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Soviet/Cuban Relations 1985-1991

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**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the
Department of Politics, University of Glasgow.**

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Abstract

In March 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). By 1985 relations between the Soviet Union and Cuba had been in existence for over 25 years and were extremely close in both ideological and trade terms. Soon after coming to power, Gorbachev implemented the policies of perestroika and glasnost while Fidel Castro introduced the campaign for rectification of errors in Cuba. There were great differences in these campaigns since the Cuban one was much more ideologically driven than its Soviet counterparts.

This study is an examination of the period from March 1985 to the end of 1991. This is done in three broad areas: official Soviet policy towards Cuba; the unofficial Soviet policy towards Cuba (an examination of academics and social/political commentators work on Cuba) and the Cuban perception and reaction to the events in the Soviet Union. This study also attempts to establish whether a re-thinking, with the benefit of hindsight, has taken place in the years since 1991.

In 1985 official and unofficial Soviet policy towards Cuba were identical but as the Gorbachev period continued this began to change. Official policy began to become contradictory in style since Moscow started "veiled" attacks against aspects of its relationship with Cuba while at the same time still defended the island in the face of continuing US hostility. Moscow also stated that the differences in Soviet and Cuban policies were because each campaign was designed for conditions specific to each country but that both had the same goal: the improvement of socialism. Although official policy became more outspoken, at no point during the Gorbachev era did it call for the termination of relations with Cuba. Unofficial Soviet policy started to change as the effects of glasnost permeated Soviet society. This became noticeable from 1987 onwards and reached the point that an open debate on the relationship was taking place. By 1991 unofficial policy was vastly different from the official Soviet line towards Cuba.

The Cuban government also stated that the programmes were for situations specific to each country but that both had the same goal, that being the improvement of socialism. The unofficial Cuban line mirrored the official one but by 1990 this started to change as it started to criticise Soviet policies. In 1991 the Cuban government also started to do this. Due to the difficult situation in the

socialist world the Cuban government from 1989 had been trying to increase its hard currency markets.

A general re-thinking with the benefit of hindsight has not taken place on either side but an examination of participants' memoirs is still a valuable study to conduct. Although it offers very little new evidence for this period it does, however, give more credence to the events that took place between March 1985 and December 1991.

Preface

In April 1989 Mikhail Gorbachev travelled to Cuba for a meeting with his Cuban counterpart Fidel Castro. As the date for Gorbachev's trip approached the Cuban government was inundated with requests for travel visas by foreign journalists as many in the West believed this visit could have "explosive" results not just for the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba but also the Cuban Revolution itself. This belief occurred due to the policy changes that had taken place in both the Soviet Union and Cuba in the mid to late 1980s that appeared to be very different in substance. Gorbachev had introduced the reforming policies of perestroika and glasnost in the Soviet Union where as Fidel had implemented the idealistic campaign of rectification of errors to try and solve Cuba's problems. Many in the West thought that Gorbachev would impose his ideas for change on his Cuban counterpart while in Cuba. This was not the outcome of his trip and Cuba's position within the Soviet elite may have even been strengthened by it. Relations between the two countries continued for two more years until in December 1991 the Soviet Union itself imploded and disintegrated but they had become more strained in this final period and it was only with the disintegration of the Soviet Union that the relationship between the two nations, which had lasted for over 30 years, came to an end.

This seven-year period in which Gorbachev was in power was of extreme importance in the relationship between his own country and Cuba and is perhaps only paralleled in importance in the 30-year relationship by the initial contact between Moscow and Havana in 1959/1960 and the tumultuous events surrounding the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962. The period in which Gorbachev was General Secretary of

the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Soviet Union's relationship with Cuba is the areas on which this study will concentrate. The role that the United States of America played in the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba will also be incorporated due to the US's status as a global superpower and its geographical and historical links with the Caribbean island. This will provide the thesis with a context of the world scene but on the main will concentrate purely on the bilateral relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba.

This study will incorporate an analysis of trade between the Soviet Union and Cuba, state-to-state relations, relations between the CPSU and the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC), and diplomatic links between the two countries. This will be conducted in a broad chronological order. The first two chapters will give a general background to the relationship between the Soviet Union from the time of the victory of the Russian Revolution until Gorbachev became general Secretary of the CPSU in March 1985. The first chapter will concentrate on the earliest contact between the Soviet Union and Cuba from November 1917 onwards. Cuba's position within the Communist International (Comintern) will be examined before Moscow's dealings with Fidel Castro and his followers during the guerrilla period of the 1950s are examined. The first chapter will conclude with a study of the relationship between Moscow and the fledgling government in Havana until December 1961 when Fidel proclaimed himself and thus the Cuban Revolution Marxist-Leninist.

The second chapter will concentrate on the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba from December 1961 until March 1985. This will be done in three sections with the first being the Soviet Union's relations with Cuba. The second section will concentrate on Cuba's dealings with the Soviet Union and the third will be a study of

Cuba's growing prestige on the world arena at this time and the role that Moscow may have played in this.

The next four chapters will concentrate on the Gorbachev period in a chronological manner. Chapters three, four and five cover two-year periods with chapter six covering solely 1991 by itself. Each chapter is, again, split into three different sections. The first is a study of official Soviet policy towards Cuba at that time. The second is an examination of Soviet academics and social/political commentator's work on Cuba to conclude the unofficial Soviet line. The third section is an analysis of Havana's reaction to the perceived changes that were being implemented in the Soviet Union. This will also involve a study of Cuban academics' works. The seventh and final chapter will be an amalgamation of the conclusions from the previous chapters before some comments will be made on the pressures and influences that were involved in the relationship between Moscow and Havana from its conception in January 1959 but in particular during the Gorbachev era.

A great amount of material has been written not only on the Cuban Revolution but also on the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba. A brief study of the literature available will be conducted. Although much has been written a great percentage of it either concentrates on earlier periods, looks in general terms at the whole 30-year relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba, or is a study of the Cuban Revolution as a whole. Soviet foreign policy throughout the entire Soviet period has unquestioningly received great attention from academics and historians worldwide. S. Clissold's Soviet Relations With Latin America A Documentary Survey provides documents and an in-depth study of Moscow's contact with each Latin American country separately in the years immediately after the Russian Revolution up to 1968 (1). The

Cuban Revolution, its history and the internal situation within the country have all received much scrutiny by academics. This started from the earliest days of the revolution, through the idealistic period of the 1960s and into the process of institutionalisation that Cuba went through in the 1970s that resulted in it resembling the Soviet Union itself (2).

The early period of the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba was heavily analysed partly due to the fact that these two countries appeared to be such strange bedfellows. Other questions which arose from this period were: were Fidel and his followers communists or not, what type of revolution had taken place in Cuba and what part had the US played in Cuba's increasing move to the left and more public embrace of the Soviet Union? Had the US policies forced Fidel to proclaim himself Marxist-Leninist in December 1961 (3)?

As has been stated, Cuba went through a very radical stage both internally and with its foreign policy in the 1960s. Cuba's radicalism was so great that problems in its relationship with the Soviet Union were beginning to appear. These problems lasted from the early to mid 1960s until 1970 when Cuba appeared to move back into the Soviet fold after its public backing of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and the failed attempt to produce a 10m ton sugar harvest or *zafra* in 1970. Cuba's radicalism, its impact on its relationship with the Soviet Union and the improvement in relations in the late 1960s have also attracted much interest from historians and writers (4).

The economic aspect of the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba has been another area that has attracted great interest. This started soon after the conception of the relationship when Moscow decided to buy the US sugar quota, which

had been cancelled when relations between the US and Cuba started to deteriorate. From this time, economic links between the Soviet Union and Cuba accelerated as illustrated by the first 5-year agreement, signed in 1964, between Moscow and Havana. Cuba's membership to the Council of Mutual economic Assistance (CMEA) further increased this. By the 1980s various levels of both trade and the amount of money that Cuba owed the Soviet Union were being suggested by analysts (5).

A very important element of the Cuban Revolution has traditionally been its foreign policy activities. B. Goldenberg in The Cuban Revolution and Latin America chronicle the immediate effect that the victory of the Cuban Revolution had on Latin America and the impetus that this gave to the communist parties there. This support only increased after the failed US backed invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961. The Bay of Pigs was also instrumental in Fidel's subsequent declaration that he and thus the Cuban Revolution were Marxist-Leninist in December 1961. He continues to chronicle Cuban foreign policy throughout the 1960s when it matched internal policy in radicalism with Ernesto "Che" Guevara attempting to spark revolutions in the Belgian Congo before his death in October 1967 in Bolivia.

Che's death appeared to end Cuba's role on the world stage but from the mid 1970s the Caribbean island became an even more prominent player on the world arena. This happened firstly with its troops' involvement in Angola and then Ethiopia before general Cuban involvement with the Sandinista government in Nicaragua after 1979 and the New Jewel Movement in Grenada in the early 1980s. Fidel also became the President of the Nonaligned Movement for three years until 1982 after its conference was held in the Cuban capital in 1979. This gave the impression that Cuba appeared to be punching above its weight on the world stage.

This phenomenon brought much scrutiny from academics around the world. H. Erisman in his work on Cuban foreign policy in Cuba's Foreign Relations in a Post-Soviet World and Cuban Foreign Policy Confronts A New International Order has opened up a much larger debate by looking at Cuba's role on the world stage as attempts by the government in Havana to try and break its traditional role of dependency. He wrote that pre 1959 Cuba had always been dependent on the US politically and economically and that after the victory of the Cuban Revolution, with its strong nationalistic tendencies, its foreign policy was dominated by the desire not to let this happen again. Erisman also suggests that counter-dependency is involved in Cuba's foreign policy. The Cuban government wanted diversification in its foreign policy so it could create economic and political space for itself while also managing to obtain assertive bargaining power on the global scene. Erisman then suggests a third theme in Cuban foreign policy: the distinctive role of Fidelista Cuba. This consisted of the Caribbean island supporting revolutionary movements and playing an active role in the Nonaligned Movement (6). Another important question that arose from this was the role that Moscow had played in Cuba's increased role in the world arena due to the very close nature of the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba by the 1980s. Research into this topic has been aided in recent years by some important documents becoming publicly available following the disintegration of the Soviet Union. This has been reflected in more recent academic work on this area (7).

The events surrounding the last two weeks of October 1962 were some of the most dramatic to occur in the 30-year relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba. The decision to place nuclear missiles on Cuba and the subsequent stand-off which took place between Moscow and Washington resulted in some of the most tense and

dramatic days of the entire Cold War period. After these events a mass of material has been written on them. The nature of this material improved with the advent of glasnost in the Soviet Union from the mid 1980s, as Soviet participants were freer to talk and write about them. International conferences of participants have even been staged. This mass of material has continued to grow since 1991 with the disintegration of the Soviet Union, as even more new material on this time has become available including the actual correspondence that took place between the Soviet and US leaders in October 1962. This has all been reflected in the work available on the Cuban Missile Crisis (8).

The years 1985 to 1991, again, attracted attention from historians and academics as the changes that were implemented in the Soviet Union started to have an effect on the Caribbean island. This interest was only increased as the differences between the internal policies being implemented in each country (glasnost and perestroika in the Soviet Union and the campaign of rectification of errors in Cuba) became greater. A number of articles that appeared at this time concentrated on the internal problems that Cuba faced in the mid to late 1980s when the campaign of rectification of errors had been introduced to try and solve them (9). The articles that did appear on Soviet/Cuban relations were often conducted on the basis that Cuba was part of the communist world. This had resulted in Cuba being analysed as being similar to Eastern European countries and ignoring its individualistic tendencies. This only intensified after the events in Eastern Europe in 1989 when many expected these events to be repeated in Cuba.

B. Carr and S. Ellner in The Latin American Left from the Fall of Allende to Perestroika analyse the effect of perestroika and the Cuban reaction to it had on the rest of Latin America and the communist parties that existed there. They believe the effect was great and caused left wing parties to react in one of two ways. Some abandoned

radicalism and joined alliances with other political parties and became involved in parliamentary politics while others in different countries became even more radical and formed closer ties with the Cuban Revolution as they were scared that Gorbachev wanted the Soviet Union to abandon its Third World policies and aims (10).

What is very noticeable about material on Cuba is that after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991 very little has been written on Soviet/Cuban relations from 1985 to 1991. The focus of attention had moved towards the question of whether the Cuban Revolution could continue to survive or not after the loss of its largest trading and idealistic partner. Again, this focus only increased with the actions of the US government in the 1990s as it attempted to further intensify the trade embargo on Cuba and the events in the late summer of 1994 when many Cubans attempted to flee the island for the US. This was all taken as being evidence that the Cuban Revolution was in permanent decline.

Although this is the case, a few books or articles have been written on the 1985 to 1991 period in the decade since. C. Mesa-Lago analysed the final 5-year plan between the Soviet Union and Cuba, J.I. Dominguez and C. Blasier offered more general analysis in Cuba After the Cold War. Yu. Pavlov wrote about the entire relationship between the two countries in his book Soviet-Cuban Alliance 1959-1991 that was published in 1994 and also in an article that he wrote on this subject in Cuban Communism (11). Pavlov's book and article are more of memoir sources due to the fact that he was involved in some of decisions actually made in the 30-year relationship. The lack of new work on the 1985 to 1991 period is somewhat surprising due to the importance of this final stage in Soviet/Cuban relations and the appearance of memoir sources, particularly on the Soviet side, by participants throughout the 1990s. One book which has been published,

however, is Sowjetisch-kubanische Beziehungen ab 1985 by the German author S. Fischer. The source material that is used is of a strong nature but perhaps more Cuban sources, particularly work by academics, could have been used to give a more rounded overall conclusion. N.S. Leonov and V.A. Borodaev wrote a biography of Fidel but this again relies heavily on Soviet sources (12).

This study will fall into the main framework that Erisman has suggested that exists in Cuban foreign policy. This is that Cuba was attempting to break its dependency on the US, counter-dependency, whereby Cuba increases its assertive bargaining power on the world stage and the purely Cuban Fidelista theme in its foreign policy. This study will however fill in some of the gaps that have appeared in the study of Soviet/Cuban relations from 1985 to 1991 in the decade since these events occurred. This study will incorporate a detailed analysis of both Soviet and Cuban academics' work which was written in the years 1985 to 1991 on the processes which were taking place within each other's country as well as the overall nature of Soviet/Cuban relations in these years. This will be done to conclude the unofficial Soviet line towards Cuba in these years. Some writers, most notably Dominguez, may have touched on this but such a detailed analysis has never before been undertaken. An analysis of Cuban academic work on the Soviet Union, also, has never been attempted. This study will add a new dimension to the study of Soviet/Cuban relations 1985 to 1991.

This research also benefits from the publication, throughout the 1990s, of participants' memoirs. A number of important memoirs have been published including two former Soviet ambassadors to Cuba, V. Vorotnikov and A. Kapto. K. Brutents, a member of the International Department of the CPSU Central Committee, has also published his memoirs, as have two former Soviet Foreign Ministers, A.A. Gromyko and

E.S. Shevardnadze. This nature of this study further benefits from the publication of Gorbachev own memoirs. As with all memoirs, these will be open to the accusation that they have been written for self-serving purposes to settle old scores and to prove that the actions that were taken at the time were indeed the correct ones taken for the right reasons. Although this is the case, these new memoirs will all add invaluable information to this study.

One aspect that is missing from this analysis is the lack of Cuban memoirs. Partly due to the fact that the Cuban regime is still in power, no top ranking PCC official or Fidel himself have ever written memoirs. It is also the case that no Cuban ambassador to the Soviet Union has ever written his memoirs either. Exceptions to this are General Rafael del Pino who was not only a high-ranking general in the Cuban air force but also a former member of Fidel's guerrilla group in the Sierra Maestra. His memoirs were published after he had defected to the US in the late 1980s but were published while the Soviet Union was still in existence. The other exception is the memoir written by Fidel's illegitimate daughter, Alina Revuelta Fernandez, after she too defected to the US. This memoir, although important, is more a personal account of her relationship with her father rather than a political account. The shortfall in Cuban memoirs will be partly countered by interviews that I have been able to conduct with various Cuban nationals. The result of this is that this study will incorporate the re-thinking, with the aid of hindsight, which has been conducted by both sides in the relationship. This can only be conducted once a number of years have passed but again this has never been undertaken.

