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REVOLUTIONARY MANIFESTOS AND FIDEL CASTRO'S ROAD TO POWER

by

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B.A. University of Central Florida, 1997

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
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in the College of Arts and Humanities  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The historiography of the Cuban Revolution includes numerous accounts which detail the responses to Batista's coup. The fact that anti-Batista sentiments were very popular in Cuba, and that several revolutionary groups existed has also been highly documented. Nonetheless, the most highly recognized insurrectional organization remains Castro's M-26-7. The goal of my thesis is to explain the steps which Castro took in order to remove all competition, allowing him to remain the only figure left in power.

The process in which Castro came to power will be analyzed in order to gain a better understanding of how he orchestrated the removal of other revolutionary groups. My thesis will show that Castro purposely aided some groups, when it was to his benefit, but also denied aid to these same groups when he knew that he could gain an advantage over them. An analysis of the manifestos will reveal that most anti-Batista groups had their own agendas and that often times they were attempting to work together in order to coordinate Cuba's future. I will focus on primary source materials such as eye witness accounts, historical publications, diaries and newspapers. I intend on analyzing Castro's M-26-7, from the time of his attack of the Moncada Barracks, through the course of the insurrection itself, and his final actions as Batista fled Cuba in 1959.

By investigating the actions that were taken by Castro and his followers, in light of how those actions affected the other revolutionaries groups, will shed light on why certain decision were made by the M-26-7. The outcome of this research will show that the M-26-7 orchestrated their actions with the sole purpose of bringing Castro to power when the insurrection war was over.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Cuban insurrectionary period is a topic that has been widely covered; however, the details on the events vary concerning how Castro became Cuba's "supreme leader." Questions still remain, some of which may never be answered due to the Cuban government's high levels of secrecy. In this thesis, my aim is to critically analyze Castro's actions in relation to the commitments he made in the manifestos and in doing so I will demonstrate that Castro's agenda was not solely the removal of Batista, but also the concentration of power to his organization. Although the opposition groups had various agendas, many attempted to work together. They crafted and co-signed manifestos throughout the insurrectionary period which lasted roughly from 1953-1958, in which they agreed to unify their forces and establish the terms under which Cuba would be run after the fall of Batista.

The revolutionary manifestos were written by these groups with the purpose of declaring their intentions and expressing the ideas of their respective organizations.<sup>1</sup> Some of the most important anti-Batista organizations were the Revolutionary Directorate (DR), the Auténtico Party (AP) under the direction of Carlos Prío, the Second Front of the Escambray, the July 26 Movement (M-27-7), the Ortodoxo Party and minimally the Popular Socialist Party (PSP).<sup>2</sup> Their attempts at compromise, through the use of pacts can shed light on some of the events, and how Castro undermined these groups for personal gain.

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<sup>1</sup>Llerena, Mario. *The Unsuspected Revolution: The Birth and Rise of Castroism*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978, 63.

<sup>2</sup>The Ortodoxo Party was created by Eduardo Chibás as a direct competitor to the Auténtico Party's reputation of political corruption.

Since Castro’s triumphal march on Havana on January 8, 1959, much has been written concerning the Cuban insurrectionary period and the actions that took place therein. The official story being told from the perspective of the Cuban government often fails to convey the events as they actually occurred. The antagonism between the opposition groups is completely ignored and the official government account makes it appear that they worked together with the aim of defeating Batista. Most of the participants that are now in the exile community have attempted to tell their stories through various mediums. Many were encouraged to document their participation in the insurrection so that their perspectives would not be overlooked by the Cuban revolutionary government’s rewriting of history with their focus primarily on the guerrilla movement.

**Table 1: Primary Manifestos**

<b>Manifesto</b>	<b>Date</b>
Mexico Pact	August 30, 1956
Manifesto of the Sierra Maestra	July 12, 1957
Miami Pact	November 1, 1957
Pact of Caracas	July 20, 1958

The manifestos written during the insurrectionary period are important because they demonstrate the contributions of the opposition groups that were fundamental to the ousting of Batista. This work will deal with some of the most significant manifestos.<sup>3</sup> Chapter one will detail the importance of the Mexico Pact, an agreement made in Mexico between Fidel Castro and José Antonio Echeverría on August 30, 1956. This pact would signify the unity of the M-26-

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<sup>3</sup> See Table One – Primary Manifestos



7 and the DR, indicating that both groups would support one another with the mutual goal of removing Batista. Chapter two discusses the Manifesto of the Sierra Maestra (MSM), which was written by Castro and signed by both Raúl Chibás and Felipe Pazos on July 12, 1957.<sup>4</sup> It called for the unity of all opposition groups, and urged all political parties to oppose an electoral solution and to refuse any negotiation with the Batista government. The second chapter also discusses, the Miami Pact which was signed four months later on November 1<sup>st</sup> by representatives of several opposition parties in exile.

**Table 2: Secondary Manifestos**

<b>Manifesto</b>	<b>Date</b>
Montreal Pact	June 2, 1953
Manifesto #1 to the People of Cuba	August 8, 1955
Manifesto #2 to the People of Cuba	December 10, 1955
Total War against the Tyranny Manifesto	March 12, 1958
The Manifesto of the Five	June 11, 1957
The Pedrero Pact	December 1, 1958

Its purpose was to unify the opposition forces in order to remove Batista, and to establish a temporary government after his removal. Castro would strongly oppose the pact, lashing out at all who signed it, including two representatives of the M-26-7, Felipe Pazos and Léster Rodríguez. The third chapter will discuss the Caracas Pact, signed in Caracas, Venezuela on July 20, 1958. Established as a final call for the unity of the opposition forces and the acceptance of guerrilla warfare, the Caracas Pact was also an attempt by Castro to establish a legitimate

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<sup>4</sup>Raúl Chibás was the brother of Eduardo Chibás and an anti-Batista activist. Felipe Pazos was an economist that served as the President of the Cuban National Bank under the Prío administration.

leadership role for himself and the M-26-7. The events in Caracas will lead to the Pedrero Pact signed on December 1, 1958, which gave Ernesto Guevara, a major in Castro's guerilla army, a leadership position over the Escambray guerillas and a small unit of PSP guerillas in the area of the Escambray Mountains. These pacts, as well as some less significant pacts, will be used as windows into the dealings of Castro and his July 26 Movement in order to illustrate his subsequent rise to power.<sup>5</sup>

### Background to the Insurrection

The history of Cuba's revolution began with Fulgencio Batista's coup d'état against President Carlos Prío Socarrás, just eighty-one days prior to the presidential election of 1952.<sup>6</sup> Prío had been elected president of Cuba on July 1, 1948 as the candidate of the *Partido Revolucionario Cubana – Auténtico* (PRC). Having replaced President Grau San Martín, whose administration was plagued with corruption, Prío was expected to be a much needed improvement. Prío himself would eventually continue in line with Cuba's history of political corruption.<sup>7</sup> Prío had been democratically elected, which gave him legitimacy, something that the Batista regime lacked, having come to power through a military coup.

After the coup d'état many Cubans expressed their discontent with the Batista government, but the fear of police violence against protestors caused the general public to remain cautious. Even Prío, who had been thrown out of office by Batista, fled Cuba rather than to face the growing government repression against anyone that dared to oppose the newly installed

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<sup>5</sup>All major pacts are listed in the Appendix.

<sup>6</sup>Pérez-Stable, Marifeli. *The Cuban Revolution: Origins, Course and Legacy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2009, 52.

<sup>7</sup>Pérez Jr., Louis A. *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006, 216-217.

Batista regime. As disapproval of the regime continued to grow, one of the most active sectors of the population was the youth, particularly university student groups. The youth of this period had come to be known as the “centennial generation.” In 1952 the centennial generation was celebrating the birth of Cuba’s martyred hero, José Martí. The youth groups stood against Batista in hopes of continuing Martí’s dreams of sovereignty and social justice for the island of Cuba.<sup>8</sup>

These student groups organized protests and demonstrations which were met with indiscriminate police violence, injuring not only demonstrators but innocent civilians as well. The increasing state violence only helped to intensify the public, many of which already opposed Batista and drew them to sympathize with the protesters. This caused many Cubans to speak out against the Batista government, not only because he had gained his power unconstitutionally, but also because it continued the political corruption that had been notorious throughout Cuba’s history.

An organization that would come to play a very minimal role in the insurrection was the PSP. Many of the PSP members were long-established traditionalists that had supported Batista during his first term as president.<sup>9</sup> In return for their support, several members of the communist party had been given cabinet positions during that term. It is because of this many PSP members continued to stand with Batista, even if just to maintain positions within the government. From the beginning of the struggle against Batista, the PSP criticized the violence of both Castro’s M-26-7 and the DR. When it became evident that Castro was gaining enough momentum to

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<sup>8</sup>Suchlicki, Jamie. *University Students and Revolution in Cuba, 1920-1968*. Miami, FL,: University of Miami Press, 1969.

<sup>9</sup>Staten, L. Clifford. *The History of Cuba*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 58.

overthrow Batista, several members of the PSP decided to join the insurrection. While the idea of associating with communists was unpopular with the majority of the opposition groups and the Cuban population in general, Castro welcomed their aid and rewarded them for their efforts.

The other groups that took part in the insurrection were ignored when Batista fled the country. Castro and the M-26-7 immediately took power and all the other opposition groups seemed to have lost steam as Castro took the lead and painted himself as Cuba's long awaited revolutionary messiah. Although some of the opposition groups tried to oppose Castro's self-imposed leadership role, they found themselves overshadowed by the living legend that Castro had become by claiming that it was the M-26-7 in the mountains that had been the major reason for the victory. As the other opposition groups were overlooked, it became clear that Castro had simply made agreements in the manifestos as a way to secure power and Castro's involvement in the signing of the pacts was simply a means to an end.

By examining the manifestos that were written throughout the insurrection, in relation to Castro's actions, one is able to gain a better understanding of Castro's activities behind the scenes. Castro's undertakings in relation to the opposition groups that he coordinated with, will demonstrate how, with a rag-tag guerrilla force which was greatly outnumbered by Cuba's military, Castro was able to take over leadership of the country after Batista's departure. I will demonstrate that the goal of the M-26-7, during the inception of the insurrection, was not to bring Castro to power, but simply to remove Batista from power. As the insurrection proceeded Castro began a transition from being the leader of the M-26-7, to the leader of the entire anti-Batista movement. This would come about because while Castro waged a rebellion against

Batista's army, he also maneuvered against the other anti-Batista groups, all which were vying for power.

In order to establish himself as one of the primary leaders of the insurrection, Castro created rivalries with other opposition groups, masked behind pacts of unity. This will be shown by an examination of other sources such as articles from journalists that visited Castro's hideout in the Sierra Maestra, memoirs of some of the participating rebels, as well as an evaluation of the pacts themselves. I intend to shed light on how Castro went from being a relative outsider during the signing of the Montreal Pact on June 2, 1953, to being named the Commander in Chief of the rebel army by the time the Caracas Pact was signed on July 20, 1958.<sup>10</sup>

I will also show that Castro was able to take advantage of the agreements summarized in the manifestos published throughout the course of the insurrection in order to obtain a position of power over the other opposition groups, with the purpose of strengthening his own movement. Each of the manifestos has significant value when viewed in light of the actions of Castro and the M-26-7. By using these documents as windows into the actions taken, we can see that for Castro, ulterior motives existed, outside of what had been agreed to in the manifestos themselves.

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<sup>10</sup>Bonachea, Ramón L. and San Martín, Martha. *The Cuban Insurrection, 1952-1959*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1974, 17.

## CHAPTER 1: CASTRO, FROM STUDENT ACTIVIST TO GUERRILLA LEADER

Castro's introduction to politics and his road to rebelliousness began while he was a student at the University of Havana. From this point we will see a steady progression beginning with Castro's actions in what was known as the *grupos de accion*, as he evolves into a leader of the Moncada Barracks attack, and eventually a political and rebel leader with the M-26-7.<sup>11</sup> The evidence shows that in a short period of time Castro was able to make a name for himself in Cuba. Although he was not seen as a viable option for a position of political leadership, from the early years of the insurrection Castro knew that he would first need ardent followers if his leadership role was going to development. His role in the University of Havana's student government power struggles prepared him for the future that lay in front of him and shows that he was willing to do whatever it took to succeed, even if it meant violent confrontations with his adversaries.

Castro's reputation grew throughout his years at the University of Havana, in large part due to his involvement in *grupos de accion* that were known for gangsterism. Castro's involvement with student politics led to him becoming known for excessive violence, and he was even accused of murder for political gain.<sup>12</sup> This reputation continued to follow him after he completed his law university, and it was something that he would eventually have to deal with if he wanted to be accepted as a legitimize leader in the anti-Batista struggle.

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<sup>11</sup>The *grupos de accion* were political groups within the universities which had a reputation for violence. They benefited from the fact that the universities had autonomy from the government, which protected them from police repression.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution: The History of Cuba since 1952*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977, 24-27. In pages 24-27 Thomas gives a detailed account of Castro's violent reputation at the University of Havana, including his being accused of the murder of a political rival.

In 1952, Castro was nominated and ran as a candidate for Congress as an Ortodoxo.<sup>13</sup> Due to Batista's coup, the elections did not take place and within weeks constitutional freedoms were suspended. This made Castro even more determined to remove Batista from power. Castro attempted to take legal action against Batista for violating the constitution by usurping power, the courts, however, refused to hear Castro's indictments against the President. Castro decided that a different course of action was necessary in order to eliminate Batista. Batista's takeover of the country was unconstitutional and legal means to defeat him were no longer an option. Castro had grown from being a student activist to a political activist and the suspension of political means led Castro to the realization that insurrection might be the only hopes of ending Cuba's governmental corruption.

As a result of Batista taking power, a meeting in Montreal had been arranged by deposed president Prío, who decided to put aside any disagreements between the Auténtico and Ortodoxo parties which may impede the removal of Batista. Although Castro was an Ortodoxo Party member, at this point he was still a relatively unknown figure who lacked the significant political importance to be invited to the meeting. Being that the majority of the participants were either moderates, or centrists, the PSP was also not included. The Auténtico, Ortodoxo and Cuban National Party (PNC) came together, along with several political figures such as former senators Manuel de Varona and José M. Gutiérrez, former Vice-President Guillermo Alonso Pujol, and Auténtico presidential candidate Carlos Hevia. On June 2, 1953 the Montreal Pact was signed, with the participants agreeing on five major points.<sup>14</sup> (1) It called for restoring the Constitution

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<sup>13</sup>Quirk, Robert E. *Fidel Castro*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993, page 56-57.

<sup>14</sup>Bonachea, Ramón L. and San Martín, Marta. *The Cuban Insurrection, 1952-1959*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1974, 17.

of 1940. (2) It was agreed that Batista was incapable of holding fair elections. (3) It declared that a neutral provisional government would be set up to temporarily replace the Batista government. (4) It stated that all signers would reject any forms of terrorism or attacks on individuals throughout the struggle. (5) Lastly, it stated that the Auténticos and Ortodoxos would carry out their objectives through appointed commissions, thus giving the various organizations a sense of fairness in the creation of a new democratic government. This agreement left many options available to its participants, so while some tried to pressure Batista into leaving office so that fair elections could be held, others such as Prío could support a more militant approach.

Castro had not been invited, nor mentioned throughout the proceedings that produced the Montreal Pact. In response, Castro proclaimed that the pact did not offer a valid solution, but rather more political banter. Rather than viewing the Montreal Pact as an alternative solution, Castro viewed the meeting as a continuation of the same politicians whose corruption had been destroying Cuba since its independence.<sup>15</sup> Ignoring the meeting in Montreal, Castro prepared for the attack on the Moncada Barracks. He referred to the members of the Montreal meeting as middle-aged politicians still receiving pensions and salaries from the Batista government that would never conduct the real revolution that Cuba required, ignoring the fact that their pensions were earned.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>De la Cova, Antonio Rafael. *The Moncada Attack: Birth of the Cuban Revolution*. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2007, 119-120.

<sup>16</sup>Marquez-Sterling, Manuel. *Cuba: 1952-1959, The True Story of Castro's Rise to Power*. Kleiopatria Digital Press, 2009, 50.



On July 26, 1953 Castro, then twenty-six years old, orchestrated an attack on the Moncada military barracks, the second most important military garrison in the country, and Bayamo with the goal of inciting the masses in a widespread rebellion.<sup>17</sup> Castro had hoped that once he took the Moncada, his victory would encourage the people of Santiago to join him in rebelling against Batista and his plan was to use the weapons stolen from the Moncada Barracks to arm the people that would join him.<sup>18</sup>

Historian Antonio Rafael De la Cova has argued that Castro accelerated his plans for the attack on the Moncada Barracks out of fear that the signers on the Montreal Pact would strike first, therefore taking away from the impact of Castro's assault on the military base.<sup>19</sup> De la Cova explains that Castro, being aware that the Montreal Pact was looking for a democratic solution to the coup, decided that Batista's government could only be defeated through a popular insurrection. To Castro and his supporters, the Montreal Pact lacked importance since it did not offer solutions.

The attack on the Moncada Barracks failed almost immediately as Castro's men were heavily outnumbered and outgunned and were quickly forced to retreat. Both the Ortodoxo Party and the Communist Party immediately expressed their disapproval of Castro's actions at Moncada and Bayamo.<sup>20</sup> During the attack, sixteen of Castro's men died in battle, and when it was all over the majority of his followers were tortured and then killed after being captured or

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<sup>17</sup> Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 42.

<sup>18</sup> Castro, Fidel. *History Will Absolve Me*. New York, NY: Fair Play for Cuba Committee, 1961, 26-27

<sup>19</sup> De la Cova, Antonio Rafael. *The Moncada Attack*, 119. De la Cova explains that the Moncada attack failed due to lack of proper preparation by the M-26-7, which wanted to be the first to strike against the Batista.

<sup>20</sup> Franqui, Carlos. *El libro de los doce*. México: Ediciones Era, 1966, 15.

surrendering.<sup>21</sup> A small minority of the group, including Castro and his brother Raúl, had survived and they would all end up serving time in prison.

It was during his time in jail that Castro prepared his defense speech which would become the text known as *History Will Absolve Me*.<sup>22</sup> This was Castro's first manifesto, and he used it to explain the motivations behind the attack on the Moncada and Bayamo Barracks, as well as his plans for a post-Batista Cuba. Instead of allowing the validation of the charges against him, he indicted the judges themselves, stating that in incriminating him they were serving a government that lacked legitimacy. Batista had not come to power through electoral means and therefore was not a constitutional power. Castro argued that it was his duty as a Cuban patriot to attempt to overthrow Batista in order to protect the constitution. Claiming that his sentencing amounted to be a mockery of the very constitution that they were sworn to protect, Castro argued that, "...the dictatorship that oppressed the nation is not a constitutional power" and therefore the Moncada rebels had not only the right, but the duty as Cuban citizens to overthrow Batista.<sup>23</sup> In his defense speech Castro specifically referred to Oriente province's relevance in colonial Cuba's history and mentioned its heroes in an attempt to bring to his defense the Cuban spirit of rebelliousness against tyranny.<sup>24</sup>

Sentenced to fifteen years in prison, Castro spent the first several months of his sentence speaking out against the regime while also trying to gain support for the M-26-7. While in prison Castro wrote numerous letters to his followers and the media in an attempt to keep the

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<sup>21</sup>Coltman, Leycester. *The Real Fidel Castro*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003, 82.

<sup>22</sup>Castro, Fidel. *History Will Absolve Me*.

<sup>23</sup>Castro, Fidel. *History Will Absolve Me*, 123.

<sup>24</sup>Castro, Fidel. *History Will Absolve Me*, 123.

public informed about his new movement. He had called his group *el Movimiento 26 de Julio*, (M-26-7), in commemoration of the Moncada attack. It can be seen from the letters that Castro wrote while in prison that he intended to use propaganda as a driving force for his struggle against the Batista regime. Many of Castro's prison letters were written to Melba Hernández, who was an ardent supporter of Castro's movement and a fellow *Moncadistas*.<sup>25</sup> She had been released from prison after serving seven months and continued to rally support for Castro.

In one of Castro's letters to Hernández he wrote, "Propaganda cannot be abandoned for a single minute, because it is the soul of every struggle. Ours should have its own style and adjust itself to the circumstance."<sup>26</sup> As shall be seen, Castro used propaganda based on Cuban nationalism and patriotism as a means to garner support throughout the insurrection. It shall also be seen that as the insurrection gained momentum, Castro and the M-26-7 coordinated with other organizations, agreeing to unify, but only when it benefited their own objectives. In the same letter, Castro stated, "Deal with people artfully and with a smile. Follow the same tactic used in the trial: Defend our viewpoint without making unnecessary enemies. There will be enough time later to crush all the cockroaches together."<sup>27</sup> Although Castro does not specify to whom he was referring to in this letter, it is evident through reevaluating the manifestos that he authored or supported, that he was willing to agree with other movements simply to gain their support.

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<sup>25</sup>Like Castro, Hernández was also a graduate of the University of Havana – School of Law and dedicated to the struggle against Batista.

<sup>26</sup>Conte Agüero, Luis and Bardach, Ann Louise (eds). *The Prison Letters of Fidel Castro*. New York, NY: Nation Books, 2007, 15.

<sup>27</sup> Conte Agüero and Bardach. *The Prison Letters of Fidel Castro*, 16.

Having temporarily crushed one of his opponents, Batista tried to make his presidency seem legitimate by calling for elections to be held in November 1954. Many people questioned whether fair elections could be held while Batista was still in power. Grau San Martin was running as an Auténtico and Márquez-Sterling as an Ortodoxo.<sup>28</sup> Márquez-Sterling was an attorney and law professor at the University of Havana that had had been the president of the constitutional assembly which wrote the constitution of 1940. As the elections ensued, the majority of the candidates began to drop out of the race believing that it was not being conducted fairly, leaving Batista to win the election uncontested. Claiming to have won 47% of the votes, on February 24, 1955 Batista assumed the presidency for a four year term.<sup>29</sup>

On May 15, 1955, Castro and the surviving Moncadistas were released from prison when Batista granted them a general amnesty in trying to appease his detractors. One of Castro's first objectives was to strengthen his new movement, therefore on July 19, 1955 he merged the M-26-7 with Frank País and his organization, the Revolutionary National Action (ARO). Thereafter País became the urban coordinator of the M-26-7 in Oriente Province. Castro then exiled himself to Mexico to prepare for another attack against Batista.

Upon his arrival in Mexico on July 7, 1955, Castro had two objectives. The first was to make sure that his men received training in guerrilla warfare, and secondly, to begin his propaganda campaign. In order to coordinate his propaganda campaign, Castro began spreading the message of the M-26-7 by traveling in search of financial support and men willing to join his movement. One of the people that Castro reached out to was former Cuban President Prío

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<sup>28</sup> Hugh, Thomas. *The Cuban Revolution*, 1971, 74.

<sup>29</sup>Bonachea, Ramón E. and Valdés, Nelson P. *Revolutionary Struggle, 1947-1958*. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1974, 31.

