among people is
the basis for love, as surely it must be, then Che, I agree
“that the true revolutionary is guided by strong feelings of
love.” (18)

Footnotes

1. Holland, J.G. Behavior modification for prisoners,
patients, and other people as a prescription for the
planned society. Mexican Journal of Behavior Analysis,
1975, 1, 81-95; and Holland, J.G. Behaviorism: Part
of the problem or part of the solution? Journal of Ap-

2. Guevara, C. Che Man and socialism in Cuba. In B.
Silverman (ed.) Man and socialism in Cuba: The great

3. Thanks to the University of Pittsburgh’s Hispanic
Department and certain of its instructors, Rosa
Mendoza (Spanish 1) and Virginia Brown and Cecilia
Heinrich (Spanish 10) I could do tolerably well in com-
unication when on my own. Still the large numbers of
bilingual Puerto Rican brigadistas and able Cuban trans-
slators were of most importance in my getting a richly
varied experience of Cuban society.


5. The information cited below comes from notes taken
during a presentation given on our tour of Alamar. The
account is consistent with information available in other
descriptions. The reader might be particularly interested
in: Maniewicz, F. and Jones, K. With Fidel. New
York: Random House, 1975; and Russell, P. Cuba in

6. Concrete is used where we might use wood or metal.
Cuba has no wood because in the past North American
companies stripped Cuba of its hard wood forests. Now
even telephone poles and fence posts must be made of
concrete.

7. Again the information below is based on presenta-
tions made while I spoke. All quantitative data can be
found in Report of the First Congress of the Communist
Party of Cuba, held in Havana, Dec. 1972-1975. Moscow:


9. Quantitative data are from Report of the First Congress

10. There are many forms of voluntary work in Cuba. A
good account is found in Meza-Lago, C. Economic sig-
nificance of unpaid labor in socialist Cuba. Industrial
and Labor Relations Review, 1969, 27, 339-357. He
evaluates how economical voluntary work is and finds
forms more costly than paid and others, including work
by boarding school students, less costly. Economy is,
for the most part, secondary to the consciousness shap-
ing role and the role in getting grub-work done without
an underclass.
11. The program produced its heroes, youths killed by counter-revolutionaries (now called political prisoners). A museum in Cuba has a bullet riddled black board with the day’s lesson on it for the day of the Bay of Pig’s landing.


13. Inexpensive two week tours are now possible. For information write Venceremos Brigade, Box 7217, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

14. The publication, Democracy in Cuba, by Venceremos Brigade provides an excellent account of the Peoples’ Power Assemblies, the new constitution, and extensive discussion throughout Cuba which led to its adoption. This publication also contains a good description of the mass organizations. (Available from Venceremos Brigade, P.O. Box 2169, New York, N.Y., 10001).

15. for example see Mankiewicz and Jones, Op. Cit.


17. The complete transcript of the interview by Barbara Walters of Fidel Castro appeared in Seven Days (December, 1977). It is an interesting exercise in slanted reporting by network television though selective cutting.


CALL FOR POSITION PAPERS FOR MABA MEETINGS

Behaviorists For Social Action will have a general membership meeting at the Midwestern Association of Behavior Analysis meeting in Chicago May 13 to 16. The purpose will be to discuss the goals and strategy of the group and develop a program for the coming year.

Position papers and proposed programs no longer than 5 pages are hereby solicited and should be sent to:

Behaviorists for Social Action
Special Interest Group of MABA
Elizabeth de la Ossa, Corresponding Secretary
Psychology Department
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008