While conducting my research I was lucky enough to travel to Cuba to broaden the scope of the study. This trip proved invaluable, as I was able to increase the number

of Cuban sources considerably. While I was in Cuba I was able to conduct several interviews. Top echelons of the PCC are extremely difficult to interview but I was able to hold interviews with other Cubans, including a retired ideologue to the Central Committee of the PCC and the Cuban academic expert on the economic relationship between Cuba and the Soviet Union, none of whom had been interviewed in this context before. This partly countered the lack of Cuban memoir sources. I was also able to access Cuban academic works which are not available within the UK including some unpublished works (this had resulted from the shortage of paper for publication during the Special Period in Peacetime). The Centro de Estudios Sobre America (CEA) in Havana very kindly printed a pamphlet for myself especially on Soviet/Cuban relations in 1991 whose information had been collected from the magazine Panorama Mundial, the publication of the Ideological Department of the PCC. The result of my trip to Cuba was that I was able to gain access to materials that I otherwise would never have accessed or were produced especially for my trip. I hope I have made the best of this opportunity and it adds greatly to both the uniqueness of my research and to the study of Soviet/Cuban relations 1985 to 1991.

As stated, a number of Soviet memoirs that have become available throughout the 1990s have been analysed. Apart from this the Soviet sources that I have used have been fairly extensive. This includes the official party paper, Pravda, and the government paper, Izvestia, as well as Moscow News, Komsomolskaya Pravda, Rossiskaya gazeta, Rabochaya Tribuna and Selskaya Zhizn amongst others. Various Soviet journals have also been examined including International Affairs and Kommunist as well as more popular publications such as Literaturnaya Gazeta, Argumenty i Fakty and New Times amongst others. During this process I have also, where appropriate, used the Foreign

Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). Most importantly for the topic of my research, the Soviet periodical Latinskaya Amerika has been examined in full from 1985 to 1991 in its Spanish form America Latina. This was done due to its availability. The result has been a thorough review of Soviet sources which made possible an examination of both the official and unofficial Soviet line towards Cuba in the period under study.

A thorough study of all available trade figures on both the Soviet and Cuban sides have also been conducted. This has proved somewhat difficult due to the availability of these figures, particularly on the Cuban side, but various issues of Anuario Estadístico from the 1950s to 1980s, the United Nation's Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) 1978, 1980 & 1985-1992, COMECON figures, Vneshniaia torgovlia Sssr statisicheskii sbornik 1918-1966, Vneshiaia Torgovlia Sssr v 1980 g & 1985-1990 g Vneshiaia Torgovlia Stran Chlenov Sodruzhestva nezavisimykh Gosudartsv v 1991 g, Statisticheskii ezhegodnik stran-chlenov soveta ekonomicheskoi vzaimopomoshchi v 1990 g, Economist Intelligence Unit reports and Cuba Business have all been consulted for this purpose.

A short note on conventions. Throughout this study, for transliteration I have attempted to follow the scheme used in Europe-Asia Studies. In some areas I have used a more common and familiar form for the English language e.g. Yeltsin instead of Yel'tsin. In Spanish I have chosen to omit the stress marks simply for convenience. Citations have been given in full when they first appear in a chapter but in a shortened form thereafter.

Endnotes

(1) A short review of works on Soviet foreign policy. See:

Adams, J.S. A Foreign Policy in Transition, 1992, Duke University Press, Durham.

Goldgeier, J.M. Leadership Style and Soviet Foreign Policy, 1994, The John Hopkins University Press, Boston.

Light, M. The Soviet Theory of International Relations, 1988, Wheatsheaf Books Brighton.

Zubok, V. & Pleshkov, C. Inside the Kremlin's Cold War, 1996, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Zwick, P. Soviet Foreign Relations Progress and Peace, 1990, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

Clissold, S. Soviet Relations with Latin America 1918-1968. A Documentary Survey, 1970, Oxford University Press, London.

(2) For analysis on the various stages of the Cuban Revolution. See:

Thomas, H. Cuba or the Pursuit of Freedom, Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1971, pp.1193-1385.

Mesa-Lago, C. Cuba in the 1970s Pragmatism and Institutionalization, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1974.

Cole, K. Cuba from Revolution Development, Pinter, London, 1998, pp.24-50.

(3) There was much debate on whether Fidel was communist when he came to power, what his intended relationship with the US was and his increasing radicalism at this time. See:

Fursenko, A. & Naftali, T. "One Hell of a Gamble" The Secret History of the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1997, John Murray, London, pp.34-100.

Suarez, A. Cuba: Castroism and Communism 1959-1966, 1967, The M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, pp.44-130.

Ramirez, B.T. Las Relaciones Cubano-Sovieticas (1959-1968), 1971, El Colegio de Mexico, Guanajuato, pp.15-45.

Miller, N. Soviet Relations with Latin America 1959-1987, 1989, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp.58-78.

(4) A number of authors have written of the importance of Fidel's backing of the Czech invasion and the failure of the 10m ton zafra in 1970 that pushed Cuba back towards the Soviet Union. See:

Gonzalez, E. "Castro: The Limits of Charisma" in Problems of Communism July-August 1970, Vol XIX, p.22.

Karol, K.S. "The Reckoning: Cuba and the USSR" in Horowitz, I. Cuban Communism, 1981, Transaction, Inc, New Brunswick, pp.632-647.

Shearman, P. The Soviet Union and Cuba, 1987, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, p.25.

Levesque, J. The USSR and the Cuban Revolution, 1978, pp.147-149.

Duncan, W.R. The Soviet Union and Cuba, 1985, pp.76-79 & p.99.

Miller, N. Soviet Relations with Latin America, 1989, p.95.

Mesa-Lago stated that this brought an end to Cuba's radical "Sino-Guevarist" stage.

Cuba in the 1970s, 1974, p.9.

(5) P. Shearman stated that after the failure of the 1970 zafra, Cuban membership to the CMEA was a logical step. The Soviet Union and Cuba, 1987, p.29.

C. Mesa-Lago wrote that Fidel may have also wanted membership to the Warsaw Pact since he left Moscow only five days before Cuba was granted membership to the CMEA.

Cuba in the 1970s, 1974, pp.16-17.

J. Levesque repeated this sentiment. The USSR and the Cuban Revolution, 1978, p.167.

M. Robins wrote that Moscow did this so it did not have to grant Cuba a formal defence treaty. "The Soviet-Cuba Relationship" in Soviet Foreign Policy in the 1980s, 1982, Praeger, New York, p.152.

For analysis of the economic relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba after Cuba had gained access to the CMEA see:

Vazquez, J.D. Cuba y el CAME, 1988, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, Havana.

Bekarevich, A.D. "USSR-Cuba. Collaboration of Experience and Perspectives" in USSR-Latin America. Collaboration of Writings and Perspectives, 1989, Nauka, Moscow, pp.41-53.

Rodriguez, J.L. "Las Relaciones Economicas Cuba-URSS" in Temas de Economia Mundial, 1986, pp.7-33.

(6) A number of authors have written about the heritage and nature of Cuba's

relationship with Africa. See:

Levesque, J. The USSR and the Cuban Revolution: Soviet Ideological and Strategic Perspectives, Praeger, New York, 1978, p.188.

Duncan, W.R. The Soviet Union and Cuba Interests and Influence, Praeger, New York 1985, p.124.

Shearman, P. "The Soviet Union and Cuba: the 'Best of Friends' in Light, M.

Troubled Friendships Moscow's Third World Ventures, 1993, British Academic Press, London, pp.174-175.

Gleijeses, P. "Havana's Policy in Africa 1959-1976: New Evidence from Cuban Archives" in Cold War International History Project Bulletin, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington DC, Winter 1996/1997, Issues 8-9, pp.5-13.

Dominguez, J.I. "The Armed Forces and Foreign Relations" in Mesa-Lago, C. & Belkin, J.S. Cuba in Africa, 1982, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh pp.68-69.

LeoGrande, W.M. "Cuban-Soviet Relations and Cuban Policy in Africa" in Cuba in Africa 1982, pp.15-16.

Marquez, G.G. "Cuba in Angola: Operation Carlotta" in Fidel Castro Speeches Cuba's Internationalist Foreign Policy 1975-80, 1981, Pathfinder Press, New York, p.339.

Erisman, H.M. Cuba's International Relations The Anatomy of a Nationalistic Foreign Policy 1985, Westview Press, Boulder, pp.68-70.

Gonzalez, E. "Institutionalization, Political Elites and Foreign Affairs" in Cuba in the World 1979, pp.24-25.

Lowenthal, A.F. " Why Cuba is in Angola (and what's next) in Weinstein, M. Revolutionary Cuba in the World Arena, 1976, Institute for the Study of Human Issues Inc, Philadelphia, pp 102-106.

Roca, S. "Economic Aspects of Cuban Involvement in Africa" in Cuba's International Relations, 1985, pp.165-172.

For the Latin American reaction to the Cuban revolution see:

Goldenberg, B. The Cuban Revolution and Latin America, 1965, Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, New York, pp.312-320

For the debate on the underlying reasons for Cuba's radical foreign policy see:

Erisman, H.M. Cuba's Foreign Relations in a Post-Soviet World, 2000, University Press of Florida, Gainesville, pp.20-48.

Erisman, H.M. "Cuban development Aid: South-South Diversification and Counterdependency Politics" in Erisman, H.M. & Kirk, J.M. (eds) Cuban Foreign Policy Confronts A New International Order, 1991, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, pp.142-148.

(7) A number of authors have stated that Cuba was not a Soviet proxy in Africa. See: Eckstein, S. "Cuba's Internationalism" in Halebsky, S. & Kirk, J.M. Cuba 25 Years of Revolution 1959-1984, 1985, Praeger, New York, pp.376-378.

Duncan, W.R. The Soviet Union and Cuba, 1985, pp.130-131.

Gonzalez, E. "Complexities of Cuban Foreign Policy" in Problems of Communism, November-December 1977, Vol XXVI, p.2.

(8) A conference with representatives from all three countries took place at the start of 1988.

The US was represented by Raymond Garthoff, Cuba by Rafael Hernandez and the Soviet Union by Sergo Mikoyan.

One of the recent books to be published on the Cuban Missile Crisis is Gribkov, A.I. & Smith, W.Y. Operation ANADYR US and Soviet Generals Recount the Cuban Missile Crisis, 1994, edition q, inc, Chicago.

A number of documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis have been published by the Cold War International History Project. See

<http://www.seas.gwu.edu/nsarchive/cwihp>

Problems of Communism, Special Edition, Spring 1992.

(9) For an analysis of the problems which faced Cuba see:

Roca, S.G. "State Enterprises in Cuba under the New System of Planning and Management" in Cuban Studies, 16, 1986, pp.153-180.

Hanratty, D.M. "Differing Perspectives on Castro's Cuba" in Problems of Communism, September to October 1989, pp.108-115.

Ritter, A.R.M. "The Cuban Economy in the 1990s. External Challenges and Policy Imperatives" in Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, Vol 32 Number 3, Fall 1990, pp.117-150.

Mazar, M.J. "Prospects for Revolution in Post-Castro Cuba" in Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, Vol 31 Number 4, Winter 1989, pp.61-90.

Sandrol, P.C. "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Dictators: A Comparison of Fidel Castro and Alfredo Stroessner" in Journal of Latin American Studies, Vol 23, 1991, pp.599-620.

Blasier, C "Moscow's Retreat from Cuba" in Problems of Communism, November 1991, pp.91-99.

(10) Authors who wrote about relations between Moscow and Havana at this time see:

Kline, M. "Castro and 'New Thinking' in Latin America" in Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs, Vol 32 Number 1, Spring 1990, pp.83-118.

Goble, P. "Is Moscow about to cut Castro Loose?" in Radio Liberty Report on the USSR Vol 2 Number 2, 12 January 1990, pp.4-5.

Payne, D.W. "Fidel Castro versus Perestroika" in *Ibid* pp.6-10.

Wiarda, H.J. "Is Cuba Next? Crisis of the Castro Regime" in Problems of

Communism January to April 1991, pp84-93.

Shearman, P. "Gorbachev and the Restructuring of Soviet-Cuban Relations" in The Journal of Communist Studies, Volume 5, December 1989, Number 4, pp.63-83.

Carr, B. & Ellner, S. The Latin American Left From the Fall of Allende to Perestroika, 1993, Westview Press Boulder, pp7-18, p.116.

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-I dedicate this thesis to my parents-

“...for debts unpaid but not forgotten”

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Chapter 1

Early Encounters between Moscow and Havana

On 2 December 1961 Fidel Castro proclaimed himself and thus the Cuban Revolution, to be Marxist-Leninist, in a speech that was broadcast on Cuban television. This statement made Cuba the first communist country in the western hemisphere and it also signaled an increase in the island's ties with the Soviet Union that had been re-started in the aftermath of the victory of the Cuban Revolution in January 1959 (1). This chapter will examine Moscow's relationship with Latin America as a whole from the time of the victory of the Russian Revolution in November 1917, but will pay particular attention to its relationship with Cuba.

The first section will examine Moscow's relationship with the left wing parties that existed in Latin America or sprung up in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution in November 1917. The participation of these Latin American left-wing parties in the Third International or Comintern, this organization was created in March 1919 in Moscow to try and spark revolution in other parts of the world, will also be analyzed (2). The second section of this chapter will investigate state-to-state relations that came into existence between the Soviet Union and Latin American countries from the 1920s onwards. These state-to-state relations were conducted on two different levels: the first being the existence of trade conducted between the Soviet Union and Latin America and the second being the date of commencement and the degree of diplomatic relations. An examination of these will also be conducted. These two sections will allow a conclusion to be reached as the importance which Moscow directed towards Latin America from the November 1917 Revolution until 1960 when the Cuban Revolution had already been victorious.

The third section of this chapter will be a study concentrating exclusively on contact between Moscow and Havana. This will involve analysing trade between the two

countries and the date of commencement and degree of diplomatic relations between the two countries. In particular Fidel and his 26th July organization's relationship, not only during the guerrilla war but also after the victory of the revolution, with Moscow will be studied. By doing this, the extent of relations between the two countries before the victory of the Cuban Revolution will be established. It will also give the opportunity to suggest the reasons and illustrate the extent of this relationship as it increased in the months immediately after January 1959.

Latin America and the Comintern

In the immediate aftermath of the Russian Revolution the first contact that the Bolsheviks had with Latin America was with local left-wing parties that were already in existence there, as diplomatic relations had not previously existed between the Bolshevik government and Latin America ones. Part of the Bolshevik philosophy was that the Russian Revolution was the first step towards a world revolution that would eventually make the whole world socialist. In an effort to accelerate this process, the Bolsheviks created the Comintern in March 1919 (3). Before the creation of this organization, Latin America had already witnessed a left wing revolution. This was the Mexican Revolution of 1910 that even predated the Russian Revolution itself. Perhaps due to the Russian Revolution or other European influences, left wing parties had also been set up in some Latin American countries. Examples of these are the creation of a left wing party in Chile in 1912 and in 1918 the first communist party in Latin America based in Argentina. The Cuban socialist party (PSP) was created in 1925 (4). The result of this was that K. Brutents, head of the International Department of the Central

Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in the 1980s, wrote that Latin America was important to Moscow as these left-wing parties already existed. It could, therefore, be assumed that the Bolsheviks would take a great interest in the revolutionary potential of Latin America.

This would only be strengthened by the fact that John Reed, the US journalist, had close ties to the Bolshevik leadership and he had also reported on the Mexican Revolution (5). Latin America's importance to the Bolsheviks was strengthened by the fact that at the Second Congress of the Comintern in August 1920 it was represented by M.N. Roy (6). Although a Bengali by birth, he had lived in Mexico for a number of years and represented Mexico at this congress. Latin America's apparent exalted place in the Comintern's thinking is strengthened by the fact that the important Comintern agent Borodin had been in Mexico in the early 1920s (7).

This would suggest that the Bolsheviks leadership had some knowledge of Latin America but had they written extensively about this continent? This does not seem to be the case. This is perhaps due to the fact that their theories were based mostly on urban areas but Latin America was still predominantly rural at this time. Although this was the case Lenin had written on colonialism and in this work a small reference to Latin America was included. The vast majority of this work, however, concentrated on other areas of the world. Perhaps this could be because Latin American countries had gained their independence in the nineteenth century, but, as they were then perceived as "semi-colonies", it could have been thought that Lenin would still have taken some interest in them. This does not appear to be the case (8). Trotsky, too, had not written anything on Latin America even although he had been the one Bolshevik leader who had traveled to the New World when he spent the First World War in New York City (9).

This lack of Bolshevik interest in Latin America is all the more surprising since Marx and Engels had written about Latin America more than fifty years earlier. Their work on this area was not extensive but it did include an account of the great Simon Bolivar and even a brief outline of the economic conditions in Cuba (10).