Socarrás, whom Castro met in Texas in September of 1956.<sup>30</sup> Prío was very anxious to help anyone that he believed would aid him in his attempt to return to a position of power in Cuba. Putting aside their differences and their mutual hatred for one another, the two leaders agreed to meet.

It was during this meeting that Prío agreed to provide money for Castro's *Granma* expedition. Nothing that Castro had written up to this point gave any indication that he would seek power once Batista was removed; leading Prío to believe that aiding the M-26-7 would only reinforce his own objectives. Prío gave Castro \$50,000 in order to help finance his return to Cuba. After the triumph of the insurrection, Castro referred to Prío's grant and stated, "Pinching \$50,000 from an SOB is not theft, it's a good deed."<sup>31</sup> This demonstrates that Castro simply used Prío because he needed financial support, and did not have any intentions of repaying Prío in any way.

With his men training for an attack on Cuba, Castro authored two programs simply known as *Manifesto No. 1 & No. 2: To the People of Cuba*.<sup>32</sup> Published on August 8, 1955, Manifesto No. 1 was similar to *History Will Absolve Me* in that it outlined a program for Cuba after the ousting of Batista. Castro also took the time to accuse Batista's government of crimes ranging from violence against innocent civilians to censorship of the media. In order to avoid losing supporters, and in answering questions concerning communist ties, or even lack of political ideology, in Manifesto No. 1, Castro made it abundantly clear that he was still an

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<sup>30</sup> Marquez-Sterling, Manuel. *Cuba: 1952-1959*, 84.

<sup>31</sup> Patterson, Thomas G. *Contesting Castro: The United States and the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, 33.

<sup>32</sup>See Appendix A/B: Manifesto #1 & #2: To the People of Cuba.

Ortodoxo Party member, firmly adhering to the purest principles of Chibás.<sup>33</sup> This was also done with the hope of retaining the support of the Ortodoxos Party in Cuba, which had disagreed with Castro's violent tactics in the past. Although the Ortodoxos were still putting forth an effort to come up with a non-violent solution to Batista's coup, with Prío's financial aid, they had also organized an armed faction.

For Castro, these manifestos served two main purposes; first to declare the intentions of the M-26-7 by explaining what his movement stood for and second to inspire the people of Cuba to support his cause rather than the other anti-Batista movements that were also gaining popularity. Castro also tried to defend his call for an armed insurrection, opposing the various anti-Batista organizations that were calling for a democratic solution, while also declaring to have the most honorable armed organization with the M-26-7. Castro reinforced his points and tried to motivate his audience by referencing the revolutionaries of Cuba's past. In doing this, he hoped to gain a following by talking about the nationalism that had inspired Cuban heroes such as José Martí and Antonio Maceo. Knowing that most Cubans venerated these historical leaders, Castro emphasized on how their ideas related to the problems that were still affecting Cuba.<sup>34</sup>

What is significant about Manifesto #2 is not Castro's criticism of the Batista government, but rather that it criticized all of Cuba's previous governments. Castro declared that since it was obvious that throughout its history Cuba's government had been corrupt, continuously lacking both integrity and honesty, what the Cuban people deserved was something completely different. Castro's call to insurrection was not meant to be seen as something

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<sup>33</sup>Appendix A: Manifesto #1 – To the People of Cuba.

<sup>34</sup>Bonachea, Ramón L. and San Martín, Marta. *The Cuban Insurrection, 1952-1958*, 267.

completely new, but rather as the same struggle that Cuba's revolutionary forefathers had also aspired to overcome. In doing this Castro emphasized that the struggle for justice and independence was a continuation of Martí's struggle, suggesting that as the leader of the M-26-7 he was also an heir to Martí.

In trying to gain financial support, in Manifesto #2 Castro explained the financial hardships that he had experienced in establishing his movement. He did however make it clear that he is fighting for Cuba, and would never benefit personally from any funds denoted to the movement. Declaring the severity of the situation which Cuba was facing, in Manifesto No. 2 Castro affirmed that, "Either we conquer the fatherland at any price so that we can live with dignity and honor, or we shall remain without one."<sup>35</sup> The goal was a Cuba free of corruption and Castro's words proclaimed his seriousness.

#### Mexico Pact – August 30, 1956

The M-26-7 continued to train while Castro continued to pursue support for this movement. One year after the release of Manifestos #1 and #2, and three months prior to his return to Cuba, Castro knew that he still lacked adequate support if his return to Cuba was to succeed. Castro had attempted to make an alliance with the DR and in doing so Castro had been trying to negotiate a unity agreement with Echeverría, president of the University Student's Federation (FEU) and founder of its armed revolutionary branch, since the time that he was released from prison. A pact with Echeverría would provide Castro with both support and

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<sup>35</sup>Bonachea, Ramón L. and San Martín, Marta. *The Cuban Insurrection, 1952-1958*, 260.

increased recognition. Establishing accords with the M-26-7 also served the DR which hoped that a unity agreement would expedite the ousting of Batista.

As communications between the two leaders continued, Echeverría eventually made the trip to Mexico to visit with Castro in person in order to negotiate an agreement. The negotiations between Castro and Echeverría were successful despite the fact that the DR was mostly an organization that functioned independently of any other groups. Echeverría had also made an exception by receiving aid and mutually supporting Prío and his OA, although they did not have any type of written agreement like the pact that he had signed with Castro.<sup>36</sup>

While both men agreed to work together, they differed on the strategy needed in order to bring down Batista. While Castro wanted a national revolution with the support of the people, Echeverría preferred an immediate end to the conflict by attempting to assassinate (*golpe arriba*) Batista thus bringing a quick end to the bloodshed. The pact stated that while Castro carried out guerrilla warfare in the mountains, Echeverría and the DR would coordinate with the M-26-7 urban underground to promote insurrection in preparation for a general strike.

The Mexico Pact's call for all students, workers and "worthy Cubans" to join in the armed struggle against Batista, also benefited Castro who hoped that the Cubans would view joining the anti-Batista movement as being their duty.<sup>37</sup> The support of Echeverría's DR also gave the M-26-7 a degree of legitimacy that they had previously lacked. One of the main reasons was that Echeverría had a good standing and reputation, whereas Castro was still

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<sup>36</sup> Brennan, Ray. *Cuba, Castro and Justice*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., 1959, 98.

<sup>37</sup> See Appendix C: The Mexico Pact.

Bonachea, Ramón E. and Valdés, Nelson P. *Revolutionary Struggle, 1947-1958*, 338. Includes the Mexico Pact in its entirety.



remembered for his violence during his university years and his actions at the Moncada Barracks attack. Although Castro's popularity had risen after the attack on the Moncada Barracks, which had practically made him a household name throughout the island, many still viewed him as an adventurer or a rebel rouser, rather than a realistic alternative to Batista.<sup>38</sup> Having a pact with an organization that already had a following would also make recruiting for the M-26-7 an easier process.

The meeting of these two men resulted in the signing of what simply became known as the Mexico Pact, which they signed on August 30, 1956. The pact declared, "Both organizations have decided to unite solidly their efforts in order to overthrow the tyranny and carry out the Cuban Revolution."<sup>39</sup> As it later became evident for Castro, the signing of the pact was a union of convenience. Castro was aware that he would need the support of the students in the cities and large segment of the middle class, specifically in Havana. Echeverría's DR was based in Havana and the use of student coordinated urban terrorism to distract the military and the police would allow Castro the time that he needed in order to organize his men in the Sierra Maestra.

The Mexico Pact does not mention Castro's return to Cuba directly, however prior to the drafting of the pact, Echeverría had agreed to support the *Granma* landing. Castro, in turn, agreed to support future armed campaigns conducted by the DR.<sup>40</sup> In fact the day prior to the signing of the Mexico Pact, both men spoke in detail concerning their plans for the insurgency and the importance of mutual support for each other's organizations. It was during this conversation that Castro expressed the crucial necessity of support from both Echeverría and

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<sup>38</sup> Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 78.

<sup>39</sup> See Appendix C: The Mexico Pact.

<sup>40</sup> Bonachea, Ramón & San Martín, Marta. *The Cuban Insurrection, 1952-1959*, 60.

País for the *Granma* landing. Here Echeverría agreed to conduct uprisings throughout Havana, Matanzas, Las Villas and Camagüey provinces in order to distract the military thus allowing Castro's men to land safely.<sup>41</sup> The M-26-7 was beginning to organize in Havana and had leaders such as Armando Hart and Carlos Franqui structuring cells, but at this point they were not as organized as Echeverría's DR. Another important benefit of agreeing to support the DR was the fact that the university served as a safe haven which the military and police could not enter due to the university's autonomy.

The *Granma* left Mexico on November 25, 1956 expecting to arrive in Cuba just five days later. However problems arose when the *Granma* became lost at sea and reached Cuba several days later than expected, landing in Las Colorades on December 3, 1956.<sup>42</sup> By the time that Castro and his men arrived, the M-26-7 urban underground, led by País, had already begun attacking police headquarters and other government buildings throughout Oriente Province. The DR on the other hand, was left completely unaware that the landing had occurred at all. Having agreed in Mexico to aid in the *Granma* landing by causing distractions in Havana, the DR clashed with the police and several of the students were arrested, and Echeverría was beaten up by police officers during the confrontation.<sup>43</sup> Since the date of the landing was changed, unbeknownst to Echeverría, when the *Granma* actually arrived, the DR did not carry out any actions to distract the government.

Regardless of the events, Castro alleged that Echeverría's purposely withheld support contrary to the agreement in the Mexico Pact. Once in the safety of the Sierra Maestra, Castro

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<sup>41</sup>Bonachea, Ramón & San Martín, Marta. *The Cuban Insurrection, 1952-1959*, 69-70.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 106.

<sup>43</sup>*Información* (Habana), November 30, 1956, 1.

would write a letter to Echeverría declaring that the failure of the DR to act during the *Granma* landing was treason, stating “Especially you, José Antonio, who promised me you would join in the uprising.” This letter demonstrated a major rift between the two groups, which already lacked trust in one another. In response, Echeverría proclaimed that no member of the DR should ever join the M-26-7 rebels in the mountains and Castro would later pay back the DR by refusing to aid their assault on the Presidential Palace.<sup>44</sup> Both Castro and Echeverría would continue to communicate, both claiming that they shared the same goal in bringing a swift end to the Batista regime, however they continued to distrust one another and neither retained any confidence of mutual support. In a letter sent to the press informing them of the departure of the *Granma* from Mexico, Castro once again declared what he had been proclaiming for several months, “In 1956 we shall be free or we shall be martyrs.”<sup>45</sup>

#### Attack on the Presidential Palace - March 13, 1957

Just four months after Castro’s return to Cuba, his rebel group consisted of a core of approximately fifteen survivors of the *Granma* landing, which were now relatively safe in the Sierra Maestra. It is at this point that Echeverría demonstrated that he fully intended to follow through with the plans he had discussed during the signing of the Mexico Pact. Unlike Castro, who was calling for support for the armed insurrection against the military and police, Echeverría continued to support the idea of *golpe arriba*, or hitting at the top. Echeverría believed that this approach would put a quick end to the violence and allow for the installation of

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<sup>44</sup>Bonachea, Ramón & San Martín, Marta. *The Cuban Insurrection, 1952-1959*, 107. This information is based on Bonachea’s personal interview with Ricardo (Popi) Corpión, who had arranged a meeting between Faustino Pérez and José Antonio Echeverría in order to have Castro’s letter delivered.

<sup>45</sup>Llerena, Mario. *The Unsuspected Revolution*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978, 63.

a provisional government until fair elections could be held. This was something that Castro wanted to avoid, therefore although the DR had invited the M-26-7 and Prío's AO to participate in the attack; the M-26-7 did not respond to the request.<sup>46</sup>

Castro was well hidden in the Sierra Maestra and therefore no longer had any reason to support the DR's efforts against Batista. Instead, Castro was making plans in case the assassination of Batista was successful. The claims at unity seem unrealistic when behind the scenes Castro was preparing to contest the DR's agenda should they succeed in assassinating Batista. In fact the threat that Batista would be defeated quickly worried Castro so much that he went back on what he had agreed to in the Mexico Pact, by preparing to install a provisional president within the Sierra Maestra in case the DR's attack succeeded.<sup>47</sup>

Although they had not organized definitive plans, to Echeverría the attack on the Presidential Palace was derived as a direct result of the agreement that he had made with Castro in Mexico, an agreement which Echeverría planned on fulfilling as he organized his assault on the palace. Prior to the attack Echeverría had written, "Our commitment to the people of Cuba was determined in the Mexico Pact... we believe that the time has come to fulfill that commitment."<sup>48</sup> The attack quickly took a turn for the worst when, without any reinforcements,

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<sup>46</sup>Chomón, Faure. *El ataque al Palacio Presidencial*. La Habana, Cuba: Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, 1969, 6. In this text Chomón states that the DR held a meeting on February 20, where it was decided that the M-26-7 would be informed of the palace attack and asked to join.

<sup>47</sup>Phillips, Hart R. "Cuba Suppresses Youths' Uprising: Forty are Killed." *The New York Times*, March 14, 1957, 1.

<sup>48</sup>Arce, Lucas Moran. *La revolución Cubana (1953-1959): Una versión rebelde*. Ponce, P.R.: Imprenta Universidad Católica, 1980, 85. "Nuestro compromiso con el pueblo de Cuba quedó fijado en la Carta de México..." "Creemos que ha llegado el momento de cumplirlo."

the DR rebels found themselves trapped inside the palace, with Batista safely hidden away on the top floor.<sup>49</sup>

Rather than aid the DR, whose men were being gunned down, Castro's and Pazos were more concerned with getting Herbert Matthews into the Sierra Maestra to interview Castro. Several members of the M-26-7 urban underground did conveniently show up at the palace after the assassination attempt had ended and most of the DR attackers had already been killed. Instead of aiding of the DR, the M-26-7 appeared suddenly, and fled just as quickly, having commandeered one of the DR's vans full of weapons.<sup>50</sup> Although the DR would demand that the weapons be returned to them, the demands were ignored with the only response being a message to the media from Castro condemning the actions as "useless bloodshed."<sup>51</sup> But the fact remains that members of the M-26-7 were close enough to the scene of the attack that they were able to steal a van, without being spotted by the military or the police, and quickly disappearing. It is obvious that the same rebels that stole the van could have reinforced the DR during the battle at the palace, but they did not and that resulted in the death of one of the anti-Batista movement's most respected and capable leaders and forty of his followers.<sup>52</sup>

The DR lost not only Echeverría on that day, but almost all of the top leadership of the DR were killed, along with several OA militants as well, thus changing the circumstances of the DR from that moment forward. Although the student movement continued, after the failure of

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<sup>49</sup>Chomón, Faure. "El ataque al Palacio Presidencial el 13 de Marzo de 1957," *Bohemia*, 51 (March 15-22, 1959).

<sup>50</sup>Sweig, Julia. *Inside the Cuban Revolution*, 19.

<sup>51</sup>More information detailing the events that occurred during the attack on the presidential palace are available in the following articles:Chomón, Faure. "El asalto al palacio." *Bohemia* (Habana), April 15, 1959. & "En Cuba." *Bohemia* (Habana), May 28, 1957, p. 97.

<sup>52</sup>Sánchez, Juan Nuiry. *Presente: A puntas para la historia del Movimiento Estudiantil Cubano* (Habana), 1988, 146.

the palace attack, no one in the DR would be able to compete with Castro's popularity and power. One of the major consequences of the death of Echeverría was the split in the DR leadership which would eventually create two separate guerrilla groups in the Escambray Mountains, a topic which will be discussed later.

Continuously trying to return to power, it is also important to note Prío's immediate support to another guerrilla expedition. By and large Castro had been ignoring much of Prío's suggestions, and it should have been obvious to Prío at this point that Castro was not as desperate for his aid as he had been in Mexico. In addition, Castro's reputation as a leader in the insurrection was growing steadily and that unquestionably caused Prío much concern since it hindered his own aspirations to return to Cuba as president. Prío also created the *Organización Auténtica*, which was the radical faction of the party, willing to use guerrilla warfare as a method to defeating Batista.

In May 1957, Prío's OA began the *Corinthia* expedition, under the leadership of Calixto Sánchez, with the hopes of opening a second guerilla front in Sierra Cristal.<sup>53</sup> Almost as soon as the *Corinthia* landed in Cuba, its men were attacked by the military. A brief gunfight ensued and eventually the majority of the group was forced to surrender. While some of the men died in the battle, shortly afterward most of the survivors were captured men, including Sánchez, and they were executed by the military.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Phillips, Hart R. "Rebel Battles Reported in Cuba; Dynamiters cut Havana." *TheNew York Times*, May 29, 1957, 1, 3.

<sup>54</sup>McCarthy, Francis L. "Cuban Army Unit joins in The Big Push." *The Times of Havana*, Vol. 1, No. 35, June 3, 1957, 1.

Castro's competition was getting smaller, especially considering that at this point the M-26-7 appeared to be the only insurgent force on the island strong enough to overthrow Batista. This could be the reason that after the death of Echeverría, the M-26-7 stepped up their assaults, not only in the Sierra Maestra, but also targeting the sugar cane fields in the plains and Cuban industry in the cities. Castro wanted to capitalize on Echeverría's death by increasing his own visibility and showing off the strength of the M-26-7.

In response to the rise in violence throughout Cuba, five opposition leaders came together in June 1957 and published what they called the Manifesto of the Five. This manifesto called for national unity, a return to the laws of the 1940 Constitution, fair elections, and an end to the violence, declaring that peace was the responsibility of both the government and the citizens.<sup>55</sup> The assertion that the citizens of Cuba were also responsible for peace was a direct charge at the violent actions of the opposition groups such as the M-26-7, DR, and Prío. The Manifesto of the Five was signed by Millo Ochoa of the Ortodoxos, Carlos Márquez Sterling of *Ortodoxia Libre* [OL was the electoral faction of the Ortodoxos], José Pardo Llada of *Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario*, Porfirio Pendás of *Defensa de la Constitución* and Amalio Fiallo of *Movimiento de Liberación*.

The manifesto specifically warned that a continuation of the violence that was currently plaguing Cuba would result in the island losing itself to “a totalitarian dictatorship, and blind and bloody revenges.”<sup>56</sup> The main purpose of the manifesto was to urge the Cuban people to seek a

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<sup>55</sup>“La solución está en las urnas, afirman 5 ptdos. de oposición.” (La Habana) *Diario de la Marina*. June 11, 1957, No. 136, 1.

<sup>56</sup>“La solución está en las urnas, afirman 5 ptdos. de oposición.” (La Habana) *Diario de la Marina*. June 11, 1957, No. 136, 1.

political solution through negotiations, specifically calling on Batista to step down, in order for the violence plaguing the country to end. By repudiating both the regime and the opposition groups, the signers of the manifesto urged Cubans to demand elections. None of the groups that signed the manifesto were members of any of Prío's organizations, and all of them vehemently denounced his financing of guerrilla groups. Although the SAR group had previously failed in their attempt at achieving a non-violent solution, signers of the Manifesto of the Five believed that the increasing violence could pressure Batista into stepping down.<sup>57</sup> The manifesto was ultimately ignored and rather than stepping down, Batista, in an attempt to appease his critics and mounting pressure from the United States, announced that elections would be held in 1958.

Castro continued to oppose elections and therefore felt the need to respond to the Manifesto of the Five, as well as to Batista's announcement of new elections while Batista was in power. Castro responded with his Manifesto of the Sierra Maestra. According to U.S. Ambassador Smith, he responded to the call for elections by stating that anyone caught voting would be in danger of either imprisonment or death at the hands of the M-26-7.<sup>58</sup> Castro was no longer a politician, but had evolved into a guerrilla leader.

The importance of the urban underground cannot be overlooked, as the M-26-7 in the Sierra Maestra needed their assistance in order to survive life in the mountains. Castro however desired more than resources from the urban underground, he hoped to control them in order to make his guerrillas the main focus of the insurrection. Now that he was a guerrilla leader, his

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<sup>57</sup> The Society of Friends of the Republic was an organization established by Don Cosme de la Torriente, a veteran of the Cuban war of independence that continued to pursue a democratic solution.

<sup>58</sup> Smith, Earl E.T. *The Fourth Floor: An Account of the Castro Communist Revolution*. New York: Random House, 1962, 66.



next objective was to subordinate the urban underground as well as the remaining anti-Batista groups under his control. Cuba was in a political crisis, and many groups tried to work together to solve the problems facing the island, but the fact is that sectarian rivalries existed, which meant that the groups were not only dealing with the Batista government, but oftentimes quarrelling amongst themselves. Castro's next step would be to try to make sure that when the fighting was over, he would be on top. In doing this, he knew that he would have to coordinate with other organizations, while increasing his own force.

## CHAPTER 2: TAKING CONTROL OF THE M-26-7

By mid-1957 Castro had demonstrated that he and his guerrilla group could endure the circumstances in the Sierra Maestra. For Castro and his group, the Sierra Maestra was a safe haven where they could wait out the many dangers that of the insurrection. As 1957 progressed, Castro found himself having to deal with the remaining challengers to his quest for political power, as well as the small minority of groups that still hoped to end the violence through democratic means. As we shall see, from early June 1957 through mid-1958 Castro successfully maintained control of M-26-7 urban underground after the death of País and he took advantage of the divisions within the other anti-Batista groups in order to make the M-26-7 appear like a viable force.

### The Manifesto of the Sierra Maestra (MSM) – July 12, 1957

Castro responded to the Manifesto of the Five in his own declaration, the MSM, which was published on July 12, 1957.<sup>59</sup> This manifesto was co-signed by Felipe Pazos and Raúl Chibás, who were almost certainly invited to sign the manifesto since Castro considered it necessary to convey the message that the M-26-7 was democratic and focused on returning Cuba to the constitution of 1940.<sup>60</sup> Both Pazos and Chibás were well respected so their inclusion also gave Castro some credibility in his attempt to legitimize his movement.

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<sup>59</sup>See Appendix E: The Manifesto of the Sierra Maestra.

<sup>60</sup> Sweig, Julia. *Inside the Cuban Revolution*, 33.  
Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 170-171.

Pazos and Chibás each represented Cuba's main political parties and they were both well-known and well respected.<sup>61</sup> Their reputations added credibility to the manifesto's avocation to all political parties and civic organizations to oppose an electoral solution and refuse political compromise with Batista under any circumstances. Similar to all the other manifestos, the MSM included a call for unification amongst the opposition forces. The manifesto states, "Unity is now the only patriotic way. Unity is what all political, revolutionary, and social sectors that combated the dictatorship had in common."<sup>62</sup>

It is ironic that while the MSM called for the unification of the opposition forces, it implies within the text that it referred to unity under the condition that the leader of the united opposition groups would be Castro.<sup>63</sup> The MSM called for unity in what Guevara called "the establishment of a great civic revolutionary front comprising all opposition parties, all civic institutions and all revolutionary forces." In his war journal Guevara wrote that the attempt at unity was not successful since "...the enemy broke the pact expressed in the manifesto when they refused to acknowledge the authority of the Sierra."<sup>64</sup> When Guevara speaks of "the enemy" he is specifically referring to Pazos and Chibás, who by signing the Miami Pact, clearly went against Castro's mandates in the MSM. Fidel and Raúl Castro and Guevara would criticize Pazos for signing the Miami Pact and Chibás for taking part and supporting the pact.