This gives a somewhat unclear picture of the Bolsheviks' thinking towards Latin America and the role that it played in the Comintern. It was not until 1927 at the Fifteenth CPSU congress that Stalin made any reference to Latin America when he mentioned that the Argentinean economy was growing (11). This is strange since a previous speech in 1925 included a section on imperialism, the colonies and semi-colonies but made no reference to Latin America (12). This would suggest that Latin America did not play a significant place in either the CPSU leaders' thinking or that of the Comintern.

What positions Latin American countries held in the Comintern? Their significance in the Comintern's thinking will become apparent if an examination of this is carried out. The Comintern's structure closely resembled the organization of the Bolshevik party with, therefore, the most important bodies in both organizations being the central bureau and the Presidium.

Latin America played no role at the First Congress of the Comintern in March 1919 as it had no representative at this congress. The First Congress was very small and predominantly dominated by Russian delegates' (13). The Second Congress took place in August 1920 with the bureau growing from four members to thirty-six but Russian delegates were still dominant. This is not too surprising since, at this time, travel to Russia was still very difficult, not only from Latin America but even Europe, due to the intervention against the Bolshevik regime from other European powers. This

situation was further complicated by the fact that it was very difficult for delegates to obtain visas for travel to Russia at this time (14). Again, Latin America was not represented in this body but it did have a delegate at the congress (15).

Latin America started to make significant progress at the Third Congress was held from 22 June to 12 July 1921 and at this the bureau was increased in size, perhaps due to the overall increase in the size of the Comintern, to 23 members with another 27 given consultative voting rights. Mexico with Roy and Argentina (name of candidate not known) both had consultative voting rights (16). Although not full members of the bureau this was an important step forward for Latin America since it would suggest that its importance in the organization was increasing.

Between the time of the Third and Fourth congresses important changes took place in the organization. In August 1922 new members were admitted to the executive committee. Uruguay represented Latin America with Jose F. Penelon (17). In 1921/1922 the Presidium increased in size to eleven members from the previous seven but a Latin American country was not amongst them (18). Latin America was making progress in the organization, but only to a limited extent, since it did not have full membership to the bureau and had no representation in the Presidium.

The Fourth Congress was held in December 1922 and again the bureau was increased in size from 23 members to 24 with a further ten candidate members. Latin America was represented by Stirnev (this was a pseudonym and he was, infact, the Swiss born Edgar Woog) who was the candidate member for South America (19). It is debatable whether this was further progress as Latin America's membership had decreased from two to one and the whole region was bracketed together instead of as individual countries.

This phenomenon continued at the Fifth Congress that met from 17 June to 8 July 1924 when Latin America had only one candidate member of the bureau. It was again classed as South America. Its representative was O. Perez Solis (20). This could be seen as a step backwards for Latin America as the bureau had been increased in size drastically at this congress to 43 members and 29 candidate members but Latin America only warranted one regional candidate member. Latin America had no member in the Presidium at this Congress (21). A new body in the International Control Committee was created at this Congress. Latin America did gain representation to this new committee. Its representatives were the Brazilian Astrojildo and Stirner from Mexico (22). On 17 December 1926 a new Presidium was elected. It consisted of 25 members from 20 countries and 10 candidate members from 9 countries. The Argentine member V. Kodovela (23) represented Latin America. Although she was only a candidate member it was the first time that Latin America had gained representation to this body.

The Sixth Congress, held from 17 July to 1 September 1928, was very important for Latin America. In his opening speech to this Congress G. Zinoviev stated that Latin America had been "discovered" (24). This discovery was illustrated by Latin America's representation in the further expanded bureau. It was increased in size to 58 members and 43 candidate members. Latin America gained dramatically from this. Mexico with R. Carrillo, Argentina with R. Ghioldi, Brazil with A. Ledo, Uruguay with E. Gomez and Chile with Fermun-Araea were all granted full membership to the bureau. D. Reacko from Colombia and Ecuador and most significantly Cuba with Lopez were candidate members (25). Latin America had a new representative in the Presidium at this congress when Rocco, who represented the South American continent in this

organization, replaced Kodovela. Kodovela became the Argentine representative to the International Control Committee (26).

During the First Congress of Latin American communist parties was held in the Uruguayan capital Montevideo in April 1928 (27). Fifteen parties took part in this congress and this event, and the increase in Latin American representation in the Comintern could assume that Latin America was becoming much more prominent in Moscow's thinking. R.Munck in his book Revolutionary Trends in Latin America certainly believes that this was the point in the Comintern's history that Moscow showed most interest towards Latin America. The Second Latin American Congress was held in Buenos Aires in June 1929 at which Moscow laid down the tactics of the "third period". This meant that Moscow wanted Latin American communist parties to pursue militant revolutionary tactics (28). A Soviet trading company, Yuzantong, had been created in the Argentine capital and in September 1928 the Comintern had also produced for the first time the paper El Trabajador Latinoamericano. Events in 1928 illustrated Latin America's increased prestige within not only the Comintern but also the Soviet government (29).

The next congress, the seventh, was not held until August 1935. This congress marked another alteration in Comintern tactics when the more cautious "Popular Front" line replaced the radical stage of the "third period". The Soviet Union had become more inward looking as the processes of industrialization and collectivization were being followed by the mid 1930s. Radicalism had been replaced with pragmatism. Soviet foreign policy illustrated this as Moscow concentrated on obtaining diplomatic relations with countries instead of sparking the world revolution, as had previously been its goal. Soviet interest in Latin America reflected this change in Comintern tactics as its

representation in the movement decreased at the Congress. In a bureau that consisted of 46 members Latin America had only 2 full members. Both of these representatives came from Brazil and were C. Conteras (this was a pseudonym and in reality was the Italian born V. Vidali) and Louis Carlos Prestes. It also had 32 candidate members. R. Gild and Blas Roca represented Argentina and Cuba respectively (30).

It was a further six years before the next congress was held. The Eighth Congress held in June 1941 and was the last one to be held before the Comintern was disbanded in 1943. Again, the size of the bureau had fallen to 37 full members and 24 candidate members. This is not surprising due to the difficulties that delegates would have had in travelling to the Soviet Union due to the Second World War. Latin America was represented by Louis Carlos Prestes of Brazil as a full member and R. Ghiodi of Argentina and Blas Roca of Cuba as candidate members (31).

As has already been stated the Comintern agent Borodin had been in Mexico in 1919. His activities and those of other Comintern agents in Latin America are difficult to assess due simply to the secret nature of their work. Because of its geographical proximity to the US, Mexico appeared to be of the greatest interest to Moscow. Although he was only in Mexico for a very short space of time, Borodin did appear to try and carry out Comintern work even although Manuel Gomez, a US communist, stated that he was

... very ignorant about Latin America (32).

In early 1921 further attempts were made to increase Comintern/Soviet activity in Mexico (33). Reports also exist of a Comintern branch being set up in New York City that was responsible for agents and activities in the Caribbean (34). The Comintern

certainly appeared to be interested in events surrounding the uprising in El Salvador in 1932, in Cuba in August 1933 with the PCC's involvement in the general strike that caused the downfall of General Machado and in Brazil in 1935. In the aftermath of this the Comintern, Profintern, Peasant International and Youth International all had a presence in Cuba (35). Moscow's interest in Latin America is further illustrated by the fact that in the aftermath of diplomatic relations being broken off with Mexico, the former Soviet embassy in Mexico City, was raided by Mexican police, who found evidence of spying. S. Clissold in Soviet Relations with Latin America 1918-1968 states that the Soviet trading company Yuzantong had also been used as a cover for spying. Communist parties in Latin America also appeared to be particularly well funded which would suggest that they received funds from Moscow. It can therefore be concluded that Moscow did take more interest in Latin America than would first appear to be the case (36).

The interest from Moscow appeared to diminish with the termination of the Comintern in 1943. In October 1947 it was succeeded by the Communist International Bureau (Cominform). This organization was very different from the Comintern as it had a different goal from its predecessor, as its aim was to coordinate the activities of European communist parties. Moscow's thinking seemed to have become even more European dominated. Obviously, with the nature of the Cominform, Latin American countries played no part in this organization, before it too was disbanded in 1956 during the anti-Stalin campaign in the Soviet Union (37).

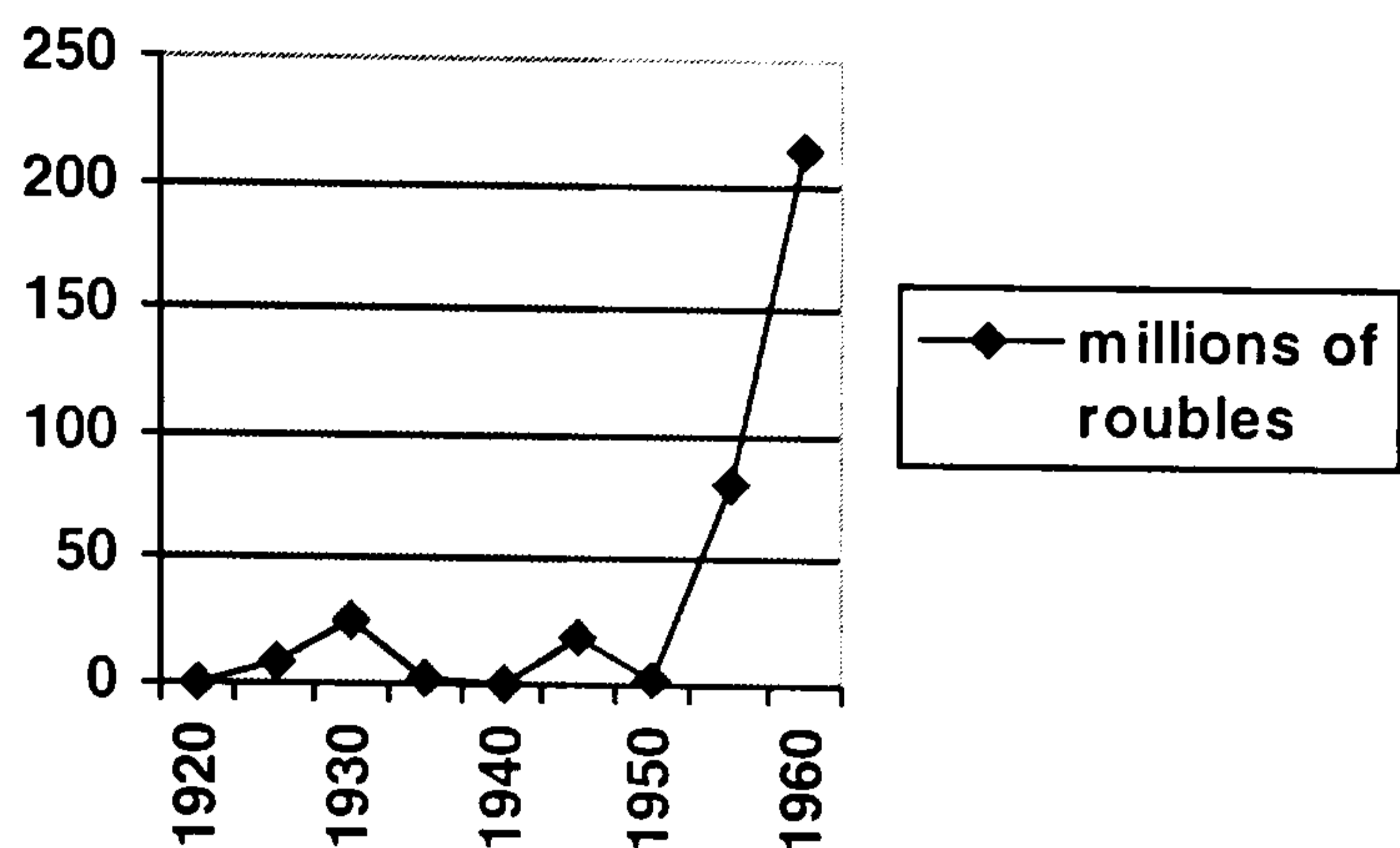
Moscow's attitude towards Latin America through the Comintern and Cominform periods are more complex than may first appear. With analysis of the positions that Latin America held in the Comintern it would appear that Moscow ignored Latin America

until 1928 when it was suddenly "discovered" before its importance fell as different tactics were employed. The activities of Comintern agents would seem to contradict this with Moscow showing more interest in the continent particularly Mexico especially in the early 1920s and during the "third period" in El Salvador in 1932, Cuba after the overthrow of General Machado's government in August 1933 and Brazil in 1935. As the 1930s progressed the importance of the Comintern decreased with the emergence of "Popular Front" tactics before it was eventually dissolved in 1943. Its successor, the Cominform, with its very different aims, only meant that the importance of Latin America for Moscow fell. As Moscow's priorities changed (the desire for diplomatic relations and the processes of industrialization and collectivization being implemented in the Soviet Union) the significance of the world revolution decreased as did Moscow's interest in Latin America within these organizations. The Bolshevik leadership may not have possessed great knowledge of Latin America but they were interested in the area. This interest, however, was not as great as it was in areas in which they had more knowledge of. The Comintern and Cominform did not, however, ignore Latin America, as may first appear to be the case. Moscow was indeed aware of Latin America and its possibilities at this time.

State-to-State Relations

One of the most basic forms of state-to-state relations is the levels of trade that are conducted between countries. If Soviet trade with Latin America is analysed it will provide an indicator of the importance which Moscow attached to its relations with the continent.

Figure 1.1 Soviet Trade with Latin America



Data analysed from Vneshniaia torgovlia SSSR statisticheskii sbornik 1918-1966, “Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia”, Moscow, 1967.

As can be seen Soviet trade with Latin America in this period was low but this is made even clearer when trade is converted into a percentage of total Soviet trade. In this period Soviet trade with Latin America hovered about 1% of the world total but in 1960 “jumped” to 2.1%. In comparison Soviet trade with the German Democratic Republic (GDR) accounted for 17.6% of it in 1960 (38). This clearly illustrates the low level of trade that was carried out between the Soviet Union and Latin America in the period up to 1960 since Moscow’s trade with the whole continent was just 2.1% but was over 17% with just one European country. Various reasons for this phenomenon exist: in 1920 the Bolsheviks were facing a Civil War while simultaneously withstanding Allied intervention. This situation slowly began to change and levels of trade, and the number of countries with which Moscow was trading, therefore, increased.

Soviet trade with Latin American, as has been stated, never reached great levels. The figures for 1930 and 1946 are higher than those in the rest of this period. The 1946 figure can be explained by the fact that in 1946 the Soviet Union was trying to recover

from World War 2 and as the international system had been thrown into disarray Moscow was conducting business with areas that it had not previously. The 1930 figure can be explained due to vast majority of this trade being carried out with Argentina and in this year it accounted for 62.7% of Latin American trade with Moscow. Soviet trade with Argentina was also “high” in the years 1927 to 1929 (39). What were the reasons for this? Argentinean beef was the reason for this as it was Argentina’s main export. Moscow turned to this source of beef as the Soviet Union was undergoing internal upheaval, particularly in agriculture, due to industrialization but more importantly collectivization, at this time. The Soviet Union was using Argentinean beef as a stopgap at this time.

It is only in the 1950s that Soviet trade with Latin America starts to grow. This commenced after changes in Soviet foreign policy took place following Stalin’s death in 1953. This resulted in the Soviet Union becoming more outward looking than had been previously been the case (40). Interestingly, Moscow also imported a larger amount of Cuban sugar in 1955. As with Argentinean beef, Moscow could have been using it as a stopgap since the amount quickly fell away again in 1956 (41). By 1960 relations between the Soviet Union and the new government in Cuba had already commenced and this explains the higher figure for 1960. In November 1960 the first trade agreement between the Soviet Union and Cuba was signed which further increased trade between them. This agreement tied Moscow to buying 700,000 tons of sugar from Cuba (42). This was the same amount of sugar that Cuba had sold to the US in 1958.

The conclusion can be made that Moscow did trade with Latin America before the victory of the Cuban Revolution in January 1959. Moscow appeared to prefer to trade with other countries and only turned to Latin America when it could not obtain the

goods it needed from elsewhere. This can be explained by (a) the geographical distance between Latin America and the Soviet Union that would result in the goods being expensive, (b) the inward looking nature of the Soviet Union under Stalin in the 1920s/1930s, (c) the favourable terms of trade that existed with Eastern Europe after World War 2 and (d) the fact that Moscow perceived this region as being under US influence which would make trade more difficult to conduct.

The date of the commencement of diplomatic relations and their degree is important in determining the extent of state-to-state relations.

Table 1.2 Soviet Diplomatic Relations with Latin America

<u>Country</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Degree</u>
Argentina	5 Jun '46	
Bolivia	18 Jun '45	Not full until 3 Dec '69
Brazil	2 Apr '45	Embassy level 23 Nov '73
Chile	11 Dec '44	Relations broken off 22 Sep '73
Columbia	25 Jun '35	Not full until 19 Jan '68
Costa Rica	8 May '44	Not full until 22 Dec '70
Dominican Republic	8 Mar '45	Mission level
Ecuador	16 Jun '45	Not full until 12 Sep '69
Grenada	7 Sep '79	
Guatemala	19 Apr '45	Mission level
Jamaica	12 Mar '75	
Mexico	4 Aug '24	Not full until 14 Jun '43 *
Nicaragua	12 Dec '44	Not full until 18 Oct '79

<u>Country</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Degree</u>
Peru	1 Feb '69	Embassy level
Surinam	25 Nov '75	
Trinidad & Tobago	6 Jun '74	
Uruguay	22 Aug '26	Mission level 27 Jan '43 *
Venezuela	14 Mar '45	Not full until 16 Apr '70

Diplomaticheskii slovar' A-U, Tom 1, Izdatelstvo "Nauka", Moskva, 1984, pp.314-325.

* Relations with Mexico were terminated 27 Jan 1930 and with Uruguay 13 Aug 1933.

Ibid, pp. 320 & 323.

Relations with Mexico would be further complicated when the Mexican government allowed Leon Trotsky to take up residence in Mexico City in the 1930s

This table shows that the Soviet Union only had relations with two Latin American countries (Mexico and Uruguay) in the 1920s and only a further one (Colombia) in the 1930s. This would tend to agree with the conclusions made about trade between the Soviet Union and Latin America: the Soviet Union had very little contact with Latin America at this time although this picture is slightly confused since the leading Bolshevik, Alexandra Kollontai, was the Soviet ambassador to Mexico in the 1920s (43).

A dramatic increase in the number of countries the Soviet Union had relations with took place in the 1940s. This occurred either at the end of World War 2 or in the last years of it. It would appear that the Soviet Union's efforts with the other Allied forces in defeating Nazism during the Second World War was important since Latin American countries wanted relations with the victorious Allied side rather than with the Soviet

Union itself. Interestingly Moscow only granted full relations to Argentina. This is significant as it was the country with which the Soviet Union had conducted most trade with. Again Moscow did not appear to be placing relations with Latin America very highly, since, if it had, it would have granted full relations to more Latin American countries.

It can be concluded that in the period from 1917 to 1969 state-to-state relations with Latin America were not of great importance to Moscow. Trade between the Soviet Union and Latin America had also been low and when it did sporadically increase it quickly fell to previous levels. Moscow treated Latin America as a stopgap in trade in this period. The Soviet Union did enjoy diplomatic relations with most Latin American countries by 1960 but most of these had not commenced until the 1940s and were not full diplomatic relations. There are a number of reasons for state to state relations not being greater: the simple matter of the distance between the Soviet Union and Latin America made relations difficult and the lack of any joint heritage since Russia, as a colonial power, had never made an impact in this area. The closeness and nature of the relationship between the continent and the US and the manner in which Moscow perceived them made relations with the Soviet Union even less likely. The great changes that the Soviet Union was undergoing internally (industrialization and collectivization) in this period resulted in Moscow being more inward looking and thus took less interest in Latin America. In this period until 1960 state to state relations between the Soviet Union and Latin America were not extensive but did exist in some form.

The Soviet Union and Cuba

In 1898 Cuba became the last country in Latin America to obtain its independence from Spain after two separate wars of independence had been fought. This, however, did not mark a new free stage in Cuban history as the US used the mysterious events surrounding the sinking of the USS Maine in Havana harbour in February 1898 to intervene in the island. This intervention even involved the US declaring war with Spain over Cuba and on 12 December 1898 the Paris settlement ended this war but Cuba had not been present at this meeting. In the twentieth century the Platt Amendment was implemented which gave the US the right to intervene in internal Cuban events and two years later in 1903 the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay in the south of the island was created. US involvement in Cuba in the first half of the twentieth century continued to increase especially in the economic field. Not only did the US become Cuba's biggest trading partner but US firms also owned great swaths of the island. During this time, the Cuban political situation was unstable but due to the Platt Amendment the specter of even greater US involvement hung over Cuba (44).

The geographical proximity of Cuba to the US made some form of US involvement inevitable but this, however, is not the case when relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union and before it Czarist Russia are examined. The book Raises de las relaciones Cubano Sovieticas by the Cuban author A. Garcia and his Soviet co-author P. Mironchuk, however, state that relations between the two countries date back to the start of the nineteenth century (45). Granma International Weekly Review on 17 March 1985 published an article that reported that three Russians (N. Melentiev, E. Konstatinaich and P. Stretlsov) fought alongside General Antonio Maceo for Cuban

independence in the nineteenth century (46). These would give the impression that the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba started much earlier than the victory of Fidel Castro's guerrillas in January 1959. The fact that both of these were published in the Soviet era highlights the fact that both the Soviet Union and Cuba were by this time trying to illustrate a long heritage to their relationship although the evidence quoted is not strong. Garcia and Mironchuk quote newspaper articles as evidence for their pronouncements. It would have been more surprising if Russian newspapers had not printed articles about problems being faced by Spain in its empire in the nineteenth century, as it was one of the great European powers (47). The three Russians who were involved in fighting with Maceo had not travelled from Russia but instead from New York City. This would suggest that their nationality was not of so great importance as would first appear since they would have acted without their country's knowledge (48). Importantly Czarist Russia had also never enjoyed diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Much more importantly for this study is the relationship between Moscow and Havana after the Russian Revolution. Moscow may have been aware of the existence of Cuba by the start of the twentieth century but the Bolsheviks would certainly have been aware of Cuba by the 1920s after the creation of Communist Party of Cuba (PSP) in August 1925 under the leadership of the former student leader Julio Antonio Mella (49). As has been stated Cuba was represented at the Sixth Congress of the Comintern in 1928 when Latin America was "discovered" and was also represented at the First Conference of Latin American Communist Parties in Buenos Aires in May 1929. A Cuban delegate was also in Moscow for the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935 (50).

It was not just the PSP's involvement in Comintern activities that would have brought Cuba to Moscow's attention but also the PSP involvement in the events of 1933 and its increased activity in Cuban political life from 1938. This perfectly illustrated the Comintern's "Popular Front" tactics when the PSP was given legal status and allowed to freely publish its own paper, Hoy. In 1943 when Juan Marinello became Minister without Portfolio in Batista's cabinet he became the first communist to hold such a position in Latin America (51). At this stage the PSP also had a fairly large membership. This would bring Cuba to Moscow's attention, as it was much bigger than other Latin American communist parties (52).

The years of the Second World War are also significant for the relationship between Moscow and Havana. Various reports exist of pro-Soviet demonstrations that took place in Cuba from 1941 onwards. Not only did demonstrations take place but a Committee for Help to the Soviet Union was also created in July 1941. This committee was responsible for sending food to the Soviet Union (53). As pro-Soviet demonstrations had not taken place in Cuba before the war it could be assumed that these activities showed unity for the Soviet Union in its fight against Nazism more than just purely for the Soviet Union itself. The Soviet Union was also an ally of the US during the war and as the US played such a prominent role in Cuban life at this time these activities are not so surprising as they may first appear. The extent, to which these events registered in Moscow are, however, debatable since the Soviet people would have been much more concerned with its battle against Nazism that threatened its very existence.

Although this is the case, diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on 14 October 1942 at mission level. Relations lasted for ten years until 3

April 1952 when they were broken off in the aftermath of General Batista's coup that brought him to power (54). When relations between the two countries were established in 1959 once Fidel had come to power, it was not, therefore, the first time that they had existed between the two countries. Interestingly in the ten-year period between 1942 and 1952, Andrei Gromyko visited the island. He travelled from New York City to present his credentials as the Soviet Union's envoy to the island in December 1943. In this capacity he did not actually live on the island since he was only the part-time envoy to Cuba. This was significant for the future of relations after 1959 since not only had relations between the two countries already existed but a future Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union had not only travelled to Cuba but even been the Soviet envoy to the island. In the years after relations were re-established between the Soviet Union and Cuba, Moscow would have a greater knowledge of Cuba than it may otherwise have had since, not only had relations already existed between them, but Gromyko, whose career quickly progressed, had personal experience of the Caribbean island (55).

As a result of diplomatic relations having already existed between the two countries and the role which the PSP had played in Cuban political life from the mid 1930s, it could have been expected that Moscow, in January 1959, may have had some insight into the events which had led Fidel and his followers to victory over Batista in the guerrilla war. This, however, does not appear to be the case. In his memoirs Khrushchev stated that he did not know what path Cuba would take after January 1959 and he did not even know what Fidel's political stance was. In an interview A. Alekseev stated that he was the first person from the Soviet Union to be granted a visa to travel to Cuba after the victory of the 1959 Revolution but also that he had no idea what type of

revolution was taking place in Cuba. He said that Moscow believed the most important aspect of it was the anti-American feeling which was prevalent in Cuba (56).

The Castro brothers, but Fidel in particular, had become involved in Cuban political life from the early 1950s but only came to national prominence on 26 July 1953 when they staged an attack on the Moncada barracks in Cuba's second city Santiago de Cuba. They hoped this could spark an uprising against Batista's government. This, however, ended in abject failure but during his subsequent trial Fidel delivered his speech "History will Absolve Me" in his defense. This did not prevent Fidel and his group being imprisoned and then exiled to Mexico but this document did famous in Cuban history as it laid out his own and his group's, beliefs and aims if they managed to win power for themselves (57).

On 2 December 1956 Fidel and a group of followers landed back in Cuba to embark upon a guerrilla war. This eventually lead to General Batista fleeing the country on 31 December 1958 (58). During the guerrilla war Fidel gave various interviews to foreign journalists including one with the New York Times journalist Herbert Matthews (59). On 20 July 1958 Fidel signed the "unity pact" with the PSP when they agreed to work together. It was only five years since the PSP had described the attack on the Moncada barracks as "putschism" but both sides appeared to gain from this agreement. Fidel gained access to the PSP's urban network and it would be advantageous for the PSP since by mid 1958 it looked likely that the guerrilla war would be victorious.

R Munck in Revolutionary Trends in Latin America stated that this union was vital to the eventual success of the guerrilla war (60). Two assumptions could be made on these events: (a) that Moscow would have been aware of the guerrilla war in Cuba through its relations with the PSP and (b) it could be assumed that it was likely that the

Soviet embassy in Washington would have known about events in Cuba after Fidel had given an interview to such a prominent US paper as the New York Times. This, however, does not appear to have taken place as Khrushchev's memoirs and Alekseev's interview state. The Soviet Union may have had some contact with Cuba before 1959 including diplomatic relations and some limited amounts of trade, but when Fidel and his followers were victorious Moscow did not have any knowledge of the situation in Cuba. It was as if there had never been any contact between the two countries before this date.

Washington was also unsure how events in Cuba after January 1959 would unfold but due to its large economic involvement in the island took great interest in the unfolding events. The US government was at first pleased with the appointment of Carlos Manuel Urrutia Leo as the Provisional President but events in Cuba soon began to concern Washington and these only increased after Fidel's trip to the US in April 1959. President Eisenhower even refused to meet him (61). Washington's concern further increased as Fidel and his fellow guerrilla war veterans began to play a more and more public and prominent role in the new government in Havana. This led to the creation of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) in May 1959 and the expropriation of land and US owned oil refineries, which had refused to process Soviet oil, soon followed.

Cuba's radicalism and move to the left continued with the gradual creation of Integrated Revolutionary Organization (ORI) in early 1960 that resulted in "old" communists gaining more prominent positions in the government (62). Cuba's increasing friendship with the Soviet Union and the belief that Fidel was a communist made the US, which had already become worried about possible further communist

penetration into Latin America, become even more concerned about this "Cuban problem". The fact that these events had taken place at a time during the Cold War when the Soviet Union was becoming more of a player on the global stage, and had achieved nuclear parity with the US, made the US become less secure in itself. This coupled with a Republican in the White House, Washington took the decision to try and remove Fidel from power. M.H. Morley in Imperial state and Revolution. The United States and Cuba 1952-1986 believes this constituted the backbone of Washington's policy towards Cuba after 1959. This set in progress the events that would eventually lead to the failed invasion attempt by US backed and trained Cuban exiles at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 (63).

Although Moscow did not know a great deal about events or the type of revolution that had brought victory for Fidel and his followers, the timing of this victory could not have been better for Moscow or Fidel. In the years after Stalin's death Soviet foreign policy had started to change with the Soviet Union becoming more outward looking. Khrushchev highlighted this point in his speech to the Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in February 1956. During the part dedicated to the Third World he said:

The awakening of the African peoples has begun. The national liberation movement has gained strength in Brazil, Chile and other Latin American countries (64).

Moscow had realised that there was a very small, if not non-existent, working class in the Third World which had resulted in the decision to back national liberation

movements even although they may not have been composed of the working class. Moscow hoped that once in power these national liberation movements could become more left wing and would turn their backs on the old colonial powers and side with Moscow. The Soviet Union would also look appealing to these countries, not just as a way of obtaining aid, but as a model of development since the Soviet Union had been able to modernize rapidly, which would only be of great interest to Third World Countries. The result of this was that the victory of the Cuban Revolution happened at a time when the Soviet Union was attempting to become more involved in the Third World. When this was coupled with its geographic position and the apparent anti-American nature of the “new” Cuba, Soviet interest in the Cuban Revolution was extremely understandable.

The anti-American nature of the Cuban Revolution was crucial in Moscow taking an interest in it but what type of revolution had actually taken place in Cuba? The US was concerned by its left wing nature and Fidel's 26 July movement did have an agreement with the PSP, but was it a communist revolution? Many of Fidel's ideas were not that removed from communism but they were also close to those that had been implemented by Cardenas in Mexico in the 1930s, by Peron in Argentina in the period after the end of the Second World War and by Arbenz in Guatemala in the early 1950s (65). What Fidel had implemented was an anti-US, anti-dictatorial, authoritarian revolution. P. Marshall in Cuba Libre. Breaking the Chains? believes that the Revolution at this time was “humanist, democratic and libertarian” but what is uncertain was Fidel and his associates' attitudes towards the Soviet Union at this time. They could not have been totally averse to it and its ideas due to the afore mentioned "unity pact" with the PSP together with the fact that Fidel's younger brother, Raul, had been a member of the

communist party while at university. R Munck in Revolutionary Trends in Latin America states that the Cuban Revolution was unusual as it started with “radical nationalist current” in it before it evolved to adopt “revolutionary socialist principles” (66).

Although the Soviet Union and Cuba may not have known a great deal about each other in January 1959 their growing friendship is perhaps not as strange as it first appears. Although there was a great distance between the two countries the time was right for Moscow to obtain such a valuable ally in the western hemisphere. This did not only illustrate perfectly to the US that the Soviet Union was becoming a global power to rival the US but, it also reinforced the point to Peking that Moscow was still the capital of the global revolution (67). Moscow could not afford to ignore the Cuban Revolution if it wanted to remain the centre of the world socialist movement even if they were unsure of the exact nature of the revolution. The Cuban Revolution may have had a large Latin American heritage but it also had left wing credentials and it did not have to move violently to the left to be considered a socialist revolution. After the creation of INRA and the expropriation of US owned property it had even less distance to travel.

In January 1959, it may not have been Fidel's aim to side with the Soviet Union, but it certainly was to change Cuba's relationship with the US. His dislike of the US and the fact that Che Guevara had been in Guatemala in 1954, when US backed exiles had overthrown the left wing Arbenz government, increased their desire to change Havana's relationship with Washington (68). When this is coupled with the fact that Fidel and his associates had fought a guerrilla war to change Cuba it meant that due to the previous relationship between Cuba and the US that continuing close relations with the US were extremely unlikely. After the US hostility towards the fledging government in Havana it made Fidel's decision to proclaim himself a Marxist-Leninist in December 1961 even

less surprising. The US's most bold attempt to overthrow Fidel had been the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of April 1961 but it seemed unlikely that the same mistakes would be repeated (63). What actions could Fidel take to try and safeguard his revolution? By proclaiming himself to be a Marxist-Leninist he hoped to achieve more assurances of security from the Soviet Union since he would know that Moscow could not afford to let the US overthrow a communist regime in such a significant geographic location during the Cold War. His revolution, not so removed from communism in the first place, and the fact that Moscow also gained benefits from a close relationship between them, made the Soviet Union and Cuba not such strange bedfellows as would first appear.