The MSM called upon the people of Cuba to join the struggle against Batista, while declaring the goals and demands of the M-26-7. The most important demand was for the

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<sup>61</sup>Llerena, Mario. *The Unsuspected Revolution: The Birth and Rise of Castroism*. Ithaca, 186. Llerena states that both men "enjoyed great moral force and popular prestige."

<sup>62</sup> See Appendix E: The Manifesto of the Sierra Maestra.

<sup>63</sup> Llerena, Mario. *The Unsuspected Revolution*, 190.

<sup>64</sup> Guevara, Ernesto. *Episodes of the Revolutionary War*. Havana: Guairas Book Institute, 1967, 88.

immediate resignation of Batista followed by a call for fair elections. Castro had been very outspoken against elections being held since the time that Batista had taken power, nonetheless in the MSM he declared that the rebels had wanted elections since they had been denied to Cuba on March 10, the day of Batista's coup. Castro, in a carefully devised statement proclaimed, "We are here because we want them [elections] more than anyone else." "Can there be free, democratic, and impartial elections under a tyranny which represents anti-democracy and partiality?"<sup>65</sup>

Since most of the political parties had pushed for elections, Castro had to take advantage of the commonly held notion that fair elections could not be held under Batista for one simple reason. If the opposition groups would have agreed to elections, under the direction of an impartial mediation, there would no longer be any reason for a rebellion against the government and the M-26-7 would no longer need to exist. Castro needed the insurrection to continue since it was his vehicle to power, and with his reputation steadily increasing both in and out of Cuba, Castro simply had to continue to promise fair elections. This was especially true since Castro had repeatedly stated that he did not want to be part of the new leadership that would replace Batista. It is for this reason that in many instances where Batista agreed to schedule elections, the M-26-7 would increase acts of terrorism throughout the urban centers in order to encourage Batista to suspend constitution rights and cancel the elections.<sup>66</sup> Camilo Cienfuegos stated in his war journals that Castro had made a "no-election degree" which declared that "any political

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<sup>65</sup>Bonachea, Ramón and Valdés, Nelson. *Revolutionary Struggle, 1947-1958*, 345.

<sup>66</sup>*Revolución*. (Habana), January 20, 1957, 1. The headline details the destruction of public utilities, the burning of sugar mills, trains being derailed and large estates being burned down.

agent who dedicates himself to the corrupt system of collection voting cards will be tried by a summary court martial and executed on the spot.”<sup>67</sup>

The MSM made it clear that the rebellion would continue until Batista was defeated. He also declared that the M-26-7 would not allow a military junta to take power by insisting that it would only prolong the insurrection. Although Castro did not have the authority to name Cuba’s next president, he took it upon himself to name Manuel Urrutia Lleó as the provisional president once power was taken away from the Batista government. By choosing a provisional president, Castro was giving himself authority that others did not feel he possessed, thus causing disagreements that would continue for several months.<sup>68</sup>

The MSM attempted to win over the Cuban population by promising a return to constitutional normalcy. Revisiting the ideas of *History Will Absolve Me*, Castro affirmed that the Cuban people would benefit greatly from social reform, such as a campaign to end illiteracy on the island, and an end to corporate corruption with the introduction of agrarian reform laws to protect those living in the rural areas. Many of the social programs that Castro promised in the MSM spoke directly to the peasants of Oriente province. The rural population had aided Castro and his men since the *Granma* landing, and the majority of them had remained his main supporters, hence Castro wanted to make it clear that he would not forget to support their needs as well.

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<sup>67</sup> Cienfuegos, Camilo. “Diario de la compañía”, *Revolución*. (Habana), November 16, 1958, 28.

<sup>68</sup> Hart, Armando. *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952-1958*. New York: Pathfinder Press, 2004, 223.

It is important however, to mention that the MSM was also a response to a letter written by País to Castro on July 7, 1957 just seven days prior to the Manifesto being made public. The letter is important in that it represents País' intentions for the M-26-7 as the insurrection went forward. Perhaps due to concern of Castro's inclinations towards sole leadership of the M-26-7, in his letter, País explains to Castro that it was time to develop a "new tactic" since there was no "revolutionary program" in place.<sup>69</sup> País expressed the need to do away with so many leaders, without concentrating the movement under one person. País stated in his letter that "the national leadership will also be composed by the six provincial coordinators."<sup>70</sup> País felt that since the Movement had grown so large, with the Sierra Maestra rebels as a small portion of a bigger organization, it was time to coordinate everyone's responsibility, based on rank and regions of operations.<sup>71</sup>

The letter must have astonished Castro, who did not want to compete with País, but rather wanted País and the urban underground to be subordinate to him and his guerrillas.<sup>72</sup> Making matters more alarming for Castro, País decided to create a national directorate, made-up of thirteen members and Castro's guerrilla group would have only one delegate. To Castro this was unacceptable. At this point Castro knew that he would have to consolidate his power base in order to not lose control, while País, on the other hand, was trying to transition the M-26-7 into a civilian movement where every delegate would have limited control. Rolando E. Bonachea, a former member of the DR underground, who has written many works on the Cuban insurrection believes that País' attempts to make changes to the power structure of the M-26-7 is one of the

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<sup>69</sup> Alvarez, José. *Frank País: Architect of Cuba's Betrayed Revolution*. Boca Raton: Universal Publishers, 2009, 206.

<sup>70</sup> Alvarez, José. *Frank País*, 206.

<sup>71</sup> Bonachea, Ramón and Valdés, Nelson. *Revolutionary Struggle, 1947-1958*, 98.

<sup>72</sup> Alvarez, José. *Frank País*, 210.

main reasons that Castro reached out to Pazos and Chibás to co-sign the MSM.<sup>73</sup> The MSM was made public on July 12, 1957, only five days after the letter from País was delivered, and eighteen days later, País would be shot dead by the Santiago police after a massive hunt was orchestrated by the Chief of Police, Colonel Rafael Salas Cañizares.

#### The Death and Replacement of Frank Pais - July 30, 1957

At this point País was the only insurrectionary left that could compete with Castro for the leadership of the M-26-7 and his letter to Castro clearly shows that he wanted the movement to be coordinated in a more democratic fashion, as well as wanting the rebel army to be subordinate to the underground civilian leadership. It is well known that the Sierra depended on the llano for everything from food, medicine, and clothes, to its arms and ammunition. The guerrillas of the Sierra Maestra could not have survived, had it not been for the continuous support from the urban underground.<sup>74</sup>

A review of the communication between the llano and the Sierra Maestra shows that there had been a high level of tensions between the guerrillas and the urban underground from very early on in the insurrection. Evidence of this is found in Guevara's diaries from May 1957, where he predicted the conflicts between the sierra and the llano. Here Guevara states, "Practically speaking, they were two separate groups, with different tactics and different strategies. The deep rift which in later months would endanger the unity of the Movement had not yet appeared, but we could already see that our concepts were different."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup>Bonachea, Ramón and Valdés, Nelson. *Revolutionary Struggle, 1947-1958*, 99.

<sup>74</sup>Sweig, Julia. *Inside the Cuban Revolution*, 4.

<sup>75</sup>Guevara, Ernesto. *Episodes of the Revolutionary War*, 76.

Although the urban underground was constantly in danger of attacks from the military or police, Castro wanted the public to believe that a major revolution was taking place in the mountains. Nonetheless, it is quite obvious that the M-26-7 guerrilla leadership, such as the Castro brothers and Guevara distrusted the urban underground since they viewed them as competitors for control of their organization, and they let it be known throughout their communications. Guevara was correct in stating that their “concepts were different,” since País was trying to combat Batista’s forces in the cities, while Castro was calling for weapons and ammunition to be given to the mountain rebels. With País and his followers in greater danger, disputes with the Sierra Maestra increased as Castro demanded supplies that could be put to better use in the cities.<sup>76</sup>

By this point in the struggle, País had gained a great deal of popularity was the face of the Anti-Batista movement in Oriente, not Castro. Adding to this, the fact that País was not afraid to be argumentative or confrontational with Castro over the way in which the revolution should be run, he was becoming a hindrance to Castro’s plan for total control. Guevara’s diaries go as far as speaking extremely negatively of the urban fighters, while commending the rebels of the Sierra Maestra. History, however paints a different picture, since it was the rebels in the cities that risked their lives almost daily, and in a letter to Castro, País even jokingly mentions that he wanted “to rest” in the Sierra Maestra since it was getting too dangerous in the llano.<sup>77</sup> So while it verges on being a conspiracy theory, the alleged involvement of Castro and his loyalists in the

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<sup>76</sup>Franqui, Carlos. *Diary of the Cuban Revolution*, 206. In a letter to Fidel Castro, País informs him of the urban underground’s dire need for money and supplies such as weapons and medicine.

<sup>77</sup> Franqui, Carlos. *Diary of the Cuban Revolution*, 209.



death of País warrants further investigation and it is my belief that in sending a letter to Castro concerning the leadership of the movement, País was in fact writing his own death sentence.

The speculation about the connection between Castro and the death of País lies in the involvement of Vilma Espín. Espín was a Castro loyalist that had collaborated with Castro since the attack on the Moncada Barracks, had served as a messenger between the sierra and the llano and was known to be Raúl Castro's lover. Speaking on the death of País, Ramón Bonachea and Nelson Valdés stated, "An informer had told the police where he was hiding. His death brought about an internal crisis with the 26<sup>th</sup> of July, but one of Fidel's pressing problems was over."<sup>78</sup> A former rebel fighter and author of several books on the topic of the Cuban insurrection, Lucas Morán Arce has some fascinating comments on the subject. Although Morán does not openly claim that it was Espín that had betrayed País, he does mention that Espín was one of a very small group of people that knew where País was hiding.<sup>79</sup> Morán goes on to say that Enrique Canto Bory mentions in his autobiography that País had asked him not to tell anyone of his location, 'especially Vilma Espín.'<sup>80</sup> This clearly points to the fact that País himself was leery of Espín's intentions. Morán also mentions that País' own brother, Agustín was convinced that it was Espín that had betrayed País by informing the police on his whereabouts.<sup>81</sup> The Cuban magazine *Bohemia* reported that País had been moving from house to house trying to hide from police Captain Salas Cañizares who was conducting random checks of houses. The fact that

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<sup>78</sup>Bonachea, Ramón and Valdés, Nelson. *Revolutionary Struggle, 1947-1958*, 101.

<sup>79</sup>Morán Arce, Lucas. *La revolución Cubana (1953-1959): Una versión rebelde*. Imprenta Universitaria, Universidad Católica, Ponce, Puerto Rico, 151.

<sup>80</sup> Enrique Canto Bory had been the Treasurer of the July 26 Movement's urban underground and was a trusted companion of Frank País.

<sup>81</sup>Morán Arce, Lucas. *La revolución Cubana*, 151.

Cañizares's found País in the very first house that he checked seems to be more than just a coincidence in light of the aforementioned information.<sup>82</sup>

Another account of the events comes from Armando Hart, who had been one of the M-26-7's earliest militants, and an important leader within the urban revolutionary underground in Havana. Having firsthand knowledge of the events, Hart mentions in his memoir, *Aldabonazo*, that in Espín's own account she had stated that "When I called him [País] later, he was no longer at home and he did not call me, nor did he call the following day – much to my surprise because he used to call as soon as he changed houses so that we could be in contact with him."<sup>83</sup> If País had in fact told Canto not to mention his whereabouts to anyone, specifically naming Espín, and he had not called Espín, as she claims that he normally would, perhaps he was beginning to view Espín as a threat to his security.

It must also be mentioned that after the death of País, the sierra immediately began to dominate the movement with the hopes of ending any previous animosity that had existed between the sierra and the llano by making Castro the sole leaders of both. Two of Castro's closest allies were given positions of power with the urban underground with Espín being named chief of organization for Oriente, while Celia Sánchez became the M-26-7 urban underground's official liaison with the Sierra Maestra.

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<sup>82</sup> Torres Hernández, Lázaro. "Ámbito de Frank País," *Bohemia* (Habana) July 30, 1971, 64-69.

<sup>83</sup> Hart, Armando. *Aldabonazo*, 185.

It is evident in the writings of both Castro and Guevara, concerning the uproar in Oriente over the death of País that they had planned to use the circumstances to their advantage.<sup>84</sup> Lamenting País' death was done openly within a public sphere, but behind closed doors the conversation turned to power politics. An example of this is seen in a letter from Guevara to Castro concerning the urban underground. Guevara mentions himself, and even Raúl Castro as possible replacements for País.<sup>85</sup> The urban underground, with País in charge, seemed to Guevara to be obstacle, rather than an ally.

Guevara had clearly been at odds with País and he used the events of his death and his prestige as momentum to increase the guerrilla's popularity. Guevara states in his diary, "When Frank País was murdered, we lost one of our most valuable fighters, but the people's reaction to the crime showed that additional forces were joining the struggle and the people's fighting spirit had increased."<sup>86</sup> Clearly País' death influenced many civilians that were tiring of being victims of military violence. This allowed both Guevara and Castro to use the death of the beloved País as an opportunity to insist that the people of Cuba support their movement and join the insurrection.

Castro initially made his ideas on the death of País known through a speech on *Radio Rebelde*, the underground radio station in the mountains.<sup>87</sup> The government's constant restrictions of media outlets allowed Radio Rebelde to become a major source of information to

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<sup>84</sup>Franqui, Carlos. *Diary of the Cuban Revolution*, 215. In a letter to Celia Sánchez, Castro states, "The hour has come to demand that everyone do something." He even goes as far as stating, "...we'll force them to do their duty with our fact."

<sup>85</sup>Franqui, Carlos. *Diary of the Cuban Revolution*, 225.

<sup>86</sup>Guevara, Ernesto. *Episodes of the Revolutionary War*, 96.

<sup>87</sup>Radio Rebelde served as a communications network which the rebels used to correspond with their various units, as well as to communicate information to the general public.

a Cuban population that was interested in receiving regular updates on the major events of the insurrection.<sup>88</sup> Castro stated on Radio Rebelde, “After seeing the assassination of Frank País, the most courageous, useful, and extraordinary of all our fighters, what is holding back thousands of Cubans anxious to do something?”<sup>89</sup> Castro needed to emphasize the idea that the guerrilla forces in the Sierra Maestra were the “vanguard” of the revolution, reinforcing the notion that the urban underground subservient to the sierra.<sup>90</sup>

País was murdered and the leadership of the urban underground was replaced by Castro supporters, allowing him to take absolute control of the M-26-7. Even some supporters of País, such as Lester Rodríguez, reluctantly began to participate in Castro’s movement without being fully aware of his agenda. Other members of the urban underground, such as Faustino Pérez (physician), Armando Hart (lawyer), Enrique Oltuski (engineer) and Carlos Franqui (journalist) began to work more directly with the rural guerrillas after the death of País.<sup>91</sup>

Castro’s fight for weapons came to end and with his loyalists controlling the urban centers he immediately demanded that the weapons he desired be sent to the sierra. In a letter to Celia Sánchez, dated August 11, 1957, less than two weeks after the death of País, Castro demands, “All guns, all bullets, and all supplies to the Sierra!”<sup>92</sup> Just three days later, in a second letter to Celia Sánchez, Castro declared, “I insist, as I did in my previous letter, that a

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<sup>88</sup> Broadcast Transcripts of Radio Rebelde, July 1957 – Dec. 1958 (Microfilm collection), Princeton University Library, Microfilm 06154, Box 8-9 of C. Franqui Collection.

<sup>89</sup> Radio Rebelde broadcast on August 1, 1957. Broadcast Transcripts of Radio Rebelde, July 1957 – Dec. 1958. (Microfilm collection), Princeton University Library, Microfilm 06154, Box 8-9 of C. Franqui Collection.

<sup>90</sup> The idea of the guerrilla forces being the “vanguard” of any revolution would later be expanded on by Régis Debray in his text, *Revolution in the Revolution*. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1967 and also in Guevara’s text, *Guerrilla Warfare*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.

<sup>91</sup> Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 82.

<sup>92</sup> Franqui, Carlos. *Diary of the Cuban Revolution*. New York: Viking, 1980, 220.

directive must be given to the Movement right now concerning the war: All weapons, all bullets, and all resources are for the Sierra.” Castro continues, “Finally, you know that with Frank gone, we’ll have to be more directly involved in the work that he carried on so brilliantly.”<sup>93</sup>With Castro’s rebel army firmly established, one of his main goals was to make the Sierra Maestra the base of operations for his struggle, which required desperately needed weapons that País thought would better serve the urban underground. This would enable the M-26-7 to make preparations to come down from the mountains to instigate attacks in order to spread the insurrection from Oriente through to Havana.

Another example in which the M-26-7 guerrillas in mountains were taking advantage of the death of País can be found by once again examining the diaries of Guevara. While mentioning the role of the Sierra Maestra, Guevara states, “The Sierra Maestra is an indestructible bulwark of freedom. It is part of the hearts of our people and it is here that we will know how to do justice to the faith and confidence of our people. The words ‘we will know how’ meant that Fidel and only Fidel knew how.”<sup>94</sup> Castro knew that something had to be done in order for the M-26-7 to focus on the guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra.<sup>95</sup> Guevara makes it clear that “only Fidel knew how,” thus amply implying that no one else would know, or be capable of bringing an end to the struggle. It is also clear in his statement that those in the Sierra Maestra were faithful only to Castro and would only adhere to his commands and no one else had authority to override his strategies as any non-followers were expunged from the core leadership.

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<sup>93</sup>Franqui, Carlos. *Diary of the Cuban Revolution*, 223.

<sup>94</sup>Guevara, Ernesto. *Episodes of the Revolutionary War*, 88.

<sup>95</sup> Franqui, Carlos. *Diary of the Cuban Revolution*, 223.

### Miami Pact – November, 1957 – The Unity Pact

Castro consolidated his leadership to encompass the forces of both the sierra and the llano, an outcome that País was trying to avoid. During this time, several leading members of the exile community were discussing plans of organizing to oust Batista, by unifying the opposition and coordinating armed action against the regime. After several weeks of negotiations an agreement known as the Miami Pact was announced by several opposition groups calling themselves the Cuban Liberation Council, (*Junta de Liberación Cubana*).<sup>96</sup> The Miami Pact intended to form a provisional government and pronounce a provisional president that would direct the country until fair elections could be held. Being that Prío was the main organizer of the Cuban Liberation Council, which was made up of mostly moderates and some left of center members, once again the PSP was not invited to participate.

Felipe Pazos and Léster Rodríguez signed on behalf of the M-26-7, and Castro rebuked them immediately, claiming that they did not have the authority to represent the movement nor to sign any unity agreements without the direct approval of Castro himself. Whether or not Castro had authorized these men to represent the M-26-7 in Miami remains unclear, but his bitterness towards the Cuban Liberation Council is very well documented. In criticizing the Miami Pact, Castro claimed that although it called itself a unity pact, it was actually an attempt by Prío to take over the opposition forces in order to return himself to power.

Castro's commanders also spoke out against the Miami Pact. Raúl Castro called the pact "a trap of *politiquería*" which he stated was confirmed by "the simple fact that while leaders of

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<sup>96</sup> Signers of the Miami pact included: Carlos Prío (Autenticos), Manuel Bisbé (Ortodoxos), Faure Chomón (Student Revolutionary Directorate), Angel Cofiño (Revolutionary Workers Directorate), Lincoln Rodón (Demócratas), and Felipe Pazos & Léster Rodríguez (July 26 Movement).

the organizations signing the agreement are abroad carrying out an imaginary revolution, the leaders of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July are in Cuba making a real revolution.”<sup>97</sup> Guevara went even further by accusing Pazos and Rodríguez of treason.<sup>98</sup> Speaking on the signing of the Miami Pact by Pazos, Guevara stated that, “He appointed himself delegate of the M-26-7 in Miami, and he was on the verge of being appointed interim president of the Republic. Through this maneuver, Prío made sure the he had a faithful man leading the provisional government.”<sup>99</sup>

The M-26-7 was in constant contact with Llerena, the Chairman of the US-based July 26<sup>th</sup> Movement Committee in Exile. One day prior to the release of the Miami Pact, in a letter to Llerena, Castro had stated, “*Politiquería* has done much harm in Cuba and will do so again outside of Cuba.”<sup>100</sup> But we have succeeded in sending *politiquería* into exile, and that is at least one step forward.”<sup>101</sup> By labeling other opposition groups as the same *politiquería* that Cuba had endured for decades, Castro was able to gain the support from Cubans that wanted to see an end to the political corruption and had high hopes for a more democratic Cuba. Since the Miami Pact clearly went against the MSM, specifically in naming a different provisional president than the one that Castro had chosen in Urrutia, Castro was compelled to reply. In condemning the Miami Pact, Castro also stated that if a provisional government was named, after the fall of Batista without his approval, the M-26-7 would continue “its struggle for liberation.”<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>97</sup>Sweig, Julia. *Inside the Cuban Revolution*, 90.

<sup>98</sup> Sweig, Julia. *Inside the Cuban Revolution*, 93.

<sup>99</sup> Guevara, Ernesto. *Episodes of the Revolutionary War*, 86.

<sup>100</sup>The term *politiquería* refers to unethical or self-serving political maneuvering.

<sup>101</sup> Sweig, Julia. *Inside the Cuban Revolution*, 72.

<sup>102</sup>Hart, Armando. *Aldabonazo*, 216.

Also detrimental to Castro's hopes for power, the Miami Pact states that the M-26-7 rebels would be incorporated into the Cuban army. In response to this Castro stated, "the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement claims for itself the function of maintaining public order and reorganizing the armed forces of the Republic."<sup>103</sup> As we shall see, by reorganizing the armed forces, what Castro meant was that the military would become subordinate to the M-26-7. Also, due to the fact that the M-26-7 was the strongest insurrectional force on the island numbering several hundred men, Castro claimed that he was in fact the leader of both the political and military roles of the opposition forces.<sup>104</sup>

Supporting the idea that Castro was the insurrection's true leader, Hart stated, "We thought that the public formulation of our reputation should be made by Fidel" thus justifying Castro's disgruntled response towards the ideas of the Miami Pact.<sup>105</sup> Guevara would add, "We must emphasize that the enemy broke the pact expressed in the manifesto when they refused to acknowledge the authority of the Sierra Maestra and made an attempt to shackle the future revolutionary government."<sup>106</sup> Here Guevara is referring to Pazos, labeling him as "the enemy" and solidifying his claims that the Miami Pact was only an attempt by Prío to return to power. After refuting the exiles in Miami, Castro had to concern himself with the other guerrilla groups that were in fact making real revolution in Cuba, the splintered guerrilla groups of the DR.

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<sup>103</sup>Bonachea, Ramón E and Valdés, Nelson P. *Revolutionary Struggle, 1947-1958*, 104.

<sup>104</sup> Franqui, Carlos. *Diary of the Cuban Revolution*, 157.