Before the victory of the Cuban Revolution in January 1959 Moscow was definitely aware of the existence of the Caribbean island. This had come about due not only to the PSP's existence but also the Comintern's interest in it after the events of August 1933, when the PSP was heavily involved in the strike that led to General Machado's overthrow. The Soviet Union had also traded with Cuba when it bought sugar from the island in the mid 1950s and had even had diplomatic relations with Cuba for ten years until 1952. Although this was the case, Moscow did not seem to have any knowledge about events or even the nature of Fidel's victorious revolution. Moscow may have had relations with Cuba before this, but in January 1959 its lack of knowledge of Cuban events of the time made it look as if they had never existed. Relations between the two countries developed quickly after this for a number of reasons: Soviet foreign policy had undergone change since Stalin's death which had resulted in the Soviet Union wanting to become more involved in the Third World; Cuba was of great propaganda benefit to Moscow due to its geographical proximity to the US; the US had put increasing pressure on the fledging Cuban Revolution and due to its Latin America

heritage and beliefs an alliance with the US was never likely, but an alliance with the Soviet Union could be reached by moving slightly to the left and thus being considered a socialist revolution.

Endnotes

(1) Revolucion 2 December 1961, p.1.

(2) The Comintern was created in March 1919 in an attempt to try and spark the world revolution. Preparing the Founding Congress, 1986, Pathfinder, New York, pp.447-452.

(3) Ibid pp.447-452.

(4) For a short history of communist parties in Latin America see Caballero, M. Latin America and the Comintern 1919-1943, 1986, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp.44-49.

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Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples Unite: Proceedings-Documents of the Second Congress, Volume 1, 1991, Pathfinder, New York, p.142.

(6) Ibid p.222.

(7) Michael Borodin would in the 1920s become the Comintern agent in China. The Comintern did believe that revolution in China was possible which illustrated the trust which they had in him and thus the importance of his trip to Mexico.

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- (14) Ibid p.21.
- Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples Unite, 1991, p.222.
- Roy was a Bengali by birth and had always been interested in trying to gain independence for India from the UK. His motives for involvement in the Comintern could well have been for this and not Mexican ones. He may have been using Mexico as a vehicle to access to the Comintern.
- (15) Bradley, J. Allied Intervention in Russia, 1968, Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

- (16) Adibekov, G.M. Organizatsionnaia struktura Kominterna 1919-1943, 1997, p.38.
- (17) Ibid p.40.
- (18) Ibid p.41.
- (19) Ibid pp.65-66.
- (20) Ibid pp.95-96.
- (21) Ibid p.98.
- (22) Ibid p.101.
- (23) Ibid p.111.
- (24) Degras, J. The Communist International 1919-1943 Documents, Volume 2, 1971, Frank Cass & Co Ltd, London, pp.526-548.
- (25) Adibekov, G.M. Organizatsionnaia struktura Kominterna 1919-1943, 1997, pp.140-141.
- (26) Ibid pp.142-143 & p.146.
- (27) Resoluciones de la Conferencia Sindical Latino Americano in Herman, D.L The Comintern Mexico, 1974, Public Affairs Press, Washington, p.86.
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- (31) Ibid pp.209-211.
- (32) Spenser, D. The Impossible Triangle Mexico, Soviet Russia and the United States in the 1920s, 1999, Duke University Press, Durham and London, pp.40-43.

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- (33) Moscow sent Louis Fraina, Charles Philips and Sen Katayama to Mexico to try and achieve this. Spenser, D. The Impossible Triangle, 1999, p.46-50.
- (34) Caballero, M. Latin America and the Comintern, 1986, pp.30-31.
- (35) The amount of knowledge that Moscow had of these events and the extent of the PSP's autonomy is open to debate as the Comintern documents are ones which were sent from Latin America to Moscow and not orders from Moscow to Latin America. For a detailed analysis of these events in Cuba see Carr, B. "From Caribbean backwater to revolutionary opportunity: Cuba's evolving relationship with the Comintern 1925-34" in Rees, T. & Thorpe, A. International Communism and the Communist International 1919-43, 1998, Manchester University Press, Manchester, pp.234-253.
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- (37) Ibid, pp.156-166.
- (38) Vneshniaia trgovlia SSSR: statisticheskii sbornik 1918-1966, 1967, "Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia", Moscow, p.63.
- (39) The new leadership hoped to increase the Soviet Union's influence in the Third World by offering trade or aid to the newly independent countries.

The agreement with Egypt was announced in Izvestia 25 April 1954, p.8, with Afghanistan in Pravda 30 April 1954, p.4 and with Iran in Pravda 19 June 1954, p.3.

(40) Pravda 20 December 1960, pp.1-2.

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(42) Ibid p.68-69.

(43) Kollantai was Soviet ambassador to Mexico for seven and half months in 1926 and 1927. Spenser, D. The Impossible Triangle, 1999, pp.82-112.

(44) For a concise history of Cuba in this period see Thomas, H. Cuba or The Pursuit of Freedom, 1971, Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, pp.245-586.

(45) Garcia, A. & Mironchuk, P. Raises de las relaciones Cubano Sovieticas, 1988, Editorial de Ciencias Sociales, Havana, pp.3-36.

(46) Granma International Weekly Review 17 March 1985, p.2.

(47) Garcia, A. & Mironchuk, P. Raises de las relaciones Cubano Sovieticas, 1988, pp.18 -20.

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(49) Caballero, M. Latin America and the Comintern 1919-1943, 1986, p.42.

(50) Ibid p.71.

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(59) Matthews, H.L. The Cuban Story, 1961, George Braziller, New York, pp.24-27.

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Ibid pp.1284-1289 for an account of the expropriation of US oil refineries in Cuba.

Ibid p.1372 for an account of the creation of Integrated Organization of the Revolution (ORI).

(63) The US had been unhappy at Cuba's increased ties with the Soviet Union and this became apparent in 1960 with the Declaration of San Jose. It even suggested that the Monroe Doctrine had been broken. Fidel countered this with the radical Declaration of Havana on 2 September 1960.

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Chapter 2

Idealism, Institutionalisation and the World Stage

(1962-1985)

In the period from December 1961 when Fidel proclaimed himself to be a Marxist-Leninist, until March 1985 when Mikhail Gorbachev became General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), the relationship between their two countries had to withstand many dramatic events which would test this relationship to its core. These events took various forms and extended even to the heart of both governing elites. In the Soviet Union there would be four different leaders in this period: Khrushchev was replaced by Leonid Brezhnev in October 1964, Brezhnev by Yuri Andropov in November 1982 and Andropov by Konstantin Chernenko in February 1984 after he too died. In Cuba, meanwhile, Ernesto "Che" Guevara was killed, in October 1967, while attempting to spark revolution in Bolivia. This event marked the death of not only one of Cuba's "big three" but also their hope of exporting revolution and the idea of the "guerrilla foco". Even more dramatic were the events of October 1962. In this month the Soviet Union and the US almost came to the point of nuclear war over Soviet missiles being placed in Cuba. In the aftermath of this the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba deteriorated to such an extent that a permanent schism between the countries appeared possible. This rift only started to be healed when Fidel publicly backed the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 (1). Relations improved dramatically after this to such an extent that in March 1972 Cuba became a member of the Council of Mutual Economic Aid (CMEA) and two years later Brezhnev became the first Soviet leader to visit Latin America when he travelled to Cuba in January 1974 (2).

Other important events also occurred in Cuba in this period, some of the most significant being the events surrounding the trial of Annibal Escalante in 1968 and the First Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) being held in Havana in

December 1975 (3). Also from the mid 1970s Cuba started to play a much more prominent role on the world stage with troops being sent to western Africa from late 1975 and Fidel becoming the President of the Nonaligned Movement after its conference was held in the Cuban capital in 1979 (4).

This chapter will examine these events and how they affected the relationship between Moscow and Havana in the 25 years from December 1961 to March 1985. This will be done in three different sections. The first will examine Soviet policy towards Cuba. Due to the long period of time which is being studied in this chapter this will be done by analysing speeches given by the Soviet governing elite either at party congresses or when they made official visits to Cuba. Trade between the Soviet Union and Cuba in this period will also be examined. The second section will conclude Cuban policy towards the Soviet Union, which will be done by examining the speeches by members of the Cuban government during this 25-year period. An overlap between the first two sections of this chapter will occur due to the fact that many of the speeches made by both the Soviet and Cuban governing elites, which will be analysed, took place at the same meetings and congresses. The last section will examine Cuba's increasing prestige in the world arena from the mid 1970s onwards, the reasons for it and Moscow's perception of it. This section will finish with an examination of the memoirs of participants on both sides, which will help conclude whether a re-thinking, with the benefit of hindsight, of this time has taken place in the years since these events took place.

Soviet Policy Towards Cuba

At the beginning of November 1962 in the immediate aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis, A. Mikoyan, a member of the Presidium of the CPSU, travelled to Havana. This was a very difficult trip for him for a number of reasons. His wife died while he was in Havana but he also received a frosty reception from the Cuban government, as Havana was unhappy with a number of issues that resulted from the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Cuban government was displeased with the fact that they had not been consulted before the weapons had been removed from Cuba, did not understand the significance of the US saying they would remove their nuclear weapons from Turkey in response for the removal of the Soviet ones in Cuba and did not like the fact that it seemed as if the US were dictating what type of weapons Cuba was allowed to possess. Fidel stated all of this to Mikoyan at a meeting on 4 November 1962 (5). Cuban displeasure at these events was so great that Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, President of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform, stated at this meeting that Cuba believed there had been secret communications between Moscow and Washington during the crisis that they had not been told about (6). Mikoyan tried to soothe the situation by saying the US could no longer talk of the Monroe Doctrine in regard to Cuba and that as a result of the events of October 1962

...the prestige of the socialist camp has strengthened (7).

Four years later in March 1966 the 23rd Congress of the CPSU was held in Moscow. In these four changes had taken place in both the Soviet Union and Cuba. In

the Soviet Union Khrushchev had been replaced by Brezhnev as General Secretary of the CPSU in October 1964 and in 1965 in Cuba the governing Unified Party of the Socialist Revolution (PURS) gave way to the PCC.

Brezhnev's appointment as General Secretary does not appear to have affected the Soviet Union's relationship with Latin America or in particular Cuba as they did not change a great deal from the Khrushchev era. In his speech to the 23rd Congress of the CPSU Brezhnev stated that the Soviet Union enjoyed good relations with the rest of the socialist commonwealth. Cuba was included in this (8). Specifically on Cuba he said

The heroic people of Cuba, the first American country to have a socialist revolution, are struggling and building socialism in complex conditions under the leadership of their communist party. Cuba is not alone: it belongs to the mighty commonwealth of socialist states. Our people are wholeheartedly with the Cuban people in their struggle to build a new society. The Soviet Union has rendered and will always render all possible assistance to fraternal Cuba (9).

Analysing Brezhnev's speech at the 23rd Congress of the CPSU, it appears that it did not lead to a change in Soviet foreign policy towards Cuba. Moscow still perceived Cuba as a member of the socialist commonwealth and continued to offer its support to the Caribbean island in its attempts to build socialism. The Cuban Missile Crisis, its

aftermath and change of leader in Moscow had had no public effect on Moscow's thinking about Cuba.

In November 1969, A.A. Gretchko, the Soviet Defense Minister, travelled to Cuba (10) but in the three years since the 23rd CPSU Congress dramatic events had taken place that would affect the relationship between Moscow and Havana. As stated Chef had been killed in October 1967 in the Bolivian jungle marking the end of Cuba's radical ideas of the "guerrilla foco" and this was further highlighted when Fidel publicly backed the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. Internally, however, Cuba had continued to be radical at this time. This had been shown by the accusations against and trial of Anibal Escalante and the "microfaction" in early 1968. Escalante faced charges of attempting to create a parallel government. Fidel and his followers took the opportunity of denouncing Escalante to further illustrate the unique nature and individuality of the Cuban Revolution to the Soviet Union.

Moscow had faced a challenging situation since 1965 but had reacted to it in public without any grandiose public statements that may have inflamed the situation even more (11). This course of action appeared to have been a success since the time of Gretchko's visit in 1969, the situation had improved to such an extent that while in Cuba Gretchko met Fidel and was accompanied by Raul throughout his trip. Pravda reported his visit as

...an important contribution to the strengthening of fraternal relations between the armed forces, parties, governments and peoples of both countries (12).

The improvement in relations by 1969 was further illustrated by the fact that during Gretchko's visit an exhibition of Soviet achievements since 1917 was even held in the Cuban city of Mantanzas to mark the 100th anniversary of Lenin's birth (13).

Cuba's radical foreign policy of the 1960s was dealt a further blow in 1970 when Salvador Allende became the President of Chile. Although his appointment helped to end Cuba's isolation in Latin America he had come to power not by the ideas of the "guerrilla foco" but through the ballot box (14).

Also in 1970 Cuba failed to produce the much vaunted 10m-ton sugar harvest or zafra in 1970. The 1970 zarf still exceeded 8m tons: a record but, since the Cuban government had made reaching the 10m ton mark the national goal for 1970, other areas of the economy had been neglected in the attempt to reach this target that resulted in the whole economy being in disarray. This pushed Cuba economically towards the Soviet Union (15).

In April 1971 the 24th Congress of the CPSU was held in Moscow but surprisingly Brezhnev's speech at this Congress made no reference to Cuba's position and very little reference to Latin America as a whole. He did, however, congratulate Allende on his victory in Chile (16). He stated that Soviet foreign policy was going to be a continuation from the 23rd Congress in 1966.

In 1971 and 1972 the Soviet Union and Cuba became increasingly economically intertwined. In September 1971 V.N. Novikov, vice-chairman of the Council of Ministers, travelled to Cuba to attend the first meeting of the Soviet-Cuban Intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation (17). It was hoped that this organization would improve the collaboration between the Soviet Union and Cuba economically. This obviously benefited Cuba after the disastrous economic results of

the 1970 zafra but by creating this organization Moscow was also gaining increased control over the Cuban economy. Moscow hoped that this would prevent a repeat of the economic difficulties that Cuba had faced after 1970 and help curb future Cuban economic radicalism (18). In 1972 Cuba gained access to the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) (19). Membership was prestigious for Cuba but again gave Moscow further control over the Cuban economy due to the fixed trade agreements, which existed within this organization.

In November 1971 A.N. Kosygin, politburo member and Chairman of the Council of Ministers, visited Cuba which was significant not only in its timing so soon after the creation of the Intergovernment Commission but also since he was such a high ranking official (20). Kosygin became the highest-ranking Soviet official to visit Cuba showing, not only the importance that Moscow placed on Cuba, but also problems, which may have existed between the two countries in the 1960s, had now disappeared.

In July 1972 not only did Cuba gain access to the CMEA but Fidel also travelled to the Soviet Union. It was eight years since his previous trip to the Soviet Union but this illustrated that any sign of a rift had by 1972 disappeared. The good state of relations was shown by the speeches given by Soviet officials during Fidel's visit and by the fact that Fidel was awarded the Order of Lenin while he was in Moscow: the highest Soviet accolade (21). In his speech to mark Fidel's visit Brezhnev not only praised the achievements of the Cuban Revolution but also stated that Cuba did not stand alone in its struggle due to its close ties with the Soviet Union and the rest of the socialist world (22). The joint communiqué, published at the end of this visit, stated that close economic ties that existed between the two countries by this time. Kosygin reiterated

this sentiment in a speech at a reception at the Cuban Embassy when he said that the Soviet Union hoped that economic ties would grow even stronger in the future (23).

Brezhnev created history eighteen months later when he arrived in Havana on 28 January 1974 becoming the first Soviet General Secretary to travel to Latin America. This visit showed not only Moscow's good relations with Havana but also its increased interest in the continent as a whole, particularly in trade. During his eight day stay on the island he travelled to Cuba's second city, Santiago de Cuba, signed a protocol on collaboration in civic aviation, was awarded the highest Cuban honour of the Order of Jose Marti and gave a speech in front of one million Cubans on the Plaza de la Revolucion in Havana (24). In this speech he repeated much of what he had said eighteen months earlier when Fidel had been in Moscow: Cuba did not stand alone due to its close ties with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries and that these ties had become closer and stronger with Cuba's membership of the CMEA. He stated that the politburo of the CPSU attached paramount significance to relations with Cuba and spoke of ways to increasingly strengthen them (25). On the relationship between the two countries he stated:

We are linked by bonds that are completely different from those that are customary in the capitalist world. For the Soviet Union, Cuba is not an object of exploitation and capital investment, not a strategic base or a so-called sphere of influence. Our friendship, our closeness, is an expression of the socialist nature of our countries, a living embodiment of the lofty principles of socialist

internationalism (26).