<sup>105</sup> Hart, Armando. *Aldabonazo*, 196

<sup>106</sup> Guevara, Ernesto. *Episodes of the Revolutionary War*, 88.



### Escambray y Guerrillas

After the death of Echeverría, the few remaining leaders of the DR had gone into exile in order to reorganize and prepare for guerrilla operations under the direction of Faure Chomón.<sup>107</sup> A short time later the DR leadership found that they could not overcome their differences over strategy and leadership and this caused them to split into two separate and opposing groups. One group under the direction of Chomón, had decided to continue with Echeverría's strategy of attacking at the top, and planned on moving the group to Havana in order to organize another assassination plot. Chomón and his men left the mountains and offered the M-26-7 a cache of weapons in return for representation in the leadership of the struggle. Castro was not willing to share the leadership of the movement and Chomón's offer of weapons was simply ignored.<sup>108</sup>

The other group, led by Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo and Armando Fleites, which had been influenced by Castro's successes in the Sierra Maestra, decided to continue guerrilla warfare in the Escambray Mountains. By the end of 1958, Menoyo and Fleites had released the Manifesto of the Escambray, pronouncing the establishment of their own guerrilla unit, the Second Front of the Escambray which was numbering approximately one thousand men.<sup>109</sup> The new front was a direct challenge to Castro's claim of guerrilla dominance on the island. Two of the reasons that it posed a threat was because their base of operations was in Las Villas province, which is approximately 180 miles from Havana, whereas Castro's base in Oriente was more than twice that distance. Castro feared that should Batista fall suddenly, Menoyo and Fleites's guerrillas

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<sup>107</sup>Suchlicki, Jamie. *University Students and Revolution in Cuba, 1920-1968*. University of Miami Press, 1969, 84.

<sup>108</sup>Sweig, Julia. *Inside the Cuban Revolution*, 130.

<sup>109</sup>Suchlicki, Jamie. *University Students and Revolution in Cuba*, 86.

would be able to reach Havana faster than the M-26-7. The second reason was that they were being funded by Prío, a man that Castro saw as his competition for power. Understanding the popularity and visibility of the Escambray guerrillas, Castro knew that they would have to be dealt with promptly in order to avoid competition once Batista was defeated. The animosity that the two groups held for each other became more obvious as Castro and his men prepared for the national strike.

#### The Total War Against the Tyranny Manifesto – March 12, 1958

On March 12, 1958 Castro released the Total War against Tyranny Manifesto. This manifesto was released a mere four weeks before the declaration of the general strike, and it called on the Cuban military and the students to support a national strike.<sup>110</sup> The Manifesto also affirmed that the strike would be backed by armed support from Castro's rebels, yet as the evidence shows, that this was not the case. Although Castro spoke about the strike as if it were intended to be one of the final steps in removing Batista from power, the events of April 9, 1958, turned out to be a complete failure. Julia Sweig, author of *Inside the Cuban Revolution* maintains that the failure of the strike was not what Castro had intended, yet she fails to provide evidence and the events that unfolded tell a different story. While Sweig claims that the urban underground were making decisions concerning the details of the strike, the evidence proves that the opposite was the case, and that the major decisions were coming from the Sierra Maestra.<sup>111</sup> She also claims that Eusebio Mujal, of the Confederations of Cuban Workers (CTC) was involved in the planning of the strike, yet there is no evidence to support that claim, and even

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<sup>110</sup>See Appendix D: Total War against the Tyranny Manifesto. See specifically Point # 13, to the students, and Point # 17, to the military.

<sup>111</sup> Sweig, Julia. *Inside the Cuban Revolution*, 9.

Castro expected that the CTC would not assist in the strike precisely because the pro-Batista Mujal was forbidding it.<sup>112</sup> The PSP had intentions to participate, however the urban underground rejected their request to participate.<sup>113</sup>

The call to strike was announced at the last moment, with the general public completely unaware of the date or time when it was supposed to take place. The announcement was made at 11:00 am, a time when the workers generally would not be listening to the radio.<sup>114</sup> Since the idea for a general strike had been talked about since Castro's time in Mexico, one is led to believe that a person as meticulous to detail as Castro would have been more organized. The fact that the strike was not better organized and that Castro made such a pathetic effort at announcing an event that was deemed so critical since the very beginning of the insurrection, is strong evidence that the strike had been orchestrated to fail.

According to the US Ambassador Smith, as soon as the DR became aware that a strike was being coordinated, they contacted Castro to inform him that once the strike was successful they would be appointing a new Mayor, Chief of Police and other government appointments in Havana.<sup>115</sup> Castro's response to the DR was a letter stating that no one had the authority to make any government appointments other than him. Upon hearing this, the DR made it clear that if they were not involved in the process of making political appointments, they would not support

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<sup>112</sup>Sweig, Julia. *Inside the Cuban Revolution*, 52.

<sup>113</sup>Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 206-207.

<sup>114</sup>Radio Rebelde broadcast on April 9, 1958. Broadcast Transcripts of Radio Rebelde, July 1957 – Dec. 1958. (Microfilm collection), Princeton University Library, Microfilm 06154, Box 8-9 of C. Franqui Collection. "Huelga, huelga, huelga. Todos a la Huelga. Todos a la calle, Pueblo de Cuba: ya sonó la hora." The call to strike was announced for several consecutive days.

<sup>115</sup>Smith, Earl E.T. *The Fourth Floor: An Account of the Castro Communist Revolution*. New York: Random House, 1962, 105.

the strike. Ambassador Smith also stated, “If Castro had been willing to let the Directorio Revolucionario name the Mayor and other officials in the city, they would have actively cooperated and the results might have been different.”<sup>116</sup> As it was, Castro ignored the opportunity to receive aid from the DR, in light of the fact that they had a great presence in the cities and was offering support.

Castro was aware that in order for the strike to succeed, the M-26-7 needed support from the unions and the communists.<sup>117</sup> Prior to announcing the strike, Castro knew that the students and the labor movements would not strike.<sup>118</sup> On March 28 Castro wrote a statement from the Sierra Maestra stating that all opposition groups, including the Communists should support the strike and his statement was ultimately ignored.<sup>119</sup> It is also suspicious is that although the general public was uninformed about the events surrounding the strike, Batista and his men were aware that it was taking place on April 9. Ray Brennan, a journalist for the Chicago Sun-Times, who an eye-witness to the events, acknowledged that “Reports on the scene agreed later that the Batista government probably had advance information.”<sup>120</sup> It is probable that Batista was aware of the call to strike due to the overwhelming amount of police officers and military soldiers that he had on the scene on the day of the strike had been set.<sup>121</sup> The general strike was supposed to be organized clandestinely and only a handful of Castro’s supporters were aware of the details,

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<sup>116</sup>Smith, Earl E.T. *The Fourth Floor*, 127.

<sup>117</sup> Pérez, Faustino. Bohemia, “El 9 de abril de 1958” (April 19, 1959), 111-112. Here Pérez states that the M-26-7 was well aware that the workers would not strike without armed support.

<sup>118</sup> Sweig, Julia. *Inside the Cuban Revolution*, 9. Sweig states that Castro had very limited ties to organized labor and could not count on them for support.

<sup>119</sup> Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 206.

<sup>120</sup> Brennan, Ray. *Castro, Cuba, and Justice*, 84.

<sup>121</sup> Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 208. In his text, Thomas reports that only three policemen are killed, yet eighty revolutionaries are shot.

yet Batista's soldiers were well prepared.<sup>122</sup> Castro's men were the only ones that had any precise knowledge of the date and time that the strike would be called.

Subsequently when the strike occurred, the armed resistance never materialized. Castro himself stated in the Total War against the Tyranny Manifesto that not only would armed support be available, but also that "Armed action will be charged to the rebel forces, the militias of the 26th of July Movement..."<sup>123</sup> Here Castro was very clear, yet neither of these factions backed the strike. Neither Castro nor anyone from the rebel forces took the blame for the failure of the strike and in the end only two people were blamed, Faustino Pérez and David Salvador.

When Argentine journalist Jorge Ricardo Masetti interviewed Pérez on the subject of the failed strike, Pérez stated, "...for the most part, the majority of the rebels did not have confidence in its success."<sup>124</sup> Pérez makes it clear that when he referred to "the majority of the rebels" he specifically meant those in the highest positions. Add to this the fact that after the failure of the strike, in an interview with Brennan, Castro stated, "The revolution will only be won when we defeat the Batista army in combat."<sup>125</sup> Here Castro is once again making the point that the only way to defeat Batista is to support the insurgency. At the same time Castro is taking no responsibility for the outcome of the strike, but rather turning the events to his favor. According to Urrutia, the strike occurred at a time when the rebel army was stronger than the

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<sup>122</sup>Brennan, Ray. *Castro, Cuba, and Justice*, 215

<sup>123</sup>See Appendix D: Total War against the Tyranny Manifesto, point # 10.

<sup>124</sup>Masetti, Jorge. *Los que luchan y los que lloran: el Fidel Castro que yo vi*. Buenos Aires: Editorial Freeland, 1958, 91.

<sup>125</sup> Brennan, Ray. *Castro, Cuba, and Justice*, 237.

urban underground.<sup>126</sup> In the end, what the general strike did was put an end to the conflict between the urban underground and the rural guerrillas, allowing Castro to take power away from the *llano* and concentrating all efforts towards his guerrilla army. Castro made this clear in a meeting he held at los Altos de Mompié.

#### Mompié Meeting – May 3, 1958

On May 3, 1958 Castro organized a meeting at a peasant's hut in the area known as *los Altos de Mompié*, under the guise of having to discuss the consequences of the failure of the general strike. In actuality, what came to be known as the Mompié meeting was for Castro, a major step in ensuring that the opposition forces would become subordinate to the M-26-7, thus taking steps at becoming the supreme leader of the anti-Batista movement. At this point it was no longer important if members of other groups were not willing to unite with the M-26-7, since most of them had either been eliminated, or had lost any type of significant power. At Mompié Castro made it clear that if the struggle were to continue and ultimately succeed, it would only be under his leadership.

Luis Buch, a leading member of the urban underground and soon to be appointed head of public relation in Caracas, stated that the main argument made at the Mompié meeting, was, "...to unify the July 26 Movement under a single leadership exercised by an executive committee located in the Sierra, and whose general secretary would be Fidel."<sup>127</sup> This also allowed Castro to shift focus from cities such as Havana and Santiago, which lost much of their

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<sup>126</sup> Urrutia Lleó, Manuel. *Fidel Castro and Company, Inc.: Communist Tyranny in Cuba*. New York, NY: Praeger Press, 1964, 22.

<sup>127</sup>Hart, Armando. *Aldabonazo*, 283.

impact after the failed strike, to the M-26-7 headquarters in the Sierra Maestra. At the meeting, Castro was named General Secretary of the Executive Committee and the M-26-7 had successfully presented itself as the largest and most powerful force remaining, and the only group that remained that was capable of removing Batista from power. It is interesting to note that the majority of those participating in the meeting were either some of Castro's most faithful supporters, or opposition members that had become subordinate to his authority.<sup>128</sup> Since Castro strategically surrounded himself strictly with people that were loyalists, no one at the Mompié meeting contested his leadership, which allowed him to effectively replace all the leaders in the major cities with members from the M-26-7 from the Sierra Maestra, making sure that the movement was now completely under his command.<sup>129</sup>

The strike and how quickly it was put down allowed Castro to successfully strengthen his position and overshadow those of the other opposition groups. The increase in violence by the police, during and after the strike, also helped Castro as the rise in sympathy for the many young people that became victims to the strike's aftermath. This allowed Castro to oppose a democratic solution by continuing to place blame on the government for the violence and he warned the Cuban citizens of what would happen if the country was to once again be run by the same old politicians that had brought it to this point.<sup>130</sup> Also, by blaming the strike's failure on Pérez and Salvador, Castro discreetly removed any blame from the M-26-7. With the blame clearly placed on someone else, Castro never felt the need to explain his misguided call for a national strike.

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<sup>128</sup>The individuals that attended the meeting included Ernesto Guevara, Faustino Pérez, Rene Ramos Latour, Vilma Espin, Celia Sánchez, Marcelo Fernandez, Antonio Torres, Haydée Santamaria, David Salvador and Armando Hart.

<sup>129</sup>*Revolución*. (Habana), April 9, 1962, 11.

<sup>130</sup> Radio Rebelde broadcast on April 12-13. *Broadcast Transcripts of Radio Rebelde, July 1957 – Dec. 1958*. (Microfilm collection), Princeton University Library, Microfilm 06154, Box 8-9 of C. Franqui Collection.

He also fails to mention that although the Total War against the Tyranny Manifesto stated that the guerrillas would support the strike; they did not help at all.<sup>131</sup>

The Mompié meeting had turned out to be a cleansing of leadership. After the meeting Castro sent Haydée Santamaria to the United States to take charge of the M-26-7 abroad.<sup>132</sup> On August 1958, just three months after Santamaria's arrival in Miami, fully aware that he had lost all authority to Santamaria, Llerena resigned from his position.<sup>133</sup> Castro's sending of Santamaria abroad was a strategic power move which allowed him to use a loyal supporter in order to safeguard control of the movement in exile, therefore successfully consolidating his power with the opposition forces in Cuba as well as with those abroad.

By consolidating power, with a focus on the M-26-7 in the Sierra Maestra, Castro effectively made himself one of the most important figures in the anti-Batista movement. Continuing to push the idea that armed insurrection was the only way to triumph against Batista, many began to see the M-26-7 as the only force capable of defeating Batista. These factors, under the guise of yet another call for unity, prepared the way for the agreements made in the Caracas Pact, which would begin to place most major decision making in Castro's hands. Castro's path to power was starting to clear and he would begin to set his sights on Havana.

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<sup>131</sup>See Appendix D: Total War against the Tyranny Manifesto. Point #2 - "That the strategy of the final blow is based on the general revolutionary strike, to be seconded by military action."

<sup>132</sup> Hart, Armando. *Aldabonazo*, 261.

<sup>133</sup>"Llerena Leaves Castro Unit Here: Cuban Exile Resigns as Head of Rebel Committee – New Leaders Named." *The New York Times*, August 4, 1958.



### CHAPTER 3: BECOMING *EL LIDER MAXIMO*

The Caracas Pact and the Pedrero Pact were arranged during the second half of 1958 and both served to strengthen Castro's position. These pacts also paved the way for the M-26-7 to move towards Havana and allowed Castro to gain a key leadership role in a post-Batista Cuba. As the events of the insurrection continued to unfold, Castro took advantage of any opportunity to reinforce his position of leadership beyond control of the M-26-7. With this in mind, Castro was aware that he needed to gain, not only greater influence amongst the other anti-Batista groups but also their acceptance and respect. In order to accomplish this goal, Castro and his followers took deliberate actions to secure a victory for themselves. This would ensure that once Batista was defeated, Castro's position of leadership on the island would be unquestionable.

#### Operación Verano – May 14 through August 8, 1958

Batista was not going to give up his power, even with mounting pressure from the United States. In a final attempt to defeat Castro and the M-26-7 guerrillas, Batista launched the insurrection's largest military offensive on May 14, 1958. Batista sent approximately 11,000 soldiers to Oriente in what was called *Operación Verano*, (Operation Summer).<sup>134</sup> Its objective was to cut off supplies and reinforcements to the Sierra Maestra in order to isolate the M-26-7 and prepare for a final assault of the rebels' mountain headquarters. As soon as the operation began, Castro continued his propaganda campaign by reporting the fighting on Radio Rebelde with exaggerated claims of rebel victories in order to shift momentum towards the M-26-7.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup>Bigart, Homer. "Batista's Drive to Crush Rebels called Failure." *The New York Times*, July 2, 1958, 1.

<sup>135</sup> Radio Rebelde broadcast on May – August 1958. *Broadcast Transcripts of Radio Rebelde, July 1957 – Dec. 1958*. (Microfilm collection), Princeton University Library, Microfilm 06154, Box 8-9 of C. Franqui Collection.

Instead of being defeated, the M-26-7 survived the ordeal, protected the Sierra Maestra and gained the respect of many Cuban citizens in the process.<sup>136</sup> The goal of Operation Summer was to destroy the M-26-7, yet it actually served to make the Sierra Maestra a symbol of resistance as many Cubans were led to believe that a guerrilla army could defeat a military army.<sup>137</sup> The failure of Operation Summer only added to the reputation of the M-26-7 guerrillas and many soldiers deserted Batista and joined the rebels in the Sierra or simply refused to fight and returned to their homes.

As the struggle between the rebels and the military continued in the mountains, Batista once again tried to schedule elections in order to give the impression that he was looking for a democratic solution to the Cuban crisis. Castro responded on Radio Rebelde, stating that, "...the people are not interested in Batista's declarations because everyone knows that they are false and ill-intended."<sup>138</sup> The elections that were scheduled for June 1958 were eventually postponed until November of that year due to the continuous acts of terrorism orchestrated by the M-26-7 in attempts to have the elections canceled all together.

#### Caracas Pact – July 20, 1958<sup>139</sup>

As Operation Summer was taking place, a majority of the opposition groups came together in Caracas in mid-July 1958 to produce yet another unity agreement. Having authorized

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<sup>136</sup>Sweig, Julia. *Inside the Cuban Revolution*, 173.

<sup>137</sup>Bonachea, Ramón L. and San Martín, Marta. *The Cuban Insurrection*, 257.

<sup>138</sup> Radio Rebelde broadcast on May 28, 1958. Broadcast Transcripts of Radio Rebelde, July 1957 – Dec. 1958. (Microfilm collection), Princeton University Library, Microfilm 06154, Box 8-9 of C. Franqui Collection. "Al pueblo no le interesan las declaraciones de Batista, porque todo el mundo sabe que son falsas y mal intencionadas."

<sup>139</sup>The Pact of Caracas was signed by the following: Fidel Castro, M-26-7; Carlos Prío Socarrás, Organización Auténtica; E. Rodríguez Loeche, DR; David Salvador, Orlando Blanco, José M. Aguilera, Ángel Cofiño, Workers Union; Manuel A. de Varona, Auténtico Revolutionary Party; Lincoln Rodón, Democratic Party; José Puente y Omar Fernández,

the pact, Castro proceeded to read it in full over Radio Rebelde on July 20, 1958.<sup>140</sup> Agreeing to put all prior disagreements and tensions aside, the various organizations, of which all opposition groups were represented with the exception of the PSP, created a united front which they called the Civic Revolutionary Democratic Front.<sup>141</sup> The Caracas Pact officially gave Castro the title of the Commander-in-Chief of all the guerrilla forces, which gave him command of the revolutionary armed forces and exclusive rights to uphold order after the ousting of Batista.<sup>142</sup>

Since all of the attending groups were anti-communist, the PSP did not participate in the meeting in Caracas although it was known that the M-26-7 had socialist sympathizers. Also not included in the Caracas Pact was Grau San Martín and Márquez-Sterling, who had still hoped that the situation in Cuba could be fixed through democratic elections. Unlike the circumstances surrounding the signing of the Miami Pact, the Caracas group was now willing to accept that guerrilla warfare was the most viable option for defeating Batista. The fact that Castro and the M-26-7 had faced Batista's military attack on the Sierra Maestra during Operation Summer only reinforced that idea.

The Caracas Pact included several points that had been dealt with in the other manifestos. For example, similar to the Miami Pact, it mentioned the formation of a provisional government that would hold power until fair elections could be held, and included a promise to return Cuba to the Constitution of 1940. It also reiterated Castro's previous warnings to the Cuban military

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University Students Federation; Capt. Gabino Rodríguez Villaverde, a former Army officer; Justo Carrillo Hernández, Montecristi Group; Angel María Santos Buch, Civic Resistance Movement; and José Miró Cardona, Coordinator-Secretary General.

<sup>140</sup>Radio Rebelde broadcast on July 20, 1958. *Broadcast Transcripts of Radio Rebelde, July 1957 – Dec. 1958*. (Microfilm collection), Princeton University Library, Microfilm 06154, Box 8-9 of C. Franqui Collection.

<sup>141</sup> See Appendix G: The Pact of Caracas.

<sup>142</sup>Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 221.

to stop supporting Batista.<sup>143</sup> Although these items had been common in previous communications, the Caracas Pact was a major victory for Castro for several reasons. One of the most important reasons was that all of the opposition groups in Caracas agreed to oppose the electoral process as a means to end the insurgency.<sup>144</sup> Avoiding elections assured Castro that the insurrection would continue until Batista was defeated without the threat of another government being installed.

Appointing of Castro as the Commander-in-Chief of the revolutionary armed forces insured that the M-26-7 would take control of the military after the fall of Batista.<sup>145</sup> This is important because the person that controls the military controls the country in case of a civilian power vacuum. Much of Cuba's power came from Camp Columbia, thus in securing military control, the Caracas Pact unintentionally enforced Castro's ambition for power. This all worked in Castro's favor since one of his primary goals since the beginning of the insurrection was to demonstrate that only his guerrilla force could secure a victory for the opposition, solidifying his role as the military leader of all the opposition forces and taking control of the post-Batista military was without question, a step in that direction.

Also important to this goal, the Caracas Pact agreed that Castro's hand-picked candidate, Manuel Urrutia, would serve as the provisional president once the insurrection was over, effectively ending the debate over the provisional government with the DR.<sup>146</sup> Castro claimed to

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<sup>143</sup> See Appendix G: The Pact of Caracas. "To our soldiers, we say that the moment has arrived to deny their support to the tyranny."

<sup>144</sup> See Appendix G: The Pact of Caracas. Although this is not directly stated in the pact, it was agreed upon by the signing members in Caracas.

<sup>145</sup> See Appendix G: The Pact of Caracas.

<sup>146</sup> Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 221. Although the Pact of Caracas does not state that Urrutia would be the provisional president, the opposition forces in Venezuela agreed to this.

have picked Urrutia as provisional president because he had proven himself to be a man of honor. Castro claimed that Urrutia had proven his integrity when he had declared members of the M-26-7 not guilty for their involvement in the *Granma* landing and other violent anti-Batista acts, since, as Urrutia had stated, they were defending their constitutional rights in taking up arms against Batista's unconstitutional government.<sup>147</sup> It is more likely that Castro chose Urrutia because he lacked any political experience and appeared to be a person that could easily be controlled. It was also important that Urrutia was a moderate who had served 31 years as a judge, since putting him at the head of the provisional government would allow Castro to counter the continuing allegations that he was a radical or a communist.<sup>148</sup> Up to this point Castro had never meet Urrutia, but he was well aware that he was a civil servant with no political experience or any serious political aspirations.<sup>149</sup> In choosing Urrutia, Castro was laying the foundations for a power grab once Batista was removed from office. The Prime Minister held more power than the president, and Urrutia would appointment Castro to this position just a few weeks into his presidency.

As Batista's rescheduled elections approached, Castro declared what he called Law No. 2 from the Sierra Maestra, stating that participation in the elections would be considered an act of betrayal. Law No. 2 stated that anyone that was detained by the M-26-7 for trying to participate in the elections would be executed on the spot.<sup>150</sup> As the electoral race moved forward most of the candidates dropped out of the race with the exception of Andrés

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<sup>147</sup>Dorschner, John and Fabrico, Roberto. *The Winds of December*. New York Coward, McCann &Geoghegan, 1980, 110.