These points were again repeated in the joint communiqué that was released at the end of Brezhnev's visit to Cuba (27). Brezhnev's visit to Cuba was deemed a great success by both countries and illustrated the healthy relationship, which the Soviet Union and Cuba enjoyed by 1974.

In December 1975 the First Congress of the PCC was held in Havana. This was important not only in its own right but also because a new constitution was discussed. This became law in July 1976 and marked a new stage in Cuba's history since its new constitution so closely resembled the Soviet one (28). This further increased the institutionalisation process that had been taking place in Cuba in the 1970s and Cuba's increasing links with the Soviet Union.

The Soviet representative at this congress was M.A. Suslov, a politburo member and secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. During his speech to this congress he praised Cuba for its achievements since the victory of the Revolution but also the historic significance of this First Congress. He also delivered a message of congratulations from Brezhnev on the staging of this First Congress (29).

In February 1976 the 25th Congress of the CPSU was staged in Moscow. Brezhnev's speech was similar to previous ones but it did contain more reference to Cuba. He spoke of the significance of the First Congress of the PCC and the new constitution that was to be implemented there and that socialism had been "firmly" established in Cuba. He stated:

The Congress of Cuban Communists, the party's

programmatic platform and the country's new constitution show that the Western hemisphere's first socialist state is making steady progress (30).

By the time of the 25th Congress of the CPSU, Moscow appeared to be quite content with its relationship with Cuba. Cuba's radicalism of the 1960s was dead and during the 1970s, with its process of institutionalization, Cuba had not only become more integrated into the socialist system but had also started to resemble the Soviet Union in its type of government and constitution.

Fourteen months after this, in April 1977, Fidel embarked on his longest overseas trip since the Cuban Revolution's triumph in 1959. This trip entailed an extensive stay in Africa before he travelled to Moscow via Berlin. During a state banquet in the Great Kremlin Palace to honour the Cuban leader, Brezhnev said:

In fulfilling the decisions of our party congresses - I have in mind the 25th Congress of the CPSU and the 1st Congress of the PCC - we feel more and more directly that the work we are doing jointly or in close cooperation is an important and undeniable part of our national efforts. It is our common task to utilise all possibilities for developing fraternal cooperation and to organize it better and more effectively (31).

Again this showed the close relationship that the two countries enjoyed. By the late 1970s Fidel had again become one of Moscow's most frequent visitors just as he had been in the early 1960s before strains had started to appear in the relationship between the two countries.

In 1979 Cuba hosted the conference of the Nonaligned Movement in Havana. In the lead up to this conference a standoff took place between Cuba and the US over Soviet troops being stationed on the island. Washington accused Cuba of breaking the agreements that had been made in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, over the number of Soviet troops that could be stationed in Cuba. Moscow jumped to Cuba's defense when it stated that these troops were merely a training battalion and that they had been there since 1962. Moscow also said that Washington's accusations had been timed so as to discredit Cuba in the build-up to the Nonaligned Conference (32).

These events also brought to a close a period when improved relations between the US and Cuba had appeared possible. While Jimmy Carter had been President of the US Interest Sections had even been created in the respective capitols and agreements involving fishing rights and the US Coast Guard and Cuba's Border Guard were signed. J. Dominguez in To Make a World Safe for Revolution. Cuba's Foreign Policy gives a detailed analysis of this period when relations between Washington and Havana improved. The events of the Iranian Revolution and the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua both in 1979 altered US foreign policy. M.H. Morley in Imperial State and Revolution. The United States and Cuba 1952-1986 states that this was the start of increased US presence in the world. From January 1980 the "Carter Doctrine" was employed which let Washington intervene unilaterally if it believed US interests were

being threatened. This quickly became Washington's global policy after first being implemented in the Middle East but soon became Washington's global policy (33). The "Carter Doctrine" was also applied to Latin America as Washington attempted to prevent Nicaragua becoming a "second Cuba".

In December 1980 the Second Congress of the PCC was held in Havana in December 1980. The Soviet delegate was K.U. Chernenko, a future General Secretary of the CPSU and at this time a politburo member. Again the Soviet Union was represented by one of the country's ruling elite. In his address to this congress Chernenko praised the successes of the Cuban Revolution and the help that the Soviet Union was giving to Cuba. He listed the goods that the Soviet Union supplied to Cuba and the help it was providing in creating a nuclear plant and a nickel-cobalt concentrate factory at Punta-Gorda (34). The relationship between the two countries was not one sided since Chernenko stated

Trade partnership with Cuba is highly appreciated in the Soviet Union. Cuban products are in regular demand in our country. We are seeking to create the most favourable conditions for mutually beneficial trade with Cuba (35).

Just two months later the 26th Congress of the CPSU was held in Moscow. Brezhnev returned to type when he made no reference to Cuba during his speech to this congress but this should not be taken as an illustration of a problem existing between Moscow and Havana. At this time Brezhnev had to deal with the increasing

hostility emanating from the White House in Washington from the new US President Ronald Reagan.

In the 1970s a period of improved relations between the two superpowers had abruptly finished with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the end of 1979 and Reagan's victory in the 1980 US Presidential election. Not only was the new US President vehemently anti communist but also US thinking in foreign policy was again more global. This brought to an end the introspective period in US politics, which had existed since the end of the Vietnam War and Watergate scandal. Reagan believed that Moscow had used the period of détente to increase its power throughout the world and he vowed to “rollback” communism and this desire would be illustrated with the US invasion of Grenada in 1983. The part of Brezhnev’s speech that was devoted to Soviet foreign policy at this Congress concentrated on the new world picture of 1981 (36).

In July 1983 celebrations were held in Cuba for the 30th anniversary of Fidel’s attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba. M.S. Solomentsev, a candidate member of the politburo, represented the Soviet Union. The politburo meeting that discussed this visit conveyed the message that it was happy at the visit’s outcome and stated their continued support for the Cuban Revolution (37).

In November 1984 N.A. Tikhonov, a politburo member and chairman of the Council of Ministers, travelled to the Cuban capital for the 39th Session of the CMEA. Further expansion and deepening of cooperation between the two countries was discussed when he met Fidel during his stay in Cuba. The pinnacle of his visit was the signing of a long-term agreement on cooperation between the two countries on 10 November 1984 (38). The duration of this agreement was to be 25 years that was to be significant as it meant Moscow was committing itself to continued relations with Havana

into the 21st century. Its content covered a great variety of different areas of cooperation with the overall aim being the improvement the Cuban economy (39).

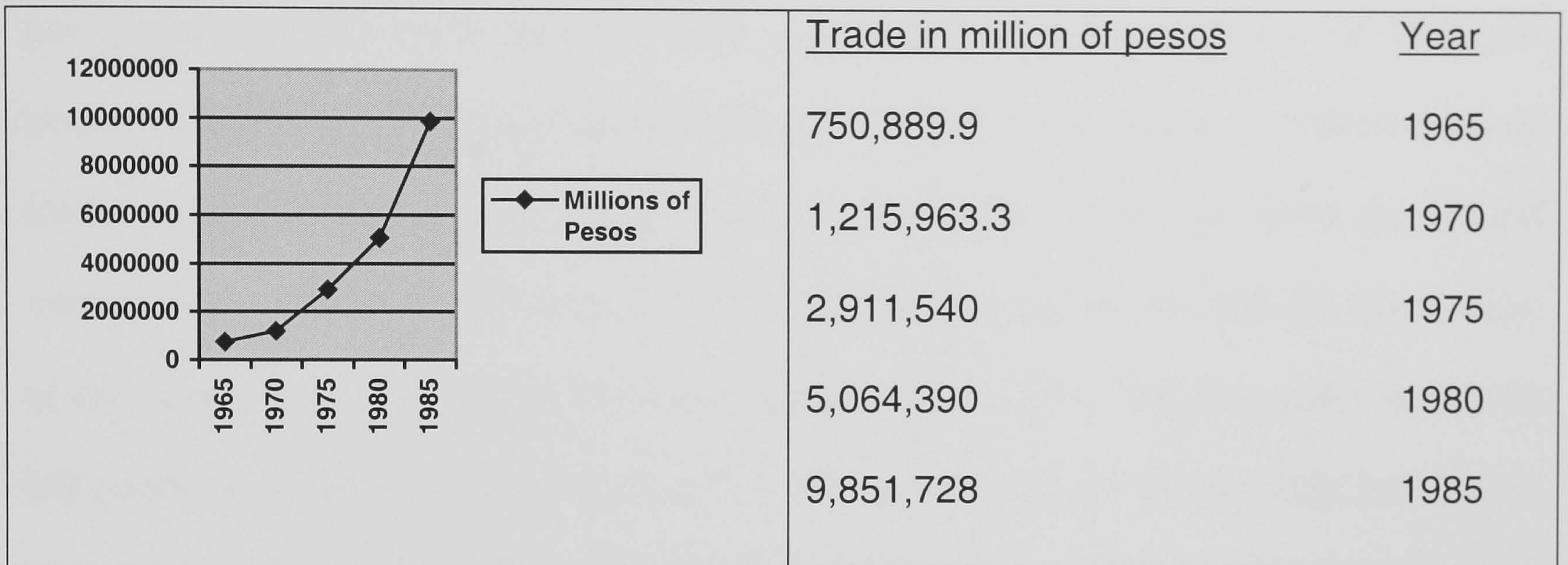
The two sides consider the principal objectives of long-term cooperation between the two countries to be assistance in completing the construction of the material and technical base of socialism in the Republic of Cuba, in the continued all-round improvement of the well-being of the Cuban people and in providing for the rational satisfaction of their growing material and spiritual requirements. The Soviet Union and Republic of Cuba have agreed to develop economic, scientific and technical cooperation (40).

This agreement may have admitted that problems existed in the Cuban economy but it certainly showed the importance that Moscow attached to its relationship with Cuba. Not only was the Soviet Union going to continue to help Cuba but it was willing to sign an agreement that would last 25 years and thus illustrated Moscow's continued long-term thinking on its relationship with Havana.

A vast number of economic agreements were signed between 1962 and 1985 and their evolution. The 1964 trade agreement, signed while Fidel was in the Soviet Union, was significant since it was to last for a duration of five years and not the one as had been the case until this point. Significantly it guaranteed the amount and price of sugar that the Soviet Union was to buy from Cuba (41). This illustrated Moscow's

commitment to Havana but also gave Cuba increased stability in trade due to the agreement's duration. It would be the blueprint for future trade agreements signed between the two countries in the 1970s and 1980s.

Table 2.1 Soviet Trade with Cuba



Data analysed from Anuario Estadístico de Cuba 1970, 1975 & 1985

In this period Cuba had gained membership of the CMEA (July 1972) but, as can clearly be seen from the graph, trade with the Soviet Union did not show any great increase from 1972 to 1973 as might have been expected. Trade with the other CMEA member states, however, did show an increase between these two years (42).

A comparison of trade figures is now going to be conducted. As stated the first five-year agreement was signed in 1964 and, as a result, 1965 will be used as the base year for all further trade figures in this thesis. By doing this it will allow all future five-year plans to be related to the original one. If this is done 1970 has a figure of 161.9, 1975 a figure of 387.7, 1980 a figure of 674.4 and 1985 a figure of 1312. This clearly shows that in 20-year period up to 1985 Soviet trade with Cuba had increased 13 fold.

Trade consisted of over 50 different items but sugar exports, the mainstay of the Cuban economy, from Cuba to the Soviet Union will be analysed in more detail. Figures for the 1960s and 1970s are more difficult to obtain but in 1970 Cuba exported over 91% of its sugar production. The Soviet Union bought the vast percentage of this and paid 6.11 US cents per pound compared to a then world market price of 3.68 US cents per pound. In 1975 Cuba exported 89% of its zafrá. It received 36.40 US cents per pound compared to a world market price of 20.37 US cents per pound. In 1980 the Soviet Union bought 51.5% of the Cuban zafrá at a price of 47.39 US cents per pound compared to a world market price of 28.15 US cents per pound. In 1985 the percentage of the Cuban zafrá that the Soviet Union bought rose to 61%. The price paid was 45.00 US cents per pound compared to a world market price of just 4.05 US cents per pound. Not only was Cuba conducting a vast percentage of its trade with the Soviet Union but it was being carried out at extremely advantageous prices for the Caribbean island (43).

By the end of this period relations between Moscow and Havana were extremely close. Problems had existed in the 1960s but as a result of Che's death in October 1967, the Cuban backing of the Soviet action in Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and the failed 10m zafrá of 1970, Cuba's radicalism waned. Publicly Moscow had never acknowledged that problems existed but with the advent of the 1970s its relationship with Havana went from strength to strength as was illustrated by Cuba's membership to the CMEA in July 1972. The relationship continued to become stronger with the result that by March 1985 Cuba was an extremely important ally for the Soviet Union.

Cuban Policy Towards The Soviet Union

As has been stated, the Cuban government was unhappy at the conclusion of the Cuban Missile Crisis as they felt that they had been ignored by the two superpowers during the negotiating process that brought an end to the crisis. Cuba's five demands for the removal of the weapons certainly had been ignored by Moscow and Washington (44). This had made A. Mikoyan's trip to Cuba in November 1962 very difficult. His trip could, however, be deemed a success since signs of problems existing between the two countries were not publicly visible.

In May 1963 Fidel made his first trip to the Soviet Union when he conducted an extensive month long trip of the Soviet Union. On 23 May 1963, in a speech at the Lenin Stadium in Moscow to celebrate his visit, Fidel thanked the Soviet Union for its help in defending Cuba: this had been the intention of both countries when nuclear weapons had been placed in Cuba in 1962. He went on to praise the achievements of the Soviet Union and said he hoped that relations between the two countries would continue to be strengthened (45).

Just eight months later Fidel made his second trip to the Soviet Union when he travelled there in January 1964. This was a much shorter trip but during it Fidel again praised the achievements of the Soviet Union in a speech that he gave in the Soviet city of Kalinin. He also said

And if today a socialist revolution is under way in Cuba, it became possible because the socialist revolution of 1917 took place to begin with (46).

Other top members of the Cuban elite also traveled to the Soviet Union. In November 1964 Che made his third trip to the Soviet Union since the victory of the Cuban Revolution five years earlier. He, like Fidel, thanked the Soviet Union for the help that it had provided to Cuba and said that he hoped that relations between the two countries would continue to improve (47).

In these two years, 1963 and 1964, as has been stated, Cuba also signed two trade agreements with the Soviet Union with the second one being particularly significant due to its increased duration. The number of trips by the Cuban elite to the Soviet Union, their speeches while they were there and the signing of the two trade agreements suggest that relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union in the two years immediately after the Cuban Missile Crisis were not strained. Any problems that had existed with the resolution of this crisis appeared to have been resolved since the government in Havana appeared quite content with its relationship with Moscow during 1963 and 1964.

In 1965 signs of strain between Havana and Moscow did start to become apparent. In February 1965 Che gave a speech in Algiers during which he was highly critical of the Soviet Union and in particular its Third World policy. He stated that the Soviet Union was not defending the Third World from imperialism and even accused Moscow of practicing imperialism towards the Third World. Later in his speech Che said he believed that the Soviet Union was going into a period of degeneration (48). This speech marked the start of a period of greater radicalism in Cuba that would obviously have repercussions for its relationship with the Soviet Union.

This soon became evident in 1966 since at the start of that year the First Tricontinental Conference was held in Havana when representatives from Africa, Asia,

and Latin America all congregated in the Cuban capital. The nature of this congress was extremely radical and very different from the more cautious Soviet Third World policy (49). In April 1966 the 23rd Congress of the CPSU was held in Moscow with Armando Hart, a member of the politburo and secretary of the Central Committee for the PCC, representing Cuba. During his speech he thanked the Soviet Union for the help that it had given to Cuba but the vast proportion of his speech was devoted to the recent Tricontinental Conference in Havana and the situation in Vietnam. Hart said that the Tricontinental Conference had been correct in its ideas that liberation movements in the Third World would help accelerate the actions of the working class and thus help speed up the revolutionary process. He said that the Cuban experience was an example of this (50). As stated before Havana's aim was to illustrate its independence from the Soviet Union and highlighting its unique revolutionary heritage.