<sup>148</sup> Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 158.

<sup>149</sup> Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 188.

<sup>150</sup>Bonachea, Ramón L. and San Martín, Marta. *The Cuban Insurrection, 1952-1959*, 289.

RiveroAgüero. Agüero was a close friend of Batista and the candidate which he had supported in the elections. It was widely held that elections could not be conducted while Batista was in power, and Agüero's uncontested victory supported that idea. Since Agüero was Batista's chosen successor, and he ran unopposed, the events surrounding the elections left the majority of Cubans disappointed with its results. Other candidates for the presidency, such as Carlos Márquez Sterling, proclaimed that the whole process was a fraud in order to give the presidency to Batista's candidate.<sup>151</sup> The fiasco of the bogus elections only added to the negative opinions already affecting Batista, yet he refused to give up power. Even his greatest ally, the United States were encouraging a political power shift in order to avoid the M-26-7 from taking power, but no one could convince Batista to back down.<sup>152</sup>

#### Pedrero Pact – December 1, 1958

Another effect of the failure of Operation Summer was that it left the Batista's army in disarray, which gave the M-26-7 the opportunity to expand its forces in hopes of making a final push towards Santiago and Havana. In an attempt to split the country in two, Castro commanded two of his most loyal commanders, Guevara and Cienfuegos to head west.<sup>153</sup> Castro hoped that by taking control of Las Villas, the M-26-7 could effectively stop Batista from sending any supplies or reinforcements from Havana, thus allowing Castro to control all of Oriente Province. The two main objectives that he gave to Cienfuegos and Guevara upon entering Las Villas was

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<sup>151</sup>Bonachea, Ramón L. and San Martín, Marta. *The Cuban Insurrection, 1952-1959*, 289.

<sup>152</sup>Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 227.

<sup>153</sup>Franqui, Carlos. *El Libro de los doce*. Mexico: Ediciones Era, 1966, 174. In his text, Franqui takes the story directly from the campaign log of Camilo Cienfuegos.

to broaden the reach and influence of the M-26-7 across the country, and to take control of the region by working out a deal with the DR and the Second Front of the Escambray.<sup>154</sup>

In a letter to Guevara, Castro stated that the “situation” with the Second Front of the Escambray was one of his most important responsibilities that he would have to deal with in Las Villas.<sup>155</sup> Since Batista’s military had become demoralized, Castro feared that the Escambray guerrillas had gained too much power in Las Villas province. The Second Front of the Escambray had been operating in the area for over one year, had established support with the nearby cities, and was also receiving financial support from Prío. The fact that the Second Front of the Escambray had more visibility in the area than the M-26-7, particularly worried Castro since they were much closer to Havana should Batista’s dictatorship suddenly collapse. Since the Second Front was receiving support from Prío, who was determined to return to power, Castro knew that it was necessary to either get rid of them or to subordinate them to the M-26-7 leadership.

Having arrived in Las Villas province, one of the first things that Guevara did was to coordinate the Pedrero Pact with Faure Chomón of the DR. The pact called for the unity of all the revolutionary forces in Las Villas province; however the Second Front of the Escambray chose not to take part in the agreement in large part due to their disagreements with Chomón and the DR.<sup>156</sup> Although the DR had maintained a strong stance on working independently of other groups, the M-26-7’s victory during Operation Summer, and their strong standing during the

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<sup>154</sup>Dorschner, John and Fabrico, Roberto. *The Winds of December*, 179.

<sup>155</sup>Dorschner, John and Fabrico, Roberto. *The Winds of December*, 179.

<sup>156</sup>Chomón, Faure. “Cuando el Che llevo al Escambray.” *Bohemia*, May 15 1969, 17.

unity pact in Caracas, was enough for them to reconsider.<sup>157</sup> Although the pact called for unity, it was clear that there would only be one leader in Las Villas and that would be Guevara.<sup>158</sup> Possibly fearing that the M-26-7 would be successful in defeating Batista, the DR may have chosen the unity agreement of the Pedrero Pact in hopes of gaining some political power in the post-Batista government. The PSP also had a small armed group in Las Villas and the importance of taking the city overrode any apprehensions that the groups previously held towards the communists, therefore in the Pedrero Pact, all these groups agreed to fight side by side. With the aid of the DR and the PSP, the forces of Guevara and Cienfuegos soon began to defeat numerous areas within Las Villas province, rapidly expanding the influences of the insurrectionary forces.

In late December 1958 the M-26-7 unit commanded by Guevara, consisting of approximately 300 men, attacked the city of Santa Clara with the support of many of the city's residents.<sup>159</sup> Although Guevara's men were outnumbered and outgunned, by the time of the assault on Santa Clara, most of Batista's army lacked the will to continue to fight what was rapidly becoming a losing battle. Although other anti-Batista groups had been in the area far longer, Guevara was the first to launch attacks in the Escambray and this made him an authority figure in the eyes of the citizens of Las Villas.<sup>160</sup> The rebel forces continued to fight the diminishing Batista forces for the next two days until they had successfully taken control of Santa Clara.

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<sup>157</sup>Suchlicki, Jamie. *University Students and Revolution in Cuba*, 86.

<sup>158</sup>Franqui, Carlos. *Diary of the Cuban Revolution*, 417.

<sup>159</sup>Hart, Armando. *Aldabonazo*, 328.

<sup>160</sup>Anderson, Jon Lee. *Che: A Revolutionary Life*. New York: Grove Press, 1997, 336.



The victory at Santa Clara was significant in that the rebels successfully split the island in half made it even difficult for the Batista's army to transport weapons and reinforcements into Santiago. In anticipation of a rebel victory, in a letter to Guevara, Castro wrote, "It is supremely important that the advance towards Matanzas and Havana be carried out exclusively by the 26<sup>th</sup> of July forces."<sup>161</sup> Batista had not yet been defeated and Castro was already planning for a takeover of Havana, being cautious that no other anti-Batista groups get in its way. The eventual fall of Santa Clara into the hands of the rebels made clear to Batista what many of his allies had been telling him for months; it was no longer possible for him to hold power in Cuba and it was time for him to flee.<sup>162</sup>

#### The Struggle for Leadership in Havana – M-26-7 vs. DR

With the influx of Cuban citizens joining the insurrectional forces after the victory at Santa Clara and the numerous military desertions, on January 1, 1959 Batista fled Cuba.<sup>163</sup> As the general public rejoiced, the struggle for power between the M-26-7 and the DR began to reach its climax. Although Batista's quick exit out of Cuba was supposed to put an end to the fighting, the days following his departure were a struggle for power as the opposition groups tried to maintain their relevance in light of Castro's parade across the country, culminating in his triumphant entrance into Havana on January 8.

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<sup>161</sup>Franqui, Carlos. *Diary of the Cuban Revolution*, 471. The letter also stated that, "Camilo's column should be in the lead... if we don't want the weapons from Camp Columbia to be distributed among the various groups, which would present a very serious problem in the future."

<sup>162</sup>Castro, Fidel. *Che: A Memoir*. Melbourne, Australia: Ocean Press, 1994, 149.

<sup>163</sup>Phillips, R. Hart. "Castro Moving to take Power; Army Halts Fire." *The New York Times*, Jan. 2, 1959, 1.

An eye-witness to the events, U.S. Ambassador Smith described the scene after Batista left on January 1, 1959 as follows: “It was not until the middle of the day that crowds began to gather in the streets of Havana. By that time, the troops of the Directorio Revolucionario were patrolling the streets in jeeps and in commandeered automobiles.”<sup>164</sup> Well aware that Castro and his men were about to claim a victory in Havana, members of the DR occupied the Presidential Palace, refusing to turn it over to the July 26 Movement.<sup>165</sup> The DR’s disagreement with Castro’s self-imposed authority was clear. The Caracas Pact granted Castro power over the military but it was becoming evident that Castro wanted total control of the country. Chomón even complained that Castro had set up a provisional government in Santiago without consulting any of the other revolutionary groups that had also struggled against Batista.<sup>166</sup> Refusing to leave, on January 4 the M-26-7 had to formally appeal to the DR to vacate the presidential Palace in order to allow Urrutia to take charge as the provisional president. Castro and the M-26-7 were clearly trying to take control of Havana and claiming victory for themselves.<sup>167</sup> Although they were openly dissatisfied with the events, the DR eventually gave in to the request, but with the knowledge that Castro was not willing to share the triumph of Batista’s defeat, they soon began to accumulate weapons and ammunition.<sup>168</sup>

In Castro’s first speech to the nation of Cuba, delivered just seven days after these events took place, he stated, “I tell you that there are members of certain revolutionary organizations

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<sup>164</sup> Smith, Earl E.T. *The Fourth Floor*, 189.

<sup>165</sup> Geyer, Georgie Anne. *Guerrilla Prince: The Untold Story of Fidel Castro*. Kansas City: Andrews and McMeel, 1993, 207.

<sup>166</sup> Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 250.

<sup>167</sup> Matthews, Herbert. “Havana Swarms with Rebel Units; City an Armed Camp.” *New York Times*, January 3, 1959, 1, 3. The very first sentence of the article demonstrates the growing popularity of the M-26-7: “This will be known as the day the rebel 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement took Havana.”

<sup>168</sup> Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 250

who are smuggling and storing arms.”<sup>169</sup> The revolutionaries that Castro spoke of were the DR, which were not pleased with Castro taking on the role of the sole leader of the revolution. The rift between the M-26-7 and the DR had become so strenuous during these crucial days that the DR procured weapons from an army barracks in an attempt to arm themselves for an attack against Castro and his newly formed government.<sup>170</sup> Castro mentions the theft of the weapons during his January 9<sup>th</sup> speech, stating: “Yet I tell you here and now that two days ago elements of certain organizations broke into the San Antonio barracks, which are under the jurisdiction of Commander Camilo Cienfuegos and also under my jurisdiction as commander in chief of the armed forces, and carried away 500 small arms, 16 machine guns, and 80,000 cartridges.”<sup>171</sup>

During that speech Castro spoke of the new era that Cuba was entering and thanked all the supporters of the M-26-7. In the process Castro effectively ended the fighting between the DR and the M-26-7 by making it apparent that no other armed movements were necessary since, as he put it, “the people of Cuba had spoken.”<sup>172</sup> Castro mentioned, “...the popular sympathy and almost unanimous support of the Cuban youth that the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement enjoyed” and he argued that there was no need for any other movement.<sup>173</sup> With the DR still holding positions throughout Havana, as well as in Las Villas, Castro pleaded to the mothers to take their son’s weapons away and stated, “The time to fight is over. What we need is unity.”<sup>174</sup> Although

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<sup>169</sup> The full text of this speech available at: <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1959/19590109.html>

<sup>170</sup> Geyer, Georgie Anne. *Guerrilla Prince*, 206.

<sup>171</sup> <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1959/19590109.html>

<sup>172</sup> <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1959/19590109.html>

<sup>173</sup> <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1959/19590109.html>

<sup>174</sup> Castro, Fidel. “Armas para que?” *Revolución*, January 9, 1959, 1.

several members of the DR held their positions, the Camp Columbia speech announced that Cubans no longer needed weapons to fight one another, the war, Castro declared, was now over.

### Castro in Power

On January 7, 1959 the United States officially announced that it recognized the new Cuban government. In order to disprove any idea that he was taking over the country, Castro immediately made an effort to show that he was going to restore democracy. The public seemed convinced as millions rushed to the capital to witness the revolution that was taking place. Castro's changes, although mainly a façade to please his audience and the United States, included the reinstating of Cuba's constitution of 1940. Also, in following the accords of the Caracas Pact, Manuel Urrutia was installed as the provisional president. This was deemed a temporary measure until a time when fair elections could be held. José Miró Cardona, who had aided in the revolutionary underground and had taken part in the signing of the Caracas Pact was named Prime Minister, a role from which he resigned approximately 6 weeks later.<sup>175</sup> Cardona resigned on February 16<sup>th</sup> and was replaced by Castro. Cardona later headed the committee that orchestrated the Bay of Pigs attack on Cuba, and was to head the post-Castro government had the attack been successful.<sup>176</sup>

As Castro had predicted in his prison letters during his time at the Isle of Pines, the time had come to "kill all the cockroaches" and around the island both Batista supporters and anyone accused of being against the revolution were being taken into custody.<sup>177</sup> By mid-January

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<sup>175</sup>Franqui, Carlos. *Diary of the Cuban Revolution*, 504.

<sup>176</sup>Hart, R. Phillips. "A 'Fight to Death' is Feared in Cuba; Tension Mounting as Castro and his foes get ready for a Final Struggle." *The New York Times*, April 9, 1961, 4.

<sup>177</sup> Conte Agüero, Luis and Barach, Ann Louise. *The Prison Letters of Fidel Castro*, 16.

Castro's rebel government began to hold military tribunals, most of which ended in death sentences as hundreds of military men found themselves facing firing squads. When questioned about the tribunals, Castro answered that the trials will continue until, "all criminals of the Batista regime are tried."<sup>178</sup> It was becoming evident that anyone that opposed Castro could become a target, including members of the new government. Just six months after taking office, on July 16, 1959, Urrutia was forced to resign amidst accusations of treason and was replaced by Osvaldo DorticósTorrado, a PSP member who remained faithful to Castro and the revolution for over twenty years. As Castro took complete control of the government, it was becoming clear that Cuba was going to be run by a new set of rules and the majority of the ideas that had been detailed in the manifestos that Castro had taken part in were mainly ignored.

### This Time the Revolution is Real

Castro had spoken of the means to victory as being propaganda from the very beginning and it was propaganda that allowed him to gain control of the island. While in prison at the Isle of Pines, in a letter that Castro wrote to Luis Conte Agüero, he stated, "The apparatus of propaganda and organization should be so powerful as to implacably destroy anyone trying to create fissures, cables, and schisms or to rise against the movement."<sup>179</sup> The fact is that when Batista fled Cuba, the only movement that had the strength to take power in Havana was the M-26-7 and much of that had to do with the way in which Castro approached the manifestos. Castro's propaganda campaign was successful as the rhetoric of justice, integrity and honesty that he had been spreading for years had propelled him to the major leadership role in the

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<sup>178</sup> Hart, R. Phillips. "Castro Deplores his Critics Here: Saying at Rally that Cuba need give no Explanation of War Crime Executions." *New York Times*, January 22, 1959, 1, 7.

<sup>179</sup> Conte Agüero, Luis and Barach, Ann Louise. *The Prison Letters of Fidel Castro*, 45.

insurrection. In the end many believed in the myth that Castro had created for himself as the hero of the Sierra Maestra. The idea that Castro had finally come down from the mountains to end Cuba's history of political corruption began to spread as he paraded across the country, but as history has revealed, this was not exactly what the people had expected of their revolution.

## CONCLUSION

The history of Cuba's insurrection has been told numerous times from various perspectives, yet the manifestos that were written are sources that have been relatively ignored. I have demonstrated that by focusing on the manifestos we can gain better insight into Castro's attitude, in order to better understand his goals and intentions. To Castro the manifestos served as stepping stones to project himself into a position of power, rather than a binding agreement. Many people had risked their lives in the anti-Batista struggle while Castro remained relatively safe in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra.<sup>180</sup> The truth is that Castro was never involved in any great battles with the military, nor was he ever really in any serious danger after the *Granma* survivors had regrouped in the Sierra Maestra. In actuality, while the insurrection was mostly being fought in the cities, Castro's M-26-7 merely had a small number of skirmishes with remote military outposts and small factions of military troops in the mountains. The only major threat that Castro faced throughout the course of the insurrection was the military assault during Operation Summer, in which Castro and his men narrowly escaped being defeated.<sup>181</sup>

Two of Castro's goals during the insurrection were to promote the idea of guerrilla warfare as the only solution to getting rid of Batista and to avoid elections in the process. He was able to accomplish both through the use of the manifestos and through successful propaganda campaigns. Herbert Matthew's article in the *New York Times*, which was published in February 1, 1957, and Robert Taber's April 27, 1957 interview with Castro helped to promote

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<sup>180</sup>Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 256. Here Thomas states that Castro's only threat was during Operation Verano, and that the only "real" battle that was fought by Castro's guerrilla was the battle of Santa Clara.

<sup>181</sup>Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 256.

the idea that guerrilla warfare was the only solution to the problem of the dictatorship.<sup>182</sup>

Throughout the course of the insurrection, Castro set out to make Santiago and the mountains of the Sierra Maestra, the center of the insurrection. This was accomplished by constantly making guerrilla warfare the focus of the struggle against Batista, and it was not until Batista fled that Havana once again became the primary focus. Castro achieved success, through the use of the propaganda by shifting the focus to a guerrilla war that was greatly exaggerated. In reality it was those fighting the Batista dictatorship in the cities that were facing the greatest threat of arrest, torture or even death.

While relatively safely hidden in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra, Castro's movement gained momentum and developed a following. Much of this was accomplished through the use of the manifestos that were geared to promote unity with the Batista opposition. Nonetheless, the first significant manifesto of the insurrection was the Montreal Pact which was headed by Prío and published on June 2, 1953 without Castro's involvement. The Montreal Pact focused on establishing post-Batista elections, while also condemning acts of terrorism. One of the major effects that the pact had on Castro was that it caused him to accelerate his plans for the attack on the Moncada Barracks.<sup>183</sup>

The attack on the Moncada Barracks resulted in being a complete failure; it did however help Castro make a name for himself as a figure in the Batista opposition. Castro used this newly found recognition to release the text, *History Will Absolve Me*, which served as Castro's

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<sup>182</sup> Taber's interview with Castro aired in May 1957 on CBS.

<sup>183</sup> De la Cova, Antonio Rafael. *The Moncada Attack*, 119.



first declaration to the people of Cuba.<sup>184</sup> This allowed him to put forth his ideas to anyone that would listen as he explained the errors of Cuba's past and his suggested remedies for the future. Cuba's long history of political corruption served as Castro's explanation for attacking the Moncada Barracks. In the text he was attempting to demonstrate that he stood for justice and democracy for the people, posing those ideas against a history of corruption. However while Castro was serving time in prison, he had already made it evident through his private letters that propaganda would play a major role in his movement.<sup>185</sup>

Upon his release from prison, Castro traveled to Mexico in order to train his army and continue his propaganda campaign. While in Mexico, Castro released his first manifestos entitled Manifesto No. 1 and No. 2 which pushed for support from Cuban youth. The main emphasis of these manifestos was a focus on Cuban economic issues.<sup>186</sup> Knowing he needed help in returning to Cuba, Castro invited Echeverría to Mexico to negotiate the Mexico Pact on August 20, 1956.<sup>187</sup> The Granma landing, however, caused this pact to be ignored as Castro criticized Echeverría for not providing support. As it has been demonstrated Echeverría was unaware that Castro's pending arrival into Cuba had been delayed at sea. Nonetheless, Castro used this instance as a reason to not support the DR and to completely ignore the conditions of the Mexico Pact. This became quite evident during the DR's attempted assassination of Batista at the president palace, which resulted in a split in the DR and the death of Echeverría and the majority of the DR leadership.

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<sup>184</sup>Castro, Fidel. *History Will Absolve Me*.

<sup>185</sup>Conte Agüero, Luis and Bardach, Ann Louise (eds). *The Prison Letters of Fidel Castro*, 15.

<sup>186</sup>See Appendix A/B: Manifesto #1 & #2 to the People of Cuba.

<sup>187</sup>See Appendix C: The Mexico Pact.

One year later, after having established his guerillas in the mountains, on July 12, 1957 Castro released the Manifesto of the Sierra Maestra which served as his declaration of leadership within the insurrection opposition groups. This manifesto was also signed by Felipe Pazos and Raúl Chibás with the intention of making Castro appear as a moderate. The manifesto called for the unity of all the opposition groups, as well as between the *sierra* and the *llano*. It also asked all political parties to, “reject the crude electoral process.”<sup>188</sup> After the release of the Manifesto of the Sierra Maestra, which chose Urrutia as the provisional president, the M-26-7 stayed relatively quiet as to their intentions after the fall of the dictatorship. Less than three weeks later, Chief of Police Colonel José Salas Cañizares killed Frank Pais on July 30, 1957, leaving Castro as the sole leader of the M-26-7.

Castro however was not afraid to speak up when several opposition groups declared their unity by signing the Miami Pact on November 1, 1957. Although it declared a move towards guerrilla warfare, Castro opposed it because it went against major decisions that he had put forth in the MSM. One of the decisions was the choosing of a provisional president. The Miami Pact had named Pazos, ignoring Castro’s choice in Urrutia. The fact that the Miami Pact was organized without Castro’s input is another reason that he attempted to discredit it. Stating that the Miami Pact was worthless since it was signed by people living abroad, carry out an “imaginary revolution” Castro made it clear that he and his men were the only legitimate revolutionaries.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>188</sup>See Appendix E: The Manifesto of the Sierra Maestra.

<sup>189</sup>Sweig, Julia. *Inside the Cuban Revolution*, 90.

Castro discredited the Miami Pact and in turn forced the Miami junta to dissolve. Enforcing his idea that guerrilla warfare was the only solution, Castro drafted the Total War Against the Tyranny Manifesto on March 12, 1958. This manifesto was signed by Castro and Faustino Pérez and demanded that all Cuban citizens join in on a total war strategy against the dictatorship.<sup>190</sup> Castro's message was clear, the electoral process was no longer an option, and even threatened anyone who would participate in an election.<sup>191</sup> When the declaration of the Total War was made, Castro began his plans for the April 9 strike. As I have shown, the strike was simply another of Castro's attempts to consolidate power and ensure that the M-26-7 was the strongest anti-Batista organization in Cuba. Contrary to what other writers have claimed, the evidence demonstrates that Castro purposefully set up the strike to fail. His betrayal of the urban underground secured that the M-26-7 would be controlled by the guerrilla in the mountains. This was made evident during the meeting at Altos del Mompié where Castro declared himself the sole leader of both the rural and urban branches of the M-26-7.<sup>192</sup>

When the Caracas Pact was transmitted over Radio Rebelde on July 19, 1958 it provided Castro with the power that he had been seeking. As with the other manifestos, the Caracas Pact included all of the major opposition groups, with the exception of the PSP. One of the most important factors discussed during the development of the Caracas Pact was the fact that it gave Castro power over the military in the post-Batista government. The person that controlled the military could also take control of the country and being aware of this, the Caracas Pact worked to Castro's benefit.

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<sup>190</sup> See Appendix D: Total War Against the Tyranny Manifesto.

<sup>191</sup> Appendix D: Total War Against the Tyranny Manifesto.

<sup>192</sup> Bonachea, Ramón E. and Valdés, Nelson P. *Revolutionary Struggle*, 108.