By 1966 Soviet third World policy had become more cautious but Fidel, however, repeated the ideas that Hart had outlined at the 23rd Congress of the CPSU during his speech at the Plaza de la Revolucion to mark May Day 1966. He also attacked the old mechanical mechanisms for building socialism in Eastern Europe and that it was Cuba and not the Soviet Union that provided the model for building socialism. He also stated that Cuba maintained the right to choose its own path to achieving communism (51).

Cuba's radicalism continued throughout 1967 when at the First Congress of the Organization for Latin American Solidarity (OLAS) in Havana in August of that year, Fidel stated that guerrilla warfare was the correct way to achieve a revolution with the Cuban experience providing the model for this (52). Later in 1967 Fidel snubbed the celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the victory of the Russian Revolution in

November 1967 by not personally attending them. Again this illustrated Cuba's radicalism to the world.

A year later Fidel's displeasure with the Soviet Union was once again evident in a marathon speech that he gave to the central committee of the PCC in January 1968. In this speech he returned to the topic of Mikoyan's trip to Cuba in November 1962. Fidel stated that Mikoyan had often lost his temper, particularly with the interpreters, and at the start of the series of meetings he had said that the IL-28 Soviet-made planes would not have to leave the island, as part of the agreement with the US, but within 24 to 48 hours these planes would indeed have to be removed from Cuba. The following month Fidel again snubbed Moscow when a Consultative Meeting of all Communist Parties was held in February 1968 in Budapest as no Cuban representative was sent to the meeting (53).

Significantly, Cuba's radicalism had occurred just after the 1964 trade agreement with the Soviet Union had been signed. The significance of this was that, as has been stated, this agreement was to last for a five-year period. This gave Cuba economic security for five years as its markets were guaranteed regardless of its policies. It was not just Cuba's economic security in the 1960s that had allowed Havana to indulge in radicalism, but also the situation within the communist world. In this decade Moscow's position as the capital of the world revolution had been challenged by Peking. In the case of the Third World the ideas of Maoism appeared to fit this region better than Leninism. The Cuban government took advantage of this situation to try and gain some independence from Moscow and the belief that a radical foreign policy could help its own survival by averting imperialism's attention to other areas of the world. Havana knew that a schism with the Soviet Union could have a grave effect on Moscow's

standing in the world communist movement and that Moscow could not risk this happening. These reasons had given Cuba the opportunity to pursue more radical policies in the knowledge that a permanent split with the Soviet Union was unlikely.

By the end of 1967 Cuba's position began to change. Its isolation in the western hemisphere had begun to end with the appearance of a left wing military government in Peru in 1967. Che's death in Bolivia in October 1967 also had great repercussions for Cuban foreign policy as until this point the Cuban government had believed that Latin America was ready for revolution (54). As B. Goldenberg in The Cuban Revolution and Latin America stated many people in Latin America had great sympathy for the Cuban Revolution in its early years (55). Che's death, however, ended the Cuban belief that this sympathy could help spark further revolutions. Cuba appeared to move back into the Soviet fold when Fidel publicly backed the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 (56) and Allende's ride to power in Chile by electoral means and Cuba's failure to produce a 10m-ton zarf in 1970 accelerated this process (57).

In April 1971 the 24th Congress of the CPSU was held in Moscow and Osvaldo Dorticos, a member of the politburo and secretariat of the PCC, represented Cuba. His speech on 2 April 1971 gave no sign of the radicalism that had been apparent in Hart's speech at the 23rd Congress of the CPSU five years previously. Dorticos merely thanked the Soviet Union for the help that it had given to Cuba since the victory of the Cuban Revolution and said that he hoped that the relationship between the two countries would grow stronger in the future (58).

As already stated Fidel made his first trip for eight years to the Soviet Union in June 1972. In his speech at a ceremony in the Kremlin to mark his visit in the Kremlin Fidel spoke of the relationship between the two countries. He said:

We are deeply satisfied with the present state of our friendship and the present state of our fraternal relations, sincere relations based on mutual respect, the type of relations that should exist between the revolutionary parties and revolutionary peoples. We shall continue to work tirelessly for sake of this friendship and its strengthening (59).

Later in his visit, during another speech, Fidel thanked the Soviet Union for its help; despite pressure from the US to break these ties and that relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union were actually growing stronger by the day. Later in this speech Fidel repeated the sentiment that the Cuban Revolution had only been able to succeed due to the existence of the earlier Russian Revolution (60). The problems that had existed between Havana and Moscow in the second half of the 1960s appeared to have disappeared by 1972 as Fidel's trip illustrated.

Similarly to Brezhnev's speech at the Plaza de la Revolucion in January 1974 Fidel repeated many of the ideas that he had stated on his own trip to the Soviet Union in June 1972. He thanked the Soviet Union for their help in the face of US hostility especially in the economic field, for the amount and type of military equipment that Cuba had received from the Soviet Union and praised the commercial ties that existed between the two countries (61). Fidel stated that the relationship that existed between Cuba and the Soviet Union was an example to the rest of the world. He also congratulated the Soviet Union on their achievements since the victory of the Russian Revolution and significantly stated that Cuba agreed with the line of Soviet foreign policy

that had been in place since the 24th Congress of the CPSU in 1971 (62). By 1974 the Soviet Union was advocating peaceful coexistence with the West: a great change in Cuba's position from the 1960s.

As already stated, at the First Congress of the PCC in Havana in December 1975 the process of institutionalization that Cuba was going through in the 1970s increased (63). This was best illustrated by the new constitution that closely resembled the Soviet one, being discussed which became law in July 1976 (64). Importantly, however, in his speech Fidel illustrated the distinct nature of the Cuban Revolution when he outlined the revolutionary processes that the island had gone through in the previous 100 years and also the achievements that Cuba had made since the victory of the Revolution in January 1959. R. Munck in Revolutionary Trends in Latin America stated that the Cuban Revolution did start to resemble the Soviet model more but kept its own unique nature as shown by the ratification of Popular Power at this Congress (65).

Also in his address to this congress Fidel was not slow to praise the role that the Soviet Union had played in Cuba since 1959 especially in helping Cuba defend itself from US hostility. He said:

A decisive factor has been the military assistance of the USSR, Lenin's homeland, which ever since the early and most difficult times of our Revolution, has given us, free of charge, modern means of defence for our units valued at several thousand million pesos (66).

Fidel in this speech also stated Cuba's support for Soviet foreign policy and praised their recent efforts to promote peace in the world (67). The First Congress of the PCC was an important event since, not only did it illustrate Cuba's support for the Soviet Union, but measures taken at it increased the institutionalisation process taking place in Cuba in the 1970s. This resulted in the island more closely resembling the Soviet Union.

Fidel continued the biannual visits that the leaders of Cuba and the Soviet Union had been making in the mid 1970s when he travelled to Moscow in February 1976 for the 25th Congress of the CPSU. In his address to this congress he once again praised the achievements that the Soviet Union had made since 1917. On the relationship with the Soviet Union he stated:

Our people are proud of their relations with your great country.

These relations set an example in the practice of international mutual understanding, respect and confidence. In providing decisive assistance to our people, the Soviet Union has never made any kinds of demands on us, never set any conditions, never told us what to do. The whole history of international relations, which have been governed for millennia by selfishness and force, knows no other examples of this kind of relations between a powerful country and a small country (68).

The relationship between Cuba and the Soviet Union had by the mid 1970s become extremely close since the structure of the Cuban government resembled the Soviet model and strong economic ties existed between the two countries. The Cuban

government appeared quite content with this situation as Fidel's speech at the 25th Congress of the CPSU showed.

Economic problems in the Third World started to appear by the end of the 1970s. They would continue to worsen throughout the 1980s. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Camilio Cienfuegos's death on 28 October 1979, Raul talked of this economic situation. He said:

Cuba, however, thanks to the socialist character of its economic, political and socialist structures and its fraternal and close relations with the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community, presents an entirely different picture (69).

Raul and the Cuban government were not only praising the Soviet Union for helping defend the Cuban Revolution from US hostility but also for sheltering it from the economic chaos which many other Third World countries were encountering by the end of the 1970s.

In 1981 the 26th Congress of the CPSU and the Second Congress of the PCC were held in each party's respective capital. Both of these congresses continued to illustrate the healthy state of the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba that existed by the 1980s. In February 1981 Fidel again travelled to Moscow for the CPSU Congress. During his visit he met the Soviet leader, Brezhnev, and he also addressed the Congress (70).

In December, at the Second PCC Congress, much time was spent discussing the international situation in the wake of Ronald Reagan becoming President of the US. As already mentioned a thaw between the US and Cuba had, perhaps, been possible towards the end of Carter's Presidency but this was quickly ended when the more right-wing Reagan was elected as US President. During the Presidential election campaign Reagan had very publicly courted the large and influential Cuban-American vote in Florida and while campaigning had even visited Little Havana in Miami. Once in power Reagan could not afford to alienate the Cuban-American community.

This situation had not been helped by the Muriel boatlift in April 1980, which had resulted in southern Florida being swamped by over 125,000 Cuban refugees, thus increasing the pressure within the Cuban-American exile community. Reagan also believed that Carter's diplomacy towards Cuba had encouraged Havana's increased role in the world, with the result being an increase in Cuba prestige throughout the world. This belief would affect US/Cuban relations because, as has been stated, he was determined to "rollback" communism. US policy towards Central America also changed, as Washington wanted to increase direct US presence in the region, remove the Sandanistas from power and defeat guerrillas in El Salvador. This would all be worrying for Cuba and Morley in Imperial State and Revolution. The United States and Cuba 1952-1986 states that US policy towards Latin America and Cuba under Reagan was a return to what it had been before 1959 (71). Reagan becoming President of the US was going to adversely affected relations between Washington and Havana in the 1980s.

Although this was the case, the Congress did not ignore Cuba's relationship with the Soviet Union. In the resolution for international economic relations the Congress praised the close ties that existed between Cuba and the Soviet Union in this field and

also in science and technology. It also stated that discussions for the 1986-1990 5-year plan had already commenced (72). This was significant since it showed that both sides were prepared to discuss the next 5-year plan at an early point in the 1981-1985 one, again illustrating the close ties that existed between Moscow and Havana by 1981.

By the mid 1970s Cuba's radical ideas had either died or had been proven not to work and this had the effect of pushing Havana closer to Moscow. Havana appeared quite happy with this, the general state of its relationship with Moscow and with the processes that had been introduced in Cuba that had made the Caribbean island resemble the Soviet Union even more. This continued throughout the rest of the 1970s and 1980s. Moscow had been Havana's most important ally since the early 1960s and relations had continued to become closer during this period. In 1985 Havana appeared quite content with this situation.

Cuba and the World

From 1975 Cuba became a more prominent player on the world stage with its increased involvement in Africa, Latin America and in the Nonaligned Movement. This happened for a number of reasons: (a) the collapse of Portugal's empire in Africa due to the fall of the Salazar dynasty in Lisbon in November 1975, (b) the Somoza dynasty in Nicaragua was overthrown in November 1979, (c) the New Jewel Movement coming to power in Grenada and (d) the more cautious US foreign policy in the aftermath of the Vietnam war and Watergate scandal. In September 1979 Fidel became President of the Nonaligned Movement when it held its conference in Havana (73). Cuba took advantage of the changing world scene by supplying aid and in some cases military assistance to

countries throughout the Third World. The effect was to increase Cuba's role in the world. This section will examine Cuban involvement in these areas, the reasons why Cuba became more involved in the world arena, the Soviet perception of Cuba's actions in the years from 1975 and will answer the question of whether Cuba was acting as a Soviet proxy on the world stage. A study of participants' memoirs will also be conducted to conclude whether a re-thinking, with the benefit of hindsight, of this period has taken place in the years since these events occurred.

From late 1975 onwards Cuban involvement in Africa increased greatly: firstly in Angola and later in Ethiopia (74). This involvement took various forms including Cuba sending doctors, teachers and construction workers in attempts to improve the infrastructure of Angola and Ethiopia. More controversially, large numbers of soldiers and military specialists were also sent. In relation to Cuban soldiers being sent to Angola, Fidel spoke of the decision to send troops to Angola during a speech to mark the 15th anniversary of the victory at the Bay of Pigs. He said:

On November 5, 1975, at the request of the MPLA, the leadership of our party decided to send with great urgency a battalion of regular troops with anti-tank weapons to help the Angolan patriots resist the invasion of the South African racists (75).

With regards to Cuban involvement in Ethiopia, Fidel again stated that they had been asked to provide help to the Ethiopians in their war with Somalia: they had duly done this (76).

Cuba also became more involved in Central America and the Caribbean when aid and assistance was sent to Nicaragua and Grenada from 1979 onwards. This, again, took the form of aid to help improve the infrastructures of these two countries, illustrated by a new airstrip at Bluefields in Grenada being built by Cuban workers. These actions left Cuba open to US accusations that they had been involved in the processes that had brought these two new governments to power, but the government in Havana always rejected these. In an interview with the US television network, CBS, in September 1979 Fidel stated that there had been no Cuban involvement in the Sandinistas' victory and it had been the work of the Nicaraguan people themselves (77). The following year, 1980, Fidel said:

... the victories of Grenada and Nicaragua were an expression of the upsurge of the popular and revolutionary movement in the area (78).

Cuban involvement had only commenced once these governments were already in power, and not before, as the US believed.

One question that must be answered is why did Cuba become so heavily involved in these countries, especially the African ones, which were so far from Cuban shores? The answer to this question has various aspects to it. Firstly and importantly was Cuba's desire to have a radical foreign policy to try and gain some independence from Moscow but also to attempt to aid its own survival by averting imperialism's attention away from Cuba to other parts of the world. Cuba also for a number of years had had ties and contacts with these countries and parties. This had resulted from the

1960s when the Cuban Revolution had been at its most radical and it had attempted to export the ideas of the "guerrilla foco" to other parts of the world. Che had travelled to the Belgian Congo in 1965 in an attempt to do this (79). At the First Congress of the PCC in December 1975 Fidel spoke of Cuba's relationship with the Movimento Popular de Liberatacao de Angola (MPLA). He said that Cuba had helped the MPLA since their creation and that some of their personnel had even trained in Cuba (80). In the aforementioned interview with CBS Fidel spoke of this again when he said:

Twenty years ago we had relations with the MPLA, with the African revolutionary movements (81).

When this is coupled with the shared history and culture between Cuba and Africa, due to African slaves being transported to Cuba in the nineteenth century to work on the Cuban sugar plantations, Cuba's involvement in Africa was not as surprising as would at first appear.

In relation to Nicaragua, Fidel, in his speech to mark the 27th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks, and in front of representatives of the Sandinista government, spoke of Cuba's relationship with the Sandinistas. His comments very closely resembled those on the MPLA when he said:

Our friendship with the Sandinistas wasn't born yesterday, or a year back, but twenty years ago (82).

Internationalism and as stated, a desire for a radical foreign policy had always been a very important element in the Cuban Revolution since its birth. By the end of the 1970s Cuba was involved in over 30 countries around the world with some 50,000 Cubans working abroad (83). At the First Congress of the PCC Fidel had said:

We are fulfilling an elemental international duty when we help the Angolan people. We are not looking for oil, or copper, or iron; we are not looking for anything at all. We are simply practising a policy of principles (84).

In 1978 Fidel repeated this sentiment over Cuban involvement in Angola. He said:

Our revolution isn't seeking glory or prestige; it simply fulfils its international postulates and principles (85).

Cuba's involvement abroad was understandable but its activity in Africa from the mid 1970s was more surprising.

Various reasons exist for this great increase. By the mid 1970s Cuba had gained economic security from its close ties to the Soviet Union and other socialist bloc countries as illustrated by Cuba's membership to the CMEA in 1972. This provided Cuba with the security it needed to become more involved in the world arena. Also the threat of a US invasion of Cuba had receded greatly by the mid 1970s not only because of the agreement Kennedy and Khrushchev made during the Cuban Missile Crisis that stated that the US would not invade Cuba, but also as a result of the US humiliation in

Vietnam. The events in South-East Asia had left a feeling of war-weariness prevalent amongst the US population and, again, this reduced the chance of a US invasion of Cuba. US foreign policy was not as expansive as it had been as the US had become more inward looking in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal and Nixon's subsequent resignation.