Batista's final attempt to defeat the M-26-7 came in June with Operation Summer which lasted from June 28 until August 8, 1958. This victory strengthened Castro and M-26-7's reputation and proved that the Sierra Maestra guerrillas could resist Batista's military.<sup>193</sup> This led to a rise in recruits and this expansion allowed Castro to send guerrillas out of the mountains and into the plains. Cienfuegos and Guevara were assigned the task of reaching Santa Clara and taking command over the guerrillas in the region. Guevara was the first to reach the Escambray Mountains, where he coordinated the Pedrero Pact with the DR and the PSP, while also ignoring the Second Front of the Escambray.<sup>194</sup> This was the only time throughout the course of the insurrection that a deal was made between any major anti-Batista organization and the PSP.<sup>195</sup> This pact was vital in that it organized a collaborated effort between the three groups with the goal of taking Santa Clara. This was clearly a strategic move by Castro, as he was preparing for the race for Havana in case Batista fled the island, which is what happened shortly after Santa Clara was taken by the rebels.

Once Batista fled Cuba, Castro wanted it to be clear that the M-26-7 was in charge of the country until a new government could be formed. Although there were several opposition groups that played important roles throughout the insurrection, they were now all ignored as Castro's chosen candidate, Urrutia became the interim president.<sup>196</sup> Even the return of Carlos Prio, who had been ousted by Batista, was ignored, and he eventually returned to exile. With Castro and the M-26-7 in charge of the country, the changes came very quickly. These changes

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<sup>193</sup>Sweig, Julia. *Inside the Cuban Revolution*, 173.

<sup>194</sup>Cienfuegos, Camilo. "Diario de la campaña." *Revolución* (Habana) November 16, 1958, 28.

<sup>195</sup> Dorschner, John. *The Winds of December: The Cuban Revolution of 1958*, 180.

<sup>196</sup> Anderson, Jon Lee. *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*, 397-398.

led to the first Castro-era mass exodus from the island, which saw a mass departure of the wealthy elite and former politicians.

Although it had been Castro's idea of Urrutia replacing Batista, by July 17, 1959 Castro had accused Urrutia of treason and replaced him with Osvaldo Dorticós, an obscure lawyer which would be easy to control.<sup>197</sup> Urrutia's role as president ended up lasting just under 6 months. The fact was that it did not matter who held which title in the new government, Castro made himself the face of the revolution, and it was evident that he was now in charge. Important figures of the insurrection, such as Echeverría and País, who had given their lives in the struggle against Batista, were made into symbols and martyrs of the revolution, yet their ideas of democracy and their anti-communist views were ignored in Cuba's new history.

The focus of the new government was now to discredit anyone or anything that had anything to do with the old system of government. Anyone that opposed the new system was labeled an anti-revolutionary and punished. For example, Huber Matos, who had assisted the M-26-7 by flying weapons from Costa Rica into the Sierra Maestra, was sentenced to 20 years in prison for simply trying to resign from his post as Commander of the Army in Camagüey Province.<sup>198</sup>

Meanwhile, the PSP which had not been invited to participate in any of the pact negotiations prior to the Pedrero Pact and had joined the anti-Batista struggle very late, began to replace the M-26-7. It did not matter that none of the anti-Batista organizations supported the PSP, Castro's new ideas began to replace the old. Communism however, would only be allowed

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<sup>197</sup> Thomas, Hugh. *The Cuban Revolution*, 830-832.

<sup>198</sup> Matos, Huber. *Como llego la noche*, 66.

on Castro's terms. Although it is unknown at what point during the insurrection Castro became a communist, according to Juan Almeida, a member of M-26-7 guerrilla army, Castro always carried a Lenin book with him while in the Sierra Maestra.<sup>199</sup> Castro himself stated, "...if we had stopped at the Pico Turquino, when there were very few of us, and said: 'We are Marxist-Leninists,' possibly we would not have been able to get down to the plain."<sup>200</sup>

Once the revolutionary government was established, history could only be published with official permission from the Cuban government. This allowed Castro's government to credit the M-26-7 with the ousting of Batista.<sup>201</sup> What this meant was that the story of the insurrection could now only be told from the perspective of the guerrillas in the Sierra Maestra, with all other participants being made into minor figures. Even major accomplishments of the revolutionary government, such as the attempt to eradicate illiteracy were used to promote the government's agenda. Those that participated in the literacy program were taught to read and write by learning about the M-26-7 and its heroes, which at this time also included the PSP. Although Castro had declared many years earlier, upon his release from Isle of Pines, "Our message of gratitude, is for the people and journalists, to whom we shall always be deeply grateful" censorship of the press was strictly enforced.<sup>202</sup> After taking power Castro went as far as stating, "The rebel army won the war by telling the truth. I want to continue the system of always telling the people the truth."<sup>203</sup> The stories of the insurrectionary period, however, did not seem to apply.

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<sup>199</sup> Franqui, Carlos. *El libro de los doce*, 15.

<sup>200</sup> *Revolucion*, December 22, 1961.

<sup>201</sup> Draper, Theodore. *Castro's Revolution, Myths and Realities*. New York: Praeger, 1962, 86.

<sup>202</sup> Bonachea, Ramón E. and Valdés, Nelson P. *Revolutionary Struggle*, 239.

<sup>203</sup> <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1959/19590109.html>

**APPENDIX A: MANIFESTO No. 1 TO THE PEOPLE OF CUBA - AUGUST 8, 1955<sup>204</sup>**

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<sup>204</sup> Historia de Cuba 6, Editorial Pueblo y Educación, 1978. Ciudad de la Habana.

I live for my fatherland and for its true freedom, although I know that my life may not last long enough to enjoy the fruit of my labors and that this service must be given with the certainty and thought of receiving no reward for it.

José Martí

My duties to the fatherland and to my convictions stand above all personal concerns; that is why I shall be free or shall perish for the redemption of my people.

Antonio Maceo

Under this battle cry, which recalls past national rebellion, the Cuban revolutionary movement it today organized and prepared for its great task of redemption and justice.

By the express agreement of its leaders, I have been entrusted with the drafting of this first manifesto to the country and those which in the future will be published clandestinely.

In carrying out this mission which duty imposes on me, I do not hesitate to assume the responsibility involved in signing these proclamations that will be a constant reminder to the people, an open call for revolution, and a frontal attack against the clique of criminals who trample the honor of the nation and rule its destiny counter to its history and the sovereign will of the people. And although at the present time I am absent from the soil of our nation and therefore outside the jurisdiction of the courts that issue the sentences ordered by the master, I did not hesitate to unmask the executioner when that court was judging me there, or from prison to accuse by name the dictator and his bloodthirsty generals of the Moncada Barracks' crimes in a manifesto dated January 6, 1954, or to reject amnesty with conditions attached, to again, when freed, to show that people evidence of the cruel and inhuman character of the Batista regime. What a cruel and inhuman apparatus Batista's regime has! I do not care what accusations they may make against me in the special courts! Cuba is my fatherland, and I shall never return to it or I shall return with the dignity I have pledged myself to. The bridges have been burned: Either we conquer the fatherland at any price so that we can live with dignity and honor, to we shall remain without one.

The fatherland means something more than oppression, something more than a piece of land without freedom and without life.

It is hardly necessary to justify the use of this means to set forth out ideas. The closing down of the newspaper *La Calle*, whose courageous stand won it the sympathy of the people, increasing its circulation to more than 20,000 copies in only a few weeks, made clear the more or



less concealed muzzle with the dictatorship has maintained over the legal press in Cuba for more than three years.

The censorship and the Law on Public Order, by which the regime sought to conceal from the people the barbarous Moncada massacre, are a threat to the mass media, the closing down of the civic-spirited newspaper of Luis Orlando was yet another warning to the press that their opinions cannot exceed certain limits, in reality so as not to threaten those in power. The same warnings were given on other occasions with the torture of Mario Kucjilán and Armando Hernández, the assault on the “University of the Air” and the newspaper *Pueblo*, the castor oil torture of the CMKC announcers, the attacks on numerous photographers, the sentencing of Luis Conte Agüero and Pincho Gutiérrez, the confinement of Pardo Lllada, Guido García Inclán, Max Lesnick, Rivadulla, García Sifredo, and others arbitrary actions which make the list of attacks on the free expression of thought since March 10 interminable.

The governmental “inquisition” was especially cruel with regard to this writer. After our article in *Bohemia* answering the cowardly provocation of a miserable henchman who went out for blood but ended up bleeding, our appearance on any radio or television program was drastically and categorically prohibited.

On two consecutive occasions the Partido del Pueblo Cubano broadcasts were prevented. The broadcasts could continue only on the condition that I would not be heard by the people. In an urgent telegram dated June 13, 1955, the network was informed that proceedings had been initiated to deprive me of this right. This was an unprecedented case: It was not a radio station or a program that was censured, but a citizen. That great hustler of governmental favors, Ramón Vasconcelos, who bought a newspaper when he was a minister under Carlos Prío and who launched the most terrible attacks against him when Prío took off with everything, was not closed down – and he was not even a Batista supporter just prior to March 10, because he was trying to obtain a senatorial post through the Ortodoxo Party. He has found his own method of concealing the truth.

Every instrument of power was used successfully to impose silence on me everywhere, which demonstrates to what extent any new moral protest is doomed today in Cuba because of the shameful coalition of oppression, vested interests, and general hypocrisy.

Thus, Santiago Rey, another cynic who was a Prío follower until March 10, 1952, a Batista follower until October 10, 1944, and a Machado follower until August 12, 1933, ordered the closing of the newspaper *La Calle* the day our article entitled “One Can No Longer Live Here” appeared. We answered one of the stupid accusations of Colonel Carratalá and challenged him to go to the courts and denounce the names of the police chiefs who have gotten rich from the proceeds of illegal gambling. We were left without a platform from which to express our views.

The same happened with every public gathering at which it was known we would be present, beginning with the meeting to welcome the political prisoners on the university steps. They went to the extreme of prohibiting the showing of a film of our visit to the National News Agency with Guido García Inclán, for they were irritated by the demonstrations of sympathy expressed by the public. We were left without the right to speak or write or hold public gatherings or to exercise civic rights of any kind – as if we were not Cubans, as if we had no rights in our fatherland, as if we had been born pariahs and slaves in the glorious land of our immortal liberators. Can this be called constitutionality, equality before the law, guarantees for peaceful struggle?

In Cuba one only has the right to write what pleases the six libelous papers the dictatorship maintains with the money stolen from teachers and public employees. In Cuba only the unconstitutional supports of the regime or those who play the game of a docile and inoffensive opposition have the right to meet freely. In Cuba only those who get down on their knees have the right to live.

The bad faith of the regime, the mean spirit on which the amnesty the people demanded was granted, had been obvious from the very first moments. Three days after we had been freed the first false accusation of subservient activity was hurled at us, when our families had not even had time to welcome us and express their joy in the naïve belief that a different stage of calm and respect from the citizen was beginning, and that their children would not find themselves again involved in the maelstrom of revolutionary struggle, agony, and martyrdom which had already lasted three and a half years. In this struggle the greatest pain is not that of the fighter who struggles resolutely, without worrying about the risk, but that of the mothers who, as Martí said, weep with inconsolable sorrow “out of love and not reason.”

We had changed prisons. The spectacle of hunger and injustice was everywhere. And the harsh struggle that idealism required, dignity demanded, and duty ordered, began again, to end only when no oppressors remain in Cuba or when the last revolutionary falls on this sad and martyred land.

Those who doubt the determination with which we shall carry forward our promise those who believe that we are reduced to impotence because we have no private fortune to put at the disposal of our cause nor millions stolen from the people, should remember the twenty-six of July. They should remember that a handful of men who had been ignored, without economic resources of any kind, and without weapons except their dignity and their ideals, stood up to the second largest military installation in Cuba and did what other with cast resources have not yet done. They should remember that there is a people with faith in its honored defenders, ready to gather the necessary funds penny by penny so that those who will achieve freedom with honest blood and honest money will not be without weapons again. Finally let them remember that for each one of the young men who fell at Santiago de Cuba there are thousand more awaiting the

signal to go into battle, that the revolutionary reserves of the people now include a hundred thousand idealists. And for each of those writers who preach cowardice, vilification, defeatism, and compromise with the oppressors, advising our people to submit peacefully to tyranny, renouncing their tradition as a rebellious and honorable people as if nothing had happened in Cuba on march 10, there are a million voices cursing them.

The voices are those who suffer hunger in the countryside and the cities, the desperate voices of those who have no work or hope of finding any, the indignant voices of our workers for whom it was a cursed hour when Batista snatched power, the voices of an entire people trampled on and deceived, who have seen their children murdered in the shadows and who are not resigned to living without rights and freedom.

Stubborn fools are those who believe that a revolutionary movement can be measured by the millions of available to it and not by the reason, idealism, determination, and honor of its fighters! “What matters,” Martí said, “is not the number of weapons in one’s hand, but the number of stars on one’s forehead!” to those who ask us to abandon the revolutionary struggle and accept the crumbs of legality the regime offers, we answer, Why do you not ask Batista to abandon office first?

He is the only obstacle. It was he who used violence when all legal paths were open. He protects and safeguards the henchmen who murder and kill. He, only he, is the man who has provoked this situation of uncertainty, unrest, and ruin.

Why ask a people to renounce their rights instead of asking a lucky adventurer to abandon a power that does not belong to him? To those who impudently advise participation in partial elections as a national solution we answer: Who is concerned with those elections? The discontent is found, not on the part of the politicians who seek posts, but in the people who seek justice. Those who believe that serious political, social, and economic problems can be solved by simply satisfying the appetites of a hundred or so miserable candidates for a few posts as mayors and representative think very badly of Cuban citizens. What have petty politics given the country in the last 50 years? Speeches, sinecures, congas, lies, compromises, deceit, betrayals, improper enrichment of a clique of rogues, empty talk, corruption, infamy. We do not view politics as the traditional politicians do. We are concerned not with the personal benefit but with the benefit of the people whom we serve as missionaries of an ideal of redemption. Glory is worth more than triumph, and “there is only one glory for certain – that of a soul at peace with itself.” Those electoral crumbs with which Batista buy his unimportant enemies should not be offered to us. The pride with which we put them aside is worth more than all of the electoral posts put together.

To those who speak of general elections, we ask: Elections with or without Batista? The general elections on November 1 with Batista were the most scandalous and fraudulent in our

republican history, a permanent stain on our democratic tradition that set us back to a stage which it seemed we had transcended. What answer have the defenders of an election presided over by Batista? What arguments do they have left after this unprecedented scandal? Did they not employ precisely the same reasons, the same words, the same lies before? Can anyone forget the mobilization of tanks along the highways and the dramatic farewells by Tabernilla at the terminal station, as if the soldiers were leaving for the battlefield? After that November experience, after the March 10 coup within 80 days of elections, for the simple reason that they did not have the slightest chance of winning, can anyone make our skeptical people believe in honest elections with Batista in power? Those who want to create the illusion that the events of 1944 could be repeated deliberately and criminally betray the people. They pretend to make us believe that the circumstances are the same. They forget the signs of the times. They do not distinguish between the present moment in which America has been invaded by reactionary dictatorships and 1944, when the world was shaken by a wave of popular enthusiasm and democratic optimism, a world which with the last shots in Europe conceived hopes for a happier and more humane future for its peoples. Batista then yielded to world public opinion, as the cowardly ruling cliques of Peru, Venezuela, Guatemala, and other countries of the American continent yielded.

Therefore the only civic solution we would accept, the only honest, logical, and just solution, is immediate general elections without Batista. Meanwhile, we shall continue tirelessly out revolutionary line. And we have a question for those who demand general elections as the only solution: What will you do if Batista flatly refuses to allow elections? Will you cross your arms and weep like Mary Magdalene for what you lacked the courage to demand with honor? "Rights are taken, not begged; they are seized, not pleased for." The people await the answer too.

To those who affirm that the 1940 Constitution has been reestablished, we state that they are brazenly lying, a fundamental principle of our constitution categorically prohibits presidential reelection, and Batista reelected himself to that post of November 1. He did not even resign his post: He asked for a leave of absence and left a lackey in the presidential palace. If the Constitution states that anyone who has occupied that post cannot so do again until eight years have gone by, Batista's continuation in the presidency is unconstitutional.

Another precept establishes that sovereignty resides in the people and that from them all powers all derived. If this is true, and the Constitution is in effect, none of these who elected themselves in the unilateral and fraudulent November first elections has the right to occupy the posts he holds. All of them should resign immediately. Sovereignty resides in the people and not in the barracks. Batista is the main enemy of our constitution, which he ignominiously destroyed on March 10. There is not room for both in the same republic.

To those who accuse the Revolution of upsetting the economy of the country, we answer: There is no economy for the rural workers who have not land; there is no economy for the millions of Cubans who are unemployed; there is no economy for the railroad, port, sugar, hemp, textile, and bus workers and those in the many sectors whose wages Batista had mercilessly reduced. And there will be an economy for them only through a just revolution that will redistribute the land, mobilize the vast resources of the country, and equalize social conditions, putting an end to privilege and exploitation. It is possible to expect that miracle from the candidates running in the forthcoming partial elections?

Or are they talking perhaps of the economy of the senators who earn 5,000 pesos a month, of the millionaire generals, of the foreign trusts that exploit the public services, of the great landowners, of the tribe of parasites who thrive and get rich at the expense of the state and the people? Then we welcome the Revolution that upsets the economy of a few who so greedily profit from it! After all, man does not live by bread alone.

Another question for those who speak of economy: Has not Batista jeopardized the credit of the country for 30 years? Has not the public debt increased to more than 800 million pesos? Is there not a deficit of more than 100 million? Are not the monetary reserves of the nation pledged to foreign banks in a desperate search of money? Were not 300 million pesos of the most recent loan wastes in the purchase of jet planes and things of that nature, without plan or program, for no other reason than personal whim? Can one play in this manner with the destiny of a nation? Did anyone authorize him to undertake those insane credit ventures? Did he consult the people in any way? Finally, how many millions have individuals very close to Batista transferred periodically to North American banks? It is for us more than anyone else to be concerned because we and future generations will have to pay the terrible consequences of that corrupt and unchecked policy. The country's economy requires an immediate and radical change of government.

To those who assert that the Revolution brings sorrow to Cuban families, we answer: Sorrow is caused by the hunger decimating families in the Cuban countryside; sorrow is caused by the corrupt politicians who steal hospital funds; sorrow is caused by the henchmen who murdered Rubén Batista, the Santiago couple Oscar Medina Salomón and María Rodríguez, the Camagüey labor leader Mario Aróstegui, the Auténtico leader Matío Fortuny, the revolutionary soldier Gonzalo Miranda Oliva, the naval commander Jorge Agostini, and the seventy young prisoners in the Moncada Barracks. This is the blood of students, workers, professional, honest military men, men and women of all parties and all social classes – honest blood, Cuban blood, the blood of fighters who could not defend themselves at the moment they were sacrificed.

Today more than ever the spokesmen of the dictatorship emphasize public discussion and legal methods as the path their opponents should follow. They did not think that way when on March 10 they perpetrated the most unjustifiable crime conceivable against a nation, and at that

time all legal paths were really open for political struggle! Now that they have blocked all paths toward peace, they speak of peace. Now that everything had been arranged through force to suit them, they defend legality. Now after four years of being in power, a power to which they have no right, getting rich and profiting under the eyes of the entire nation, distributing privileges and sinecures among friends, unconditional supporters, and relatives of the whole clique, having constantly used abuse and force to maintain their privileges, now they shout that the only just and decent way of fighting them is through politics. Politics, as conceived by Martí and as we understand it, is the art of keeping the peace and greatness of the country, but not the vile art of creating a fortune at its expense.

The fatherland is not a tool we can use or discard as we choose; nor is the Republic a means of maintaining the lazy and the haughty, well fed and housed, who in the baseness of the egotism believe themselves to be the natural responsibility of the country and the inevitable masters of their inferior people.

Those who chant their devout songs in favor of peace as if there could be peace without freedom, peace without law, peace without justice, have still not found the words to condemn *the one hundred crimes* which have been committed since March 10, not the daily outrages, the raids on homes in the middle of the night, the arbitrary arrests, the false accusations, the unjust convictions. What have they said about the young man from Guantánamo, a humble employee of the newspaper *La Calle*, who was atrociously tortured and on whose strangled testicles corrosive acid was thrown by his executioners? Nothing! Absolutely nothing!

Beware, Cubans, of those who advise cowardly submission to the tyranny, whatever the source of this advice, because these people are paid a price for their hypocritical sermons by Batista.

The peace Batista wants is the peace Spain wanted. The peace we want is the peace Martí wanted.

To speak of peace under tyranny is to offend the memory of all those who died for the freedom and happiness of Cuba. Then as well there were reformists and autonomists who fought with cowardly fury the honorable attitude of our liberators and accepted as a solution the electoral crumbs offered by the master of that era.

The streets and the parks of our cities and towns bear the names and proudly display the statues of Maceo, Martí, Máximo Gómez, Calixto García, Céspedes, Agramonte, Flor Crombet, Bartolomé Masó, and other illustrious heroes who had the courage to rebel. The schools teach out glorious history, and October 10 and February 24 are celebrated with devotion. These were not dates of submission or of resigned and cowardly acceptance of the existing despotism, nor

were those individuals the ones who extended a begging hand to receive from Spain a post as a deputy to the royal court or in the senate of the colonial master.

All the regime's efforts will be futile. The 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement will send its revolutionary message to all corners of Cuba. Tens of thousands of our revolutionary manifestos will circulate clandestinely throughout the country, invading factories, farms, and villages. Men and women who want to aid our case will reproduce them by hand or machine everywhere, knowing that thereby they are doing their little bit in this heroic struggle of the nation against its oppressors. They will even penetrate the barracks, the warships, the police stations, and the military camps.

We do not fear talking to the military, we have no hatred in our hearts for the honest Cubans – the military man who has been vilely used as a tool so that cliques of politicians gain power and wealth, the military man who is forced to constant and cruel guard duty to safeguard the interests of a handful of scoundrels who take no risks; the military man who is forced to die without glory for a regime hated by the people; the military man whom Batista miserably deceived. Batista had not yet found a way of justifying the unlimited enrichment of the high commanders, not the violations of military seniority in favor of the families and friends of the generals, setting aside merit and ability, not the presence of gangsters in the government, not the frequent decreases in wage while every senator whom no one elected and who represents no one collects 5,000 pesos. Batista himself had increased his income to the fabulous sum of 70,000 per month, seventy times what the prime minister of England earns. We defeated the military when no one defended them, and fought them when they supported the tyranny, but we shall welcome them with open arms when they join the cause of liberty. We shall tell the military the truth, as one Cuban to another, as one man to another, without fear or flattery, and the hands and the hearts of many honest soldiers will be reached by our revolutionary proclamations. The military must be freed from tyranny too.

The 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement is formed without hatred for anyone. It is not a political party but a revolutionary movement. Its ranks are open to all Cubans who sincerely desire to see political democracy reestablished and social justice introduced in Cuba. Its leadership is collective and secret, formed by new men of strong will who are not accomplices of the past. Its structure is functional. Young and old, men and women, workers and peasants, students and professionals, can join in its fighting groups, its youth cadres, its secret worker's cells, its women's organizations, its economic sections, and its underground distribution apparatus throughout the country, for not all can take up arms. There will never be sufficient weapons to equip each of those who wishes to give his life in the struggle, but each can participate to the extent that he can, contributing money, distributing proclamations, or leaving work in a gesture of solidarity and proletarian support when the revolutionary call to struggle comes. Above all,

this must be a revolution of the people, with the blood of the people and the sweat of the people. Its broad and courageous program can be synthesized in the following essential points:

1. Outlawing of the latifundia, distribution of the land among peasant families; permanent and untransferable granting of property to all existing small tenant farmers, sharecroppers, small holders, and farm laborers; state economic and technical aid; reduction of taxes.
2. Reestablishment of all the worker's gains taken away by the dictatorship the right of the worker to broad participation in the profits of all the large industrial, commercial, and mining enterprises, which should be paid out in addition to salaries or wages at given intervals during the year.
3. Immediate industrialization of the country by means of a vast plan made and promoted by the state, which will have to decisively mobilize all the human and economic resources of the nation in the supreme effort to free the country from the moral and material prostration in which it finds itself. It is inconceivable that they should be hunger in a country as endowed by nature; every shelf should be stocked with goods and all hands employed productively.
4. Drastic decrease in all rents, effectively benefiting the 2,200,000 persons who are today spending a third of their income on rent; construction by the state of decent housing to shelter the 400,000 families crowded into filthy single rooms, huts, shacks, and tenements; extension of electricity to the 2,800,000 persons in our rural and suburban sectors who have none initiation of a policy designed to transform each renter into an owner of the apartment in which he lives on the basis of long-term amortization.
5. Nationalization of public services: telephone, electricity, and gas.
6. Construction of ten children's cities to fully shelter and educate 200,000 children of workers and peasants who cannot currently feed and clothe them.
7. Extension of education, following a previous reform of all teaching methods, to the farthest corner of the country, so that every Cuban will be able to develop his mental and physical aptitudes in a decent living environment.
8. General reforms of the tax system and establishment of modern methods for the collection of taxes to avoid tax evasion and mishandling of funds, so that the state can meet its needs and the people will know that what they pay from their income goes back to society to benefit all classes.
9. Reorganization of public administration and establishment of administrative training.
10. Establishment of an inviolable military roster safeguarding the members of the armed forces so that they can be removed from their post only for good reasons proved in administrative litigation courts. Elimination of the death penalty in the Military Penal Code for crimes committed during peacetime. Rendering of all socially beneficial



- services by the armed services throughout the country, making economic surveys, land surveys and demarcation, and building by their corps of engineers, with special remuneration, hygienic schools and decent housing for peasants, workers, and members of the armed forces themselves, who will retain ownership when they retire from service.
11. Generous and decent pay to all public employees: teachers, office workers, and members of the armed forces, retired civil and military personnel.
  12. Establishment of adequate measures in education and legislation to put an end to every vestige of discrimination for reasons of race or sex which regrettably still exists in our social and economic life.
  13. Social security and state unemployment compensation.
  14. Reorganization of the judicial branch and abolition of the treasury courts.
  15. Confiscation of all the assets of embezzlers acquired under all past governments, without exceptions of any kind, so that the Republic can recover the hundreds of millions which have been taken from it with impunity. These will be invested in the implementation of some the undertakings describes above. Does anyone doubt that they could have been possible if the nation had had honest governments?

These points will be fully explained in a pamphlet that will be distributed throughout the country.

The Cuban Revolution will carry out all of the reforms following the spirit and the letter of our 1940 Constitution, without taking from anyone what is legitimately his and compensating everyone for the losses he has suffered, fully aware that in the long run all of society will be benefited.

The Cuban Revolution will firmly punish all the acts of violence against the individual committed under the tyranny, but it will reject and repress any evidence of ignoble vengeance inspired by hatred or base passions.

The Cuban Revolution does not compromise with groups or persons of any sorts, nor does it offer anyone governmental employment or posts within the armed forces. It will respect competence and merit wherever it may be found, and it will never regard the state as the booty of a triumphant group. A revolutionary movement which has already given the fatherland a legion of heroic martyrs who neither prospered from the nation nor had any ambition but to serve their country tirelessly and without self-interest can speak thus to the nation.

In adopting again the line of sacrifice we assume before history responsibility for our actions. And in making our declaration of faith in a happier world for the Cuban people, we think like Martí that a sincere man does not seek where his adventure lies but where

his duty is, and that the only practical man is the one whose present dream will be the law of tomorrow.

On behalf of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Revolutionary Movement,

Fidel Castro

**APPENDIX B: MANIFESTO No. 2 TO THE PEOPLE OF CUBA – DECEMBER 10,  
1955<sup>205</sup>**

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▪ <sup>205</sup> Historia de Cuba 6, Editorial Pueblo y Educación, 1978. Ciudad de la Habana.

We will find generous help in all honey hearts. And we will knock on all doors, and we will ask for contributions from town to town. And they will give, because we will ask with honor.

José Martí

I am addressing these lines essentially to the generous men and women of my fatherland. I still remember the unforgettable scenes I witnessed among the Cuban émigrés to the United States. Everywhere I saw Cubans standing, their hands raised high, swearing not to rest until they saw their land redeemed, and then en masse they deposited in the *mambi* hat the product of their sweat which they earned through hard work. But that was not their only contribution. One does not need to look for the exiled Cubans to obtain their aid; after every public gathering they can be seen in the streets asking for the address of the Patriotic Club where they join and offer their weekly contributions. Every Sunday Cuban parties are organized, and what is collect is given entirely to the Revolution. The first of these, held just a few days ago in New York, produced hundreds of pesos. All the beauty of our historical tradition is evidenced by the Cuban exiles with astonishing fervor. Already there are Patriotic Clubs functioning in Bridgeport, Union City, New York, Miami, Tampa, and Key West. New groups will be organized in Chicago Philadelphia, Washington, and other places where the Cubans who have had to leave their native land have settled. Seven weeks of tireless effort dedicated to organizing the Cubans from the Canadian border to the glorious Key have produced the best of results.

The 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement, which unites and organizes all of the country's revolutionary forces in a close and disciplined organization, breaking away from the traditional framework in which petty Cuban politics have existed up to the present, has called on our émigré brothers – who are also Cubans suffering from the misfortunes of Cuba – to struggle. The émigré have responded unanimously to the appeal of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July. They have provided hundreds of young fighters, many of them veterans of the European and Pacific theaters in World War II, who now want to fight for the cause of liberty in their own land. Moreover, they are providing abundant economic resources so that the noble and virile individuals who will challenge the tyranny once again with the cry “liberty or death” on their lips will not go unarmed.

There are some who have not yet understood the meaning of the public preaching of a revolutionary idea, and they wonder if this does not put the oppressors on guard. They forget many things, but mainly that we are not millionaires with huge sums deposited in banks. They forget that we are not rich, nor do we have private means to make available to our cause. We would offer them without hesitation if we had them, just as we are offering all that we do have – our energy and our lives. They forget that a revolution, unlike a military putsch, is the work of the people, and it is necessary that the people know beforehand what they must do in the struggle. In revolution, as Martí states, “the methods are secret and the goals are public.”

Does anyone believe that when our liberators publically solicited aid from the cigar makers of Tampa and Key West they wanted to conceal from the Spanish authorities that a revolution was developing in Cuba? If we are not embezzlers or rich men, how can we obtain the resources essential for the struggle if we do not ask the people for them? And how can we ask the people for resources if we do not tell them what we will do with the money? If the Revolution robs a bank to get funds, the enemy will call us gangsters. If the Revolution accepts aid from embezzlers who have plundered the Republic, the Revolution will be betraying its principles. If the Revolution solicits aid from vested interests, it will be compromised before it attains power.

We have already gone to battle once with the limited resources we could obtain, each of us giving what little he had and quietly soliciting the aid of some generous individuals, and the result was defeat and the horrible crimes which followed. It would have been useless then to ask for help publically, because no one would have paid attention to us. Faith lay with other men who were expected to do everything against oppression. Today, after paying such a high price in sacrifice and lives for the confidence of our compatriots, we shall do what we could not do then. We shall publically appeal to the people to help us, to prepare the country for revolution on a major scale, with possibility of failure. We shall set forth the actions the masses must carry out everywhere when national rebellion breaks out like a storm, so that the fighting detachments, well-armed and led, and the active youth cadres will be supported by the workers throughout the country, organized from below in revolutionary cells, capable of unleashing a general strike. What the enemy will never know is where the weapons are hidden and at what movement and how the insurrection will erupt. If the corrupt politicians publically their electoral thesis, the Revolution must publically preach its thesis of rebellion.

To preach revolution aloud will undoubtedly produce better results than to speak of peace in public and conspire in secret, which was the method used for three and a half years by the group removed from power on March 10. Their secret conspiracy was never a secret to anyone. Thanks to our campaign it is clear that, despite the return of the Auténticos from exile, many of whom erroneously thought that the insurreccional stage had ended, revolutionary feeling and agitation are stronger than ever throughout the nation. Our cry "Revolution! Revolution!" is the slogan of the masses whenever people gather. All of the electoral plans of the regime to maintain itself in power with the complicity of the political cliques of the pseudo-opposition have been destroyed by our strategy. Only the blind, the greedy, the envious, or the impotent could deny this.

The national panorama is clearing. Events are finally proving us right. The massacres of workers, the street battles between students and police, the increasing economic crisis with its hunger and misery, the unchecked rise of the public debt which has compromised the credit of the nation for thirty years, the men who have disappeared without a trace, the crimes committed

with impunity, the daily embezzlements, and the haughty and categorical refusal by the dictator to one hundred thousand citizens who gathered at the Muelle de Luz indicate that no alternative remains for the country but revolution. Those who to date have maintained other theses not have only two choices: They must either surrender to the regime or join the Revolution, whose standard we alone held high when everyone was running around in search of an electoral compromise with the dictatorship. Even the most humble citizen correctly interprets the situation in Cuba when he says that Baista and his clique of millionaire generals have been deceiving the public for four years and that they will not give up their powers unless they are thrown out by force. To the cowards who say that he has the tanks, the guns, and the planes, the answer of a nation with dignity must be, "Well then, we too have to get together the necessary weapons. We have to give the fighters the economic resources they need. If the tyranny forces us by taxes to purchase its weapons and pay its police, we should contribute our resources voluntarily to those who for four years have been fighting and dying for our freedom. We have to aid them because the duty to sacrifice oneself for the fatherland is the duty of all and not just a few. We have to aid them because the frivolous life, the life of indifference when the country is in agony, is a crime when others are suffering in prison or in exile or are already buried in debased soil."

Each citizen should give a dollar, each worker should contribute the earning of one day's work, as the Cuban émigrés are going to do on January 28, and you will see how the tyranny resoundingly collapses in less time than many imagine.

Those of us who lead an austere and poor life, devoted without rest or respite to the struggle, giving the country our youth and our life, working for six million Cubans without asking anything of anyone, we feel that we have the moral authority and courage to speak to the nation in these terms. To beg is bitter, even if it is done for the fatherland, but it is more bitter still to live oppressed as we are living. It is more bitter to see a husband tolerate insults to his wife in the street from a uniformed officer; a mother see her son or husband taken away from home in the middle of the night; a father, despite his age and position, find himself beaten and harassed without any respect at a police station; a businessman see the very policeman who should protect him from thieves taking a handful of cigars or a pound of meat or a cup of coffee from him, and if he is refused, imposing a fine or making an unjust accusation of some violation; barefoot children walking the streets begging alms; men standing idle in street corners; lines formed outside foreign consulates for visas to leave the country; infinite injustices occurring daily before our very eyes.

Let the people who see us suffer, who see us fight, who see us asking for help for the fatherland, heed us.

Others ask for themselves, and they offer as security a house, a farm, or some asset. We ask for Cuba and offer as security our lives. Each dollar deposited in our hands is a check drawn

against the existence of men who have pledged to die before abandoning the undertaking in which we are engaged. And those who out of egotism or pettiness refuse to help them, knowing that they are right and fighting for a just cause, for a noble ideal, for a worthy principle, for the common good, will see them die, their consciences full of remorse.

We know that this appeal will not be wasted. Already on one occasion, when it appeared necessary to close down the newspaper *La Calle* because of lack of funds, we made a similar appeal and the people immediately began to provide splendid help. The regime had to close it down. This time we are not asking for a newspaper but for the entire nations. The contribution, therefore, should be a thousand times more generous and more spontaneous.

The collection of funds by a movement functioning underground is a difficult task, but perfectly feasible in this case, given the organization and discipline of our cadres throughout the island.

Nonetheless, it is essential that the following rules be followed:

No citizen should give anything to anyone if he does not have absolute confidence in the honesty, seriousness, and moral reputation of that individual. One must be certain that what has been donated will reach the treasury of the Movement.

No one will have any identification or document from this Movement for the specific purpose of collecting funds. The only valid credential of an activist of ours for these purposes will be the reputation he enjoys in the place where he lives or works.

No one should give a cent to any person coming from another place of employment or a place where he says he works, so that no person who is not known in any given place can claim to be a member of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July movement in order to collect funds.

No one will be given a receipt or bond as proof of his contribution, for any paper of this sort would be dangerous to the person giving it or receiving it. When the time comes, when the present circumstances of repression have been eliminated, honor rolls listing the names of the persons who have contributed will be drafted based on reports of the members of our economic section.

The dictatorship cannot take effective measures against this economic campaign because it is confronted with a mass conspiracy.

Any imposter pretending to be a member of our movement who tries to collect funds on its behalf will be discovered promptly by our militants and will be given the punishment deserved, as happened in the province of Matanzas to a rogue named Ramón Estévez who

undertook that despicable deception using a photograph of us passed on false credentials. No vigilance is more effective than collective vigilance.

Any form of collection by means of coercion or violence is entirely alien to our methods.

The preceding rules for collecting funds apply only in Cuba, in which our underground organization functions. This will not be the case abroad, where Patriotic Clubs will carry out their tasks legally.

The treasury of the Movement maintains detailed accounts of income and expenditures, of which a full report will be rendered to the nation when its work is concluded.

On behalf of the national leadership of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Revolutionary Movement, signed in the island of Nassau,

Fidel Castro



**APPENDIX C: MEXICO PACT – SEPTEMBER 1956<sup>206</sup>**

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<sup>206</sup> Bonachea, Ramón E. and Valdés, Nelson P. *Revolutionary Struggle, 1947-1958*, 338.

The Federación Estudiantil Universitaria (FEU) and the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement, the two organizations formed by a new generation that has earned through sacrifice and struggle the sympathies of the Cuban people, have agreed to address the following declaration to the country. That:

1. Both organizations have decided to unite solidly their efforts in order to overthrow the tyranny and carry out the Cuban Revolution.
2. To collaborate with partial elections after having demanded general and free elections for four years constitutes a submissive and treacherous attitude which will not attain its ambitious goals because the Revolution will not permit it.
3. If the Cuban Revolution, which already has the sympathy of America's democratic public opinion, is defeated in the inevitable struggle, the dictatorship will not offer even that niggardly concession which it offers today because it fears revolution, on the heads of the ambitious electoral candidates will fall the blood of those who sacrifice themselves.
4. We consider the social and political conditions of the country ripe for revolution and the preparations sufficiently advanced to offer the people their liberation in 1956. The insurrection supported by a general strike throughout the country will be undefeatable.
5. A foreign tyrant, Rafael Leónidas Trujillo, had intervened openly in the internal affairs of our county and forged a conspiracy against Cuba with the complicity of a group of officers who participated in the March 10 coup: Alberto del Rio Chaviano, Martín Diaz Tamayo, Leopoldo Pérez Coujil, Manuel Ugalde Carrillo, Manuel Larrubia, Juan Rojas, Rego Rubido, and a gang of henchmen led by Policarpo Soler, who left Cuba tight after the coup d'état with Batista's protection, in spite of being wanted by the courts of justice.
6. Weapons from Trujillo were introduced in Ciba with the clear complicity of those military men.
7. Dictator Batista did not have the courage at the Panama Conference to denounce this aggression on Cuba's honor and integrity; instead he embraced the brother of the Dominican murderer.
8. On returning to Cuba, hiding the truth from the people, Batista gave himself to the ignoble task of accusing the Cuban revolutionaries of being followers of Trujillo, a relationship that is impossible because of our democratic convictions.
9. In reply to the cowardly maneuver, we challenge Batista to give the FEU and the fighters of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement the weapons of the Republic, which he has not known how to use with dignity, so that we may show our willingness to settle the matter with the Dominican dictator and save our nation's honor.
10. Cuba must answer the offence it had suffered with dignity; consequently, we support armed action against the tyrant Trujillo, which will free the Dominican from an oppression that has already lasted over twenty-five years. We challenge Batista to say the last word or to unmask himself before the Cuban people.

11. The weak, opportunistic, and cowardly attitude of the regime toward Trujillo is treason to the fatherland.
12. Trujillo and Batista are dictators who endanger democratic sentiment in America and disturb the people, friendship, and happiness of Cubans and Dominicans.
13. While the pro-Trujillo military remain in their posts, the best men of the armed forces, the officers most capable of defending the fatherland, are imprisoned and treated inhumanly on the Isle of Pines.
14. The FEU and the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement consider Colonel Barquín, Major Borbonet, and other imprisoned officers as the most honorable representatives of the army. They are the men who have the sympathy of the armed forces today.
15. The army, led by those honorable and prestigious officers, serving the Constitution and the people, will have the respect and sympathy of the Cuban Revolution.
16. The FEU and the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement adopt as their watchword the unity of all the revolutionary, moral, and civic forces of the nation – students, workers, youth organizations, and all men of dignity – so that they will support us in this struggle which will end in our victory or death.
17. The time has come for political parties and the Sociedad de Amigos de la República to cease their useless pleading for friendly solutions – an attitude which might have been patriotic at other times but which after four years of rejections, contempt, and refusal is infamous.
18. As the Revolution faces a struggle to death against the tyranny, victory will belong to those of us who fight on the side of history.
19. The Revolution will take power free of compromises or vested interests to serve Cuba with a program of social justice, freedom, and democracy. There will be respect for just laws and the full recognition of the dignity of all Cubans without petty hatreds against anyone. Those of us who lead the Revolution are ready to sacrifice our lives in order to achieve our pure intentions.

José Antonio Echevarría Bianchi

Fidel Castro Ruz

**APPENDIX D: TOTAL WAR AGAINST TYRANNY MANIFESTO – MARCH 12, 1958<sup>207</sup>**

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<sup>207</sup> <http://www.latinamericanstudies.org/cuban-rebels/3-12-58.htm>

In refusing authorization to the Cuban press to visit the field of operations and know the stand of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement, dictator Batista has shown not only moral cowardice and military impotence but has said the last word on the final outcome of this struggle.

He could have rendered an invaluable service to the country in this final moment, in the midst of all the harm he had done, namely, by resigning in order to save the coming bloodshed, for he has irremediably lost this contest.

If it is unjustifiable to rule the country by brute force and sacrifice human lives in the selfish desire to remain in power, as he's been doing for the last six years, it is a thousand times more unjustifiable to sacrifice those lives when the unbreakable will of the nation, expressed in all social, political, cultural, and religious sectors, against which it is impossible to govern has decreed the immediate and inexorable end of this regime.

Those of us who know intimately the values the fatherland is sacrificing in its fight for freedom, those of us who know the lives it costs to take every position and to carry out every action; those of us who always hold before us the memory of Frank País and José Antonio Echevarría as symbols of hundreds of other equally courageous young men who have died to fulfill their duty, and who know how much the fatherland will need them in the creative moment which is close at hand, with deep sorrow, with uncontainable indignation, we understand and suffer as no one else the monstrous and futile crime being committed against Cuba.

If the right to know the truth is denied the people, how can one expect the slightest respect for physical integrity, personal freedom, and the right of meeting, organizing, and electing rulers?

The tyranny could not grant anything without the danger of disintegrating; the tyranny has no other possible alternative than its immediate disappearance.

If the rebels are vanquished, if the troops of the regime dominate the mountains and the valleys, if our forces do not fight and are impossible to locate, if what exists are small groups engaged in misdeeds, and if against us there stands a strong, invincible, disciplined, and combative army, as the General Staff in its cynical reports states, why were newspapermen not permitted to come to the Sierra Maestra? Why, if they once ostentatiously sent them in a plane to see that no one was here, why do they not allow newspapermen not to even come close to the southern zone of Oriente? Why do they not remedy this insult among the many that have conferred on the Cuban press?

The explanation to the denial of authorization to the newspapermen lies in the shameful defeats that the dictatorship has suffered in the military offensives that, over and over again, we have destroyed; in the unprecedented acts of barbarism that their henchmen have committed against the defenseless civilian population; in the real and true fact that their troops have been

expelled from the Sierra Maestra and the 26<sup>th</sup> of July army is not on the offensive in the north of the province; in the demoralization and cowardice that have reached such a degree in their ranks that women and children are used as shields to prevent the action of our detachments; and in the ever more numerous cases of soldiers and officers coming to our side with their weapons, sickened by the corrupt and criminal regime they have been defending.

The dictatorship did not want the newspapermen to know on the spot, directly and irrefutably, that more than 400 peasants were murdered during the six months of suspended guarantees and press censorship; that in Oro de Guisa in Oriente Province alone fifty-three peasants were killed in one day; that a mother lost her nine children and husband in a single blow. It did not want the newspapermen to see the hundreds of humble homes, built through sacrifice, reduced to ashes in brutal reprisal, children mutilated by the bombing and machine-gunning of defenseless hamlets. It did not want them to know the lies that the General Staff reported after each combat, trying to deceive not only the people but the army itself. We were going to take the newspapermen to the scenes of the defeats and the crimes of the tyranny; we were going to show them the prisoners we have taken and the soldiers that have joined our side. If all the truth of the Sierra Maestra were to reach the Cuban newspapermen, the regime would fall by the frightening discredit it would have suffered in the eyes of the members of the armed forces.

No other reason could exist for refusing to grant them permission. In our territory, the newspapermen can move around and report freely what they see. There is no censorship here, with demonstrates that freedom of information is not incompatible with military security and that restrictions on the freedom of the press are not justified in the midst of war.

We were sure of the negative reply because we knew the deep reasons for it, but we wanted to unmask the dictatorship, unmask its moral bankruptcy and military weakness, show the Cuban people that they must have faith in our victory, that faith our men have acquired fighting under the most adverse circumstances, that invincible faith always held by representatives of just causes, because what matters, as Martí said, is not the number of weapons at hand but the number of stars on one's forehead. Now we can fight with the power of our reason and the power of our numbers, with the power of justice as well as the power of arms. The promise that we made one day to the nation will soon be a beautiful reality.

The dictatorship had just suspended guarantees and reestablished the hated censorship. This demonstrates its tremendous weakness. It was enough to announce that the chains were about to be broken and the rapid advance of Colum 6 toward the heart of Oriente Province would soon precipitate the measure in the midst of an atmosphere of general strike. The ministers are resigning, the ship is sinking, and the people are rising.

Meeting at the camp of Colum 1, general headquarters of the rebel forces, the national directorate of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement unanimously agreed the following:

1. To consider that due to the visible disintegration of the dictatorship, the growth of the national consciousness and the belligerent participation of all social, political, cultural, and religious sectors of the country, the struggle against Batista has entered its final stage.
2. That the strategy of the final blow is based on the general revolutionary strike, to be seconded by military action.
3. That revolutionary actions should be progressively intensified from this moment on, until they end in the strike which will be ordered at the proper time.
4. The citizenry should be alerted and warned against any false order. Therefore, contacts and communications should be defined and ensured.
5. The general strike and the armed struggle will continue resolutely if a military junta should try to take over the government. The position of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement on this point is unchangeable.
6. To ratify the appointment of Dr. Urrutia to preside over the provisional government, to invite him to select freely and in the shortest possible time his aides, and to determine the governmental measures to be taken when the tyranny falls in accordance with the minimum program set forth in the Sierra Maestra Manifesto and in the Letter to the Cuban Liberation Junta.
7. The organization and direction of the strike in the labor sector will be charged to the National Labor Front, which will assume in turn the representation of the proletariat before the provisional revolutionary government.
8. The organization and direction of the strike in the professional, commercial, and industrial sectors will be charged to the Civic Resistance Movement.
9. The organization and direction of the student strike will be charged to the National Student Front.
10. Armed action will be charged to the rebel forces, the militias of the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement, and all revolutionary organizations that support the Movement.
11. The underground papers, *Revolución*, *Vanguardia Obrera*, *Sierra Maestra*, *El Cubano Libre*, and *Resistencia*, will orient and inform the people, and they will be distributed through underground channels in order to prevent faked issues.
12. To exhort all newspapermen, radio announcers, graphic arts workers, and all newspaper, radio, and television enterprises to rapidly organize in order to strongly answer the new censorship, so that they become, as in Venezuela, the leaders of the people in the final struggle for liberation.
13. To exhort the students of the country to maintain now more than ever the indefinite strike already started, so that the valiant student youth, who have fought heroically for

- freedom, will be the vanguard of the general revolutionary strike. No student should return to class until the dictatorship falls.
14. From April 1, for military reasons, all highways or railway traffic is prohibited throughout Oriente Province. Any vehicle passing through those routes by day or by night may be fired on without warning.
  15. From April 1, the payment of any type of tax to the state, province, or municipality in the entire national territory is prohibited. All payments made after that date to the state treasurer of the dictatorship will be declared null and will have to be paid again to the new provisional government, aside from the fact that noncompliance with this measure will be considered an unpatriotic and counterrevolutionary act.
  16. The continuance of any person in an office of trust in the executive branch from the presidency of government councils to paragonmental agencies subsequent to April 5 will be considered treason to the fatherland.
  17. Due to the state of war existing between the people of Cuba and the Batista tyranny, any officer, noncommissioned officer, or enlisted man in the army, navy or police who continues to render service against the oppressed people after April 5 will lose his right to continue service in the armed forces. There is no valid pretext to use weapons against the people under circumstances such as those of today. Every enlisted man has a duty to abandon the army, rebel, to join the revolutionary forces. All those who come with the weapons will be received in our ranks, their rights respected, and they will be promoted to the rank immediately above and will be exempt from the obligation to fight against their former comrades.
  18. The 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement will reject only the collaboration of those military men who have been directly responsible for inhuman acts or theft. Having fought against us does not prohibit any military man from serving his fatherland in this decisive hour.
  19. In view of the news that seven thousand more men will be drafted into the army to fight the Revolution, the 26<sup>th</sup> of July Movement declares that any citizen enlisting in the armed forces subsequent to the date hereof will be subject to court martial and judged as a criminal.
  20. Likewise, after April 5, any judicial functionary, magistrate, or district attorney who wishes to preserve his right to continue in office must resign from his post, because the absolute lack of guarantees and of respect for legal procedure has converted the judiciary into a useless body.
  21. To communicate to the country that Column 6 of the rebel forces, under the command on Major Raúl Castro Ruz, having left the Sierra Maestra has invaded the northern part of Oriente Province; that Column 3 of the rebel forces, under the command of Juan Almeida, has invaded the eastern part of the same province that rebel patrols are



- moving in all directions through the entire province and that the action of armed patrols will intensify throughout the nation.
22. From this moment, the country should consider itself in total war against the tyranny. The weapons of the army, navy, and police belong to the people. They should serve the people. No one has the right to use them against the people, and anyone doing so should not expect the least consideration. In order to give the leaders of the revolutionary movement time to act, the campaign of extermination against all those who serve the tyranny with weapons will not begin until April 5. From that date, the war on the military will be relentless in order to recover those weapons which belong to the nation and not to the dictator. The people will find it necessary to annihilate them wherever they may be, as the worst of enemies of their freedom and happiness.

The entire nation is determined to be free or to perish.

**APPENDIX E: MANIFESTO OF THE SIERRA MAESTRA - JULY 12, 1957<sup>208</sup>**

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<sup>208</sup> *Bohemia* (Habana), July 28, 1957.

From the Sierra Maestra, where a sense of duty has united us, we issue this call to our compatriots.

The time has come when the nation can save itself from tyranny through the intelligence, courage, and civic spirit of its children, through the efforts of all those who feel deeply the destiny of this land where we have the right to live in peace and freedom.

Is the nation incapable of fulfilling its high destiny or does the blame for its impotence fall on the lack of vision of its public leaders? Can we not offer the fatherland in its most difficult hour the sacrifice of all personal aspirations, as just as they may seem, of all petty passions, personal or group rivalries, or in short, of whatever selfish or small sentiment has prevented placing on the alert, as one man, this formidable Cuban nation, awakened and heroic? Or is the self-centered desire of an aspirant to public office worth more than all the blood that has been spilled for this republic?

Our greatest weakness has been disunity. The tyranny, conscious of it, has promoted it by all means in all its forms, offering half solutions, tempting ambitions, and using the good faith or naïveté of its adversaries. They have divided the parties into antagonistic factions, divided the political opposition into different groups and, when the revolutionary current gained strength and became more threatening, they attempted to set the politicians against the revolutionaries, with the only goal of beating the Revolution now and deceiving the parties later.

It is no secret that if the dictatorship managed to defeat the rebel bulwark of the Sierra Maestra and crush the underground movement, once free from the revolutionary danger there would be left not even the remotest possibility of honest elections in the midst of general grief and skepticism.

Their intentions were made evident when they approved the senatorial minority, perhaps too soon, disregarding the Constitution and poking fun at the obligations contracted with the very delegates from the opposition. Once again they tried to divide and prepared the way for the electoral farce.

That the Interparliamentary Commission failed is recognized by the party that proposed it in Congress. The seven opposition organizations that participated in it say so categorically today and denounce the whole thing as a bloody joke. All the civic institutions affirm it; above all, the facts affirm it. It was bound to fail because it wanted to ignore two forces that have made their appearance in Cuban public life: the new revolutionary generation and the civic institutions, much more powerful than any little clique. Thus, the interparliamentary maneuvers could only prosper on the basis of the extermination of the rebels. The fighters of the Sierra were not offered

anything in that wretched solution but prison, exile, or death. One should never accept discussions on those terms.

Unity is now the only patriotic way. Unity is what all political, revolutionary, and social sectors that combat the dictatorship have in common. And what do all the opposition political parties, the revolutionary sectors, and the civic institutions have in common? The desire to put an end to a regime based on force, the violation of individual rights, the infamous crimes, the desire to seek the peace that we all long for by the only road possible, the democratic and constitutional path of our country.

Do the Sierra Maestra rebels not want free elections, a democratic regime, a constitutional government? It is because they deprived us of those rights that we have fought since March 10. We are here because we want them more than anyone else. To demonstrate it, there are our fighters dead in the mountains and our comrades murdered in the streets or secluded in prison dungeons. We are fighting for the beautiful ideal of a free, democratic, and just Cuba. What we do not do is to agree with the lies, farces, and compromises of the dictatorship.

We want elections, but with one condition: truly free, democratic, and impartial elections.

Is it not nonsensical, a deception of the people, what is happening here daily? Can there be free, democratic, and impartial elections under a tyranny which represents antidemocracy and partiality?

Of what value is the direct and free vote, the immediate counts, and other fictitious concessions if on the day of the elections no one is allowed to vote and the ballot boxes are filled at bayonet point? Of what use was the Committee on Suffrage and Public Liberties in halting the closing of radio stations and the mysterious deaths that continued to occur?

Has it done any good for public opinion to make demands? Have the exhortations for peace, the tears of mothers done any good?

With more blood, they want to put an end to the rebellion; with more terror, they want to end terrorism; with more oppression, they want to put an end to the desire for freedom.

Elections should be presided over by a provisional, neutral government, with the support of all, that will replace the dictatorship in order to induce peace and move the country toward democratic and constitutional normalcy.

This should be the slogan of a great civic-revolutionary front [Frente Civico Revolucionario] that comprises all political parties of the opposition, all civic institutions, and all revolutionary forces.

Consequently, we propose to all opposition political parties, all civic institutions, and all revolutionary sectors the following:

1. To create a civic-revolutionary front with a common strategy of struggle.
2. To designate as of now a person to preside over the provisional government, whose election will be left to the civic institutions to show the disinterest and impartiality of opposition leaders.
3. To declare to the country that due to the gravity of events there is no possible solution other than the resignation of the dictator and the transference of power to the person who has the confidence and the support of the majority of the nation, expressed through its representative organizations.
4. To declare that the civic-revolutionary front does not invoke or accept mediation or intervention of any kind from another nation in the internal affairs of Cuba. In contrast, it supports the denunciations of the violation of human rights made by Cuban emigrants before international organizations and asks the government of the United States that as long as the present regime of terror and dictatorship persists to suspend all arms shipments to Cuba.
5. To declare that the civic-revolutionary front, by republican and independent tradition, will not allow any type of provisional military junta to rule the Republic.
6. To declare that the civic-revolutionary front plans to separate the army from politics and to guarantee the apolitical nature of the armed forces. Military men have nothing to fear from the Cuban people, but it is the corrupt clique that sends them to their death in a fratricidal struggle.
7. To declare under formal promise that the provisional government will hold general elections for all offices of the state, the provinces, and the municipalities at the end of a year following the norms of the 1940 Constitution and the Electoral Code of 1943, and that power will be given immediately to the elected candidates.
8. To declare that the provisional government must adjust its mission to the following program:
  - a. Immediate freedom for all political, civil, and military prisoners.
  - b. Absolute guarantee of freedom of information, of the spoken and written press, and of all the individual and political rights guaranteed by the Constitution.
  - c. Designation of provisional mayors in all the municipalities after consultation with the civic institutions of the locality.
  - d. Suppression of embezzlement in all its forms and adoption of measures that tend to increase the efficiency of all state agencies.
  - e. Establishment of the civil service on a career basis.
  - f. Democratization of labor politics, promoting free elections in all unions and industrial federations.
  - g. Immediate initiation of an intensive campaign against illiteracy, and civic education emphasizing the duties and rights of each citizen to his society and fatherland.
  - h. Establishment of the basis for an agrarian reform to distribute barren lands and convert into owners all the tenant farmers, sharecroppers, squatters, and lessee planters who have small parcels of land, be it property of the state or of private persons, with prior indemnification to the owners of the land.
  - i. Adoption of a healthy financial policy that safeguards the stability of our currency and tends to use the credit of the nation in productive works.
  - j. Acceleration of the process of industrialization and the creation of new jobs.Special emphasis must be put on two points of this document.

First: The need to name now the person called to preside over the provisional government of the Republic, to demonstrate before the world that the Cuban nation is capable of uniting behind the ideal of freedom and supporting the person who, meeting the conditions of impartiality, integrity, capability, and decency, can represent that ideal. There are more than enough men in Cuba capable of presiding over the Republic!

Second: That this person must be designated by all civic institutions because those organizations are apolitical and their backing would free the provisional president of partisan compromises and lead to absolutely clean and impartial elections.

To form this front it is not necessary that the political parties and the civic institutions declare themselves in favor of the insurrectional thesis and come to the Sierra Maestra. It is enough that they deny all support to the regime's electoral compromise and declare heroically before the nation, before the armed forces, and before world opinion that after five years of useless effort, of continuous deceit and rivers of blood, in Cuba there is no other solution than the resignation of Batista, who already has ruled the destiny of the country in two stages for sixteen years, and that Cuba is not disposed to fall into the situation of Nicaragua or Santo Domingo.

It is not necessary to come to the mountains to discuss this. We can be represented in Havana, in Mexico, or wherever may be necessary.

It is not necessary to decree the Revolution: Organize the front that we propose and the downfall of the regime will follow, perhaps without spilling another drop of blood. One has to be blind not to see that the dictatorship is in its last days, and that this is the moment when all Cubans must put forth the best of their intelligence and effort.

Can there be another solution in the midst of civil war with a government incapable of guaranteeing human life, which no longer even controls the action of its own repressive forces and whose continued tricks and games have made completely impossible the slightest public confidence?

No one should be deceived by the government propaganda concerning the situation in the mountains. The Sierra Maestra is already an indestructible bulwark of freedom that has taken root in the hearts of our compatriots, and here we shall know how to honor the faith and confidence of our people.

Our call may not be heard, but the fight will not stop because of it, and the victory of the people, although it will be much more costly and bloody, will not be prevented by anyone. We hope, however, that our appeal will be heard and that a real solution will halt the spilling of Cuban blood and will bring an era of peace and freedom.

**APPENDIX F: MIAMI PACT - NOVEMBER 1, 1957<sup>209</sup>**

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<sup>209</sup> Dubois, Jules. *Fidel Castro: Rebel Liberator or Dictator?* Indianápolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959.

In view of the above, the political parties, the revolutionary organizations and the Federation of University Students, united on free soil belonging to this great democracy that is the United States of America, agree to the following:

First: Increase the fight against the regime of terror of Batista until a democratic form of government is restored to the island.

Second: Constitute the Council of Cuban Liberation to unite the civic and material forces of the Cuban people and organize the transition between the dictatorship and a constitutional and democratic government.

Third: Underline that a constitutional, legal and democratic government is sought in which the people of Cuba will be able to express their wishes and declare that the existing tyranny has not been able and will never be able to offer anything but anarchy, repression, terror and plunder.

Fourth: Declare that owing to the dangerous situation existing in the nation, there is no other solution but to bring about the end of the present government and to constitute a provisional government which will preside over the process of reconstruction and summon a general election which will be celebrated as soon as possible, so that the Cuban people can freely elect its candidates, and offer this democratic government a solid backing so that its stability and impartiality will be assured. This provisional government shall in no case exceed the term of eighteen months, at the end of which the new government elected by the people shall take over.

Fifth: Agree that the provisional president shall not be permitted to become a candidate for any position to be filled by the elections presided over by the provisional government. Agree also, that the ministers, governors and mayors must give up their offices six months before the elections to be able to participate as candidates for the presidency or for any other elective position.

Sixth: Agree to the minimum program to be undertaken by the provisional government in its work to restore order and democracy under the compliance of the 1940 Constitution. This program should be inspired by the following objectives:

- A. Immediate liberty of all political prisoners, civilians and military.
- B. Restoration of civil liberties.
- C. Establishment of systems of control and punishment to end graft.
- D. Enactment of a Civil Service Act.
- E. Creation of a higher standard of education, scientific research, technical education and the conservation of our natural resources.



- F. Betterment of governmental agencies and institutions violated and plundered by the dictatorship.
- G. Preservation of the monetary stability and work to in a manner productive to the country.
- H. Establishment of regulations covering agrarian reform.
- I. The organization of free elections in the trade unions, in whose operation the dictatorship has intervened.
- J. Creation of new sources of employment and higher standard of living for farmers and workers through the establishment of new industries and the development of agriculture and mining.

Seventh: Declare that the Council of Cuban Liberation backs up all the charges of violation of human rights committed by Batista made by Cubans to the United Nations and other international organizations; request that, until peace is obtained in Cuba, all the shipments of arms given to the Cuban government for hemispheric defense be suspended by the government of the United States, as the dictatorship is using such equipment against the Cuban people and not for continental defense. And request from the United States and the Organization of American States the recognition of this Council of Cuban Liberation, in view of the civil war existing on the island.

Eighth: Invite all the Cuban civic, professional, religious and cultural institutions and the trade unions and financial institutions and organizations to back up these ideals integrating this movement against Batista.

Ninth: Reiterate our firm decision to separate the armed forces from the political battles and guarantee the proper organization of same, and we appeal to them requesting that they also unite with us and support the common objective of obtaining freedom from the tyranny which has caused Cuba so much bloodshed, so that the present climate of hate and death strangling the Republic ceases, never to return.

Tenth: Maintain after the success of the revolutionary goal the necessary integration to bring about the task of furnishing our country with the freedom it needs and consolidate a democratic regime for our nation.

Carlos Prío, Carlos Hevia, Carlos Maristany and Tony Varona (*Autenticos*)

Manuel Bisbé and Roberto Agramonte (*Ortodoxos*)

Felipe Pazos, Raúl Chibás, Léster Rodríguez, Lucas Morán and Mario Llerena (*M-26-7*)

Alberto Mora, Ramón Prendes and Faure Chomón (*FEU-DR/Student Revolutionary Directorate*)

Angel Cofiño (*CTC/Revolutionary Workers Directorate*)

Lincoln Rodón and José R. Andreu (*Demócratas*).

**APPENDIX G: PACT OF CARACAS - JULY 20, 1958<sup>210</sup>**

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<sup>210</sup> Radio Rebelde broadcast on July 20, 1958. Broadcast Transcripts of Radio Rebelde, July 1957 – Dec. 1958. (Microfilm collection), Princeton University Library, Microfilm 06154, Box 8-9 of C. Franqui Collection.

After the treacherous coup of March 10, which interrupted the normal democratic process of the nation, the Cuban people have opposed the tyranny with heroism and determination. Each and every form of defiance has been used in these six bloody years, and all sectors of Cuba have patriotically opposed Fulgencio Batista's dictatorship. The Cuban people, in their struggle to be free, have shed much blood demonstrating that they have a never-ending love for freedom. Ever since the long-gone days of student parades and demonstrations, when the first martyrs fell, up to the recent battles, such as the one at Santo Domingo in Oriente Province, in which the dictatorship suffered a crushing defeat, leaving on the battlefield its dead, wounded, and a large amount of equipment, much blood has been shed and numerous efforts made to free the enslaved fatherland. Labor strikes, three military conspiracies, and courageous protests by all the civic institutions have aided the heroic armed struggle in Santiago, Matanzas, Havana, Cienfuegos, and Sagua la Grande. In the cities sabotage and other revolutionary tactics have tested the indomitable spirit of a generation loyal to the immortal words of our national anthem: "To die for the fatherland is to live!"

Rebellion has spread over the whole nation. In the mountains new battle fronts have been created; in the plains guerrilla columns constantly harass the enemy. Today thousands of soldiers, in Batista's largest offensive to date, are being faced by courageous rebels who are defending, inch by inch, the free territory at the Sierra Maestra. One third of Oriente Province is under the control of guerrilla column number 6. In the plains, guerrilla column number 2 is fighting throughout the area between Manzanillo and Nuevitas. In the central region of Santa Clara, the Directorio Revolucionario has been fighting bravely. There have been battles in the Escambray Mountains and the surrounding area. Members of the Partido Revolucionario Cubano and the 26th of July Movement have also been fighting in this region. At Cienfuegos and Yaguajay, revolutionary guerrillas are fighting hard. Small guerrilla forces are operating in Matanzas and Pinar del Rio. In each corner of Cuba, a struggle to the death is taking place between freedom and dictatorship. Abroad many exiles are aiding in the effort to free the fatherland.

Aware that the coordination of human efforts, resources, civic forces, of political and revolutionary sectors of the opposition, including civilians, military men, workers, students, professionals, businessmen, and citizens in general is necessary to overthrow the dictatorship through a supreme effort, we pledge our united efforts. Hereby we agree to create a large revolutionary, civic coalition, made up of all of Cuba's sectors. We pledge our best and patriotic efforts to that goal because united we shall oust the criminal dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and give Cuba peace, returning democracy to the people--the two blessings which can lead our people toward greater progress, development, and freedom. We are aware of the need to act in a united manner. Our fellow citizens demand it.

This unity of the Cuban opposition forces is based on three main points:

1. Adoption of a common strategy to defeat the dictatorship by means of armed insurrection, reinforcing--as soon as possible--all the fronts and arming the thousands of Cubans willing to fight for freedom. The popular mobilization of all labor, civic, professional and economic forces, culminating in a great general strike on the civilian front; while, on the military front, action will be coordinated throughout the country. From this common determination, Cuba will emerge free,

and the painful spilling of blood will come to an end. Victory will be ours in any case, but it will be delayed if our activities are not coordinated.

2. Guiding our nation, after the tyrant's fall, to a normal state of affairs, a brief provisional government will be formed to establish full constitutional and democratic rights.

3. A minimum governmental program will be formed to guarantee the punishment of those who are guilty of crimes, workers' rights, fulfillment of international agreements, public order, peace, freedom, as well as the economic, social, and political progress of the Cuban people.

We ask the government of the United States of America to cease all military and other types of aid to the dictator, and also reaffirm our defense of our national sovereignty and the nonmilitary, republican tradition of Cuba.

To our soldiers, we say that the moment has arrived to deny their support to the tyranny. We trust them because we know that there are decent men in the armed forces. In the past hundreds of officers and enlisted men have paid with their lives, imprisonment, exile, or retirement from active duty because of their love of freedom, and there must be many others who feel the same way. This is not a war against the armed forces of the Republic but against Batista, the only obstacle to the peace desired and needed by all Cubans, both civilian and military. We urge workers, students, professionals, businessmen, sugar plantation owners, farmers, and Cubans of all religions, ideologies, and races to join this liberation movement which will overthrow the infamous tyranny that has soaked our soil with blood, decimated our best human resources, ruined our economy, destroyed our republican institutions, and interrupted the constitutional and democratic evolution of our country, thus bringing about a bloody civil war which will come to a triumphant end only with a revolution backed by all the people.

The hour has come when the intelligence, patriotism, courage, and civic virtues of our men and women--especially those who feel deeply the historic destiny of our nation, its right to be free and to adopt the democratic way of life--will save the oppressed fatherland. Our great future is assured by our history and our natural resources and the people's capacity to sacrifice. We call on all the revolutionary organizations and the civic and political forces of our nation to support this declaration of unity. Later, as soon as possible, we shall hold a meeting with every representative delegate to discuss and approve all the points of our pledge.

Fidel Castro (26th of July Movement)

Carlos Prío Socarrás (Organización Auténtica)

Enrique Rodríguez Loeches (Directorio Revolucionario)

Justo Carrillo (Agrupación Montecristi)

Manuel A. de Varona (Partido Revolucionario Cubano Insurreccional)

Angel Santos (Resistencia Cívica)

Lincoln Rodón (Partido Demócrata Independiente)

David Salvador, Angel Cofiño, Pascasio Linares, Lauro Blanco, José M. Aguilera (Unidad Obrera)

José Puente, Omar Fernández (FEU)

Dr. José Miró Cardona (Coordinador General).

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