Havana may have also hoped that these actions would increase its leverage with Moscow due to their shared interests in Africa and Latin America. Erisman wrote that he believed this to be one of the factors in Cuban foreign policy in Cuba's Foreign Relations in a Post-Soviet World (86). Despite what Fidel had said, Cuba may have also hoped to increase its markets, not only for selling goods, but also purchasing them. By the mid 1970s the Cuban Revolution had produced a highly educated population but the supply of jobs on the island had not increased as quickly as the levels of education had. Cuba's internationalist foreign policy helped counter this situation as it resulted in many of these educated professionals, especially doctors and teachers, working abroad. These reasons are important in explaining Cuba's increased role in the world arena but the opportunity to become more involved on the world stage became possible with the collapse of the Salazar and Somoza dynasties and Havana happily took it (87).

These reasons also apply to Havana hosting the conference of the Nonaligned Movement in August 1979: Cuba had been involved in this movement since its inception in the early 1960s, Cuba was merely taking its turn in staging this conference and due to its long and active involvement it would have been more surprising if Cuba had not staged this conference at this time. These reasons plus the Cuban Revolution's more secure position by the mid 1970s meant that the 1979 conference was the ideal time for

Havana to host this important event. This again only increased Cuba's role and prestige in the world arena.

Due to Cuba's increased role on the world scene and the process of institutionalization that had also been taking place internally in Cuba in the 1970s, the government in Havana had had to face many questions and accusations that it was merely acting as a Soviet proxy. These accusations only increased with the fact that the Soviet Union provided weapons and means of transport for Cuban soldiers. When Moscow signed agreements with Grenada in the early 1980s these were not signed in the Soviet Union or Grenada but instead in the Cuban capital (88). In his speech to mark the 15th anniversary of the Cuban victory at the Bay of Pigs in 1976 Fidel countered these accusations when he spoke of the decision to send troops to Angola. He stated:

Cuba alone bears the responsibility for taking the decision (89).

Two years later on 26 July 1978 Fidel spoke of Cuba's right to be a member of the Nonaligned Movement. He said:

Cuba is a Nonaligned country because it does not belong to any military pact (90).

Documents that have been recently released provide more evidence that Cuba had acted on its own and was not a Soviet proxy. In December 1981 Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, a member of the politburo of the PCC, held talks with the US Secretary of

State, Alexander Haig, in a secret meeting held in Mexico City. On the decision to send troops to Angola Rodriguez said

I can assure unequivocally, in as much as I played a direct role in this matter, that when the decision to dispatch Cuban forces into Angola was made, we communicated nothing about it to the Soviet Union (91).

It has even become known that the decision to become involved in Angola was taken personally by the Castro brothers. On troops being sent to Ethiopia, Rodriguez said that it had been Fidel's idea and not Moscow's. In relation to Central America he said Moscow would not become entwined in anything that it did not want to become involved in (92).

The Soviet Union and Cuba did enjoy a close relationship in these matters and even shared information. Rodriguez even stated to Haig that a deal had been agreed upon where the Soviet Union provided weapons and Cuba the personnel (93). This showed that Cuba was not acting as a proxy for the Soviet Union but instead as its partner. The Cuban government had made the decision to send troops to Angola by itself and had also suggested that troops should be sent to Ethiopia without any interference or prompting from Moscow. Also agreements were only signed after Cuban troops were already engaged in Africa and not before. In the aforementioned interview with CBS in September 1979, Fidel had stated this very fact when he had said:

At times we coincide. We don't always coincide (94).

Cuba's increased role in the world arena from the mid 1970s, instead of signalling its subservience to Moscow, could have instead increased its prestige within the Soviet Union's governing elite, as well as in the world arena. This, again, illustrated Havana's use of foreign policy in its desire to reduce its dependence on Moscow and the Soviet Union and help its own survival.

Brezhnev's speeches at the 25th and 26th Congresses of the CPSU in February 1976 and February 1981 also suggest that Cuba was not a Soviet proxy since Brezhnev in his references to Africa did not mention Cuba in relation to this continent. Brezhnev merely talked about Moscow's relationship with the various African countries it was involved with and made no reference to Cuban involvement (95). If Cuba was acting as a Soviet proxy it could be assumed that he would have made reference to this especially as Fidel had been present at for these congresses. Brezhnev did; however, talk about Cuban involvement in Africa was when Fidel visited Moscow in April 1977. What made this visit different from the previous ones was that Fidel, before arriving in Moscow, had travelled extensively in Africa on route from Havana. It would have been a great surprise if Brezhnev had not mentioned Cuban involvement in Africa. Brezhnev stated:

Comrade Fidel, you have just visited a number of African countries. We followed this trip with great comradely interest. It showed for all to see the wide international recognition that the policy of socialist Cuba has. A stranger to any interference whatsoever in the internal affairs of other states,

this policy is marked by a noble endeavour to consolidate peace, to help peoples who have thrown off the hated yoke of colonialism, to defend their gains and to strengthen their countries' independence (96).

As has been stated, Soviet foreign policy had undergone change when Brezhnev had replaced Khrushchev as General Secretary of the CPSU. It had become more conservative in nature and, with regard to the Third World, Moscow was more cautious in granting large levels of backing to countries in this region. When the Soviet Union did become involved in the Third World, it was for various reasons: reduce the prestige/influence of the US; increase its own prestige/influence; counter China and in its involvement in Africa achieved naval access to new parts of the world. By the 1970s Moscow, again, became more involved in the Third World due to its increased prestige but also due to the problems that the US had encountered as a result of the Vietnam War and its aftermath (97).

In the years since these events took place has a re-thinking, with the benefit of hindsight, taken place among people who participated in them? This will be concluded once an analysis of participants' memoirs and speeches in the preceding years has taken place. A number of different events and subjects are commented upon and will be analysed in turn These are (a) the Cuban Missile Crisis and its aftermath, (b) perceptions of Che Guevara, (c) Cuban rapprochement with the Soviet Union in the late 1960s, (d) Cuban membership to the CMEA, (e) Soviet and Cuban involvement in Africa and Latin America, (f) the problems of the US "discovering" Soviet troops in Cuba in the late 1970s and (g) collaboration between the two countries in this period.

The area that has received most attention is the Cuban Missile Crisis. A number of people have written on this subject including Khrushchev himself. In his memoirs he not only stated that he took the decision to send the missiles himself, but that they were sent for the purpose of defending Cuba and that the whole affair had been a triumph for Soviet foreign policy since Moscow had been able to obtain a promise from Washington that it would not invade Cuba (98). A. Gromyko, the Soviet Foreign Minister at this time, repeated Khrushchev's statement that the whole episode was a triumph for the Soviet Union (99).

A. Dobrynin, the Soviet ambassador to Washington, confuses this picture, however, when he wrote that Khrushchev had been mistaken not to get a public pledge from Washington over its promise not to invade Cuba, since the outcome had been a humiliation for Moscow. In the book Operation Anaydr, written by the US and Soviet generals, who had been in charge of their respective operations in 1962, General W.Y. Smith and General A.I. Gribkov. Gribkov wrote that the US aerial inspection of the Soviet ships leaving Cuba was shameful (100). Carlos Lechuga, the Cuban ambassador to the United Nations, wrote that Fidel had said in 1992 that the missiles had not been sent just for the purpose of defending Cuba since if this had been the case Soviet soldiers would have been sufficient for defending the island against US aggression (101). In recent years participants have also taken part in conferences and round table meetings where these issues have been debated (102).

Recently factual matters and details on the Cuban Missile Crisis have become clearer. The first is on the question of whether a second U-2 US spy plane was shot down over Cuba in October 1962. Fidel in an interview with the US television network, NBC, in February 1988 categorically denied this had taken place (103). Gribkov also

stated that the Soviet tactical nuclear weapons or "Luna" missiles in Cuba were not under the command of Moscow but were instead under the Soviet General, I.A. Pliyev, in Cuba. Gribkov stated that this was the first time Moscow had given up such total control of nuclear weapons (104). The real picture of the Cuban Missile Crisis has become clearer over time, but the humiliation Fidel felt in not being consulted by Khrushchev before he made his deal with Kennedy has not waned (105). Khrushchev wrote on the outcome of the crisis:

Our relations with Cuba, on the other hand, took a sudden turn for the worse (106).

General Rafael del Pino, a Sierra Maestra veteran, wrote in 1989 that the outcome of the crisis had accentuated the differences between Moscow and Havana and made Cuba more radical throughout the rest of the 1960s (107).

In 1989 N. Kudin, who had been the economic specialist for the Soviet embassy in Havana from 1960 to 1967, wrote in America Latina about his experiences with Che when he had been the Cuban Economic Minister in this period. In this article Kudin wrote that Che was very rigid in his approach as a result of his experiences in the Sierra Maestra but that he had always appeared very happy with his dealings with Kudin and the ideas of collaboration between Moscow and Havana. Kudin wrote that his last meeting with Che had been in April 1965 (108). Two months after Che's speech in Algiers when he had attacked the Soviet Union for showing "imperialism" towards the Third World. The conclusion can be drawn that Moscow either did not attach much importance to this speech or, more likely, simply choose to ignore it.

Yu. Pavlov has also written his memoirs. In October 1962 Pavlov had been involved in talks with William Knox of the Westinghouse Electric International and this correspondence had been used as an additional channel of communication between Khrushchev and Kennedy during the Missile Crisis. Pavlov would later become the Soviet ambassador to Costa Rica. In his memoirs he wrote of the situation between Moscow and Havana in the late 1960s and of Cuba's membership to the CMEA in July 1972. On the relationship between Moscow and Havana at the end of the 1960s becoming closer Pavlov wrote:

Then came a 'belated honeymoon' in Soviet-Cuban relations that lasted well into the 1980s (109).

This made it perfectly clear that problems had existed, but from the late 1960s these had been resolved and the relationship between the two countries had begun to flourish. General Rafael del Pino in his memoirs wrote that relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union had indeed been strained in the 1960s after the Cuban Missile Crisis. This situation lasted until the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. After this, however, del Pino wrote that the relationship was extremely close until the death of Brezhnev in 1982 (110).

Pavlov confuses this idea of good relations between Moscow and Havana being continuous after August 1968 when he wrote of Cuba's membership to the CMEA in June 1972. This was often seen as extremely prestigious for Cuba but Pavlov painted a different picture when he wrote that Brezhnev and Kosygin had perhaps different motives. They wanted Cuba to gain membership of this movement since it would not

only give Moscow more control over the Cuban economy, but also importantly spread the burden of the massive aid to Cuba over the rest of the European member states of the CMEA (111). In 1972, obviously, no mention of this was made by Moscow, but by stating this, Pavlov illustrated that Moscow was concerned as early as 1972 about the Cuban economy and the knock-on effects that it was having on the Soviet economy.

Much has also been written about Soviet and Cuban involvement in Africa from the mid 1970s and in Latin America from the late 1970s. Del Pino wrote that by the mid 1970s the world situation and the US defeat in Vietnam in particular, gave the Soviet Union and Cuba the opportunity to increase their role in Africa since US involvement was unlikely (112). Dobrynin wrote that it was a Cuban decision to become involved in Africa and that Cuba was much more enthusiastic than the Soviet Union over this. On this decision and Fidel he wrote:

He wanted to be a player on the world scene...The Soviet leadership never contemplated using the Cuban troops in any third country, but the Cubans quickly managed to involve us there on the pretext of international solidarity (113).

In his book, Pavlov agreed with Dobrynin when he stated that Brezhnev had never asked Cuba to become involved in Angola and the decision was purely a Cuban one (114). Del Pino affirmed that a deal between Moscow and Havana involving Soviet machinery and weapons being used by Cuban personnel in Africa had been struck after both had become involved on the continent (115).

On Nicaragua, del Pino wrote that collaboration between Moscow and Havana had taken place, but Pavlov qualified this when he stated that opinions between Moscow and Havana had differed over Nicaragua, since Fidel had wanted the Sandinistas to move to the left, but Moscow had wanted a more cautious approach. He even stated that Havana had attempted to guide Soviet policy in this matter by taking the dominant role (116). A re-thinking on Moscow and Havana's increased role in Africa and Latin America has not taken place, but what these participants' memoirs do illustrate is that Cuba did not act, as a Soviet proxy and that Cuba, in fact, had been even more radical than the Soviet Union. These memoirs merely reaffirm what Moscow and Havana had stated at the time these events had actually taken place.

This phenomenon was repeated over other matters including the US "discovery" of Soviet troops in Cuba in the late 1970s and the collaboration between Moscow and Havana at this time. Dobrynin wrote that the US "discovery" of Soviet troops had seen Washington over react to the situation, but that it was indeed an extremely dangerous turn of events at the time. He wrote that the whole process of detente between the Soviet Union and the US, which had been prevalent in the 1970s was called into question by the US statements on the Soviet troops (117).

On collaboration between Moscow and Havana, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, a member of the politburo of the PCC, stated in an interview that the Soviet Union provided the goods and equipment that Cuba could not find from other sources. V.I. Vorotnikov, the Soviet ambassador to Cuba in the late 1970s, wrote of the Soviet Union and Cuba sharing information on events that were taking place at this time (118). Again, a re-thinking has not taken place but this study reaffirms the statements that had been made in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

A general re-thinking has not taken place but an examination of participants' memoirs has given a re-ratification of these earlier statements and events. The only area where a re-thinking has taken place is over the Cuban Missile Crisis with the reasons for the missiles deployment and the outcome for the Soviet Union being questioned. Since 1962 it has also emerged that the tactical nuclear weapons in Cuba were not under Moscow's control. In relation to Cuba's increased role in the world from the mid 1960s, Cuba did not act as a Soviet proxy but rather as its partner in many areas. Both countries had their own reasons for Cuba's more prominent position on the world stage. Sometimes these reasons coincided and this resulted in the two countries working together. This perfectly illustrated the relationship between Moscow and Havana by the mid 1980s. Cuba's radicalism had long since died and the relationship had gone from strength to strength until by 1985 the Soviet Union and Cuba were extremely close allies.

Endnotes

(1) Granma 24 August 1968, pp.2-5.

(2) Granma 12 July 1972, p.1. Granma 29 January 1974, pp.1-8.

Fursenko, A. & Naftali, T. "One Hell of a Gamble" Khrushchev, Castro and Kennedy and the Cuban Missile 1958-1964, 1997, John Murray, London, pp184-257.

(3) Granma 17 December 1975, p.1.

(4) Granma 31 August 1979, pp.1-2.

(5) Document 1, Cuban Record of Conversation, Mikoyan and Cuban Leadership,

Havana 4 November 1962 in Cold War International History Project Bulletin, Issues

8-9 Winter 1996/1997, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars,
Washington, D.C. pp. 339-342.

(6) Ibid.

(7) Ibid.

Mikoyan's trip and the leadup and events of the missile crisis are discussed in
Fursenko, A. & Nafatali, T. "One Hell of a Gamble", 1997, pp.166-318.

(8) Pravda 30 March 1966, p.2.

(9) Ibid.

(10) Pravda 18 November 1969, p.5.

(11) T.W. Roe stated the 1964 agreement had said that oil supplies would increase by
2% each year but Cuba had hoped for a 8% increase by 1967. The result was oil
shortages.

Fidel Castro's Retreat on Armed Struggle 1967 and 1968, John Hopkins University
PhD Thesis, p.163

(12) Pravda 18 November 1969, p.5.

(13) Ibid.

(14) L.Gaure & J. Suchlicki said that Moscow was extremely happy with Allende's
victory in Chile. "The Allende Regime: Actions and Reactions" in Problems of
Communism, May-June 1971, Volume XX, Number 3, p.53.

(15) Granma 10 August 1970, pp.1-2.

(16) Pravda 31 March 1971, pp.2-10.

(17) Pravda 3 September 1971, p.4.

(18) C. Mesa-Lago wrote of the increase in Soviet involvement with this organization's
creation. Cuba in the 1970s, 1974, p.10.

- (19) Granma 12 July 1972, p.1.
- (20) Pravda 1 November 1971, p.1.
- (21) Granma 28 June 1972, p.7.
- (22) Pravda 28 June 1972, pp.1-2.
- (23) Pravda 6 July 1972, pp.1-2. Pravda 4 July 1972, pp.1,2. Pravda 2 February 1974, p.1.
- (24) Granma 29 January 1974, p.1. Granma 2 February 1974, p.1. Granma 31 January 1974, p.1. Granma 30 January 1974, pp.2-5.
- (25) Pravda 31 January 1974, p.5.
- (26) Ibid.
- (27) Pravda 5 February 1974, pp.1-2.
- (28) Granma 17 December 1975, p.1. Granma 25 July 1976, pp.1-4.
- (29) Granma 19 December 1975, p.5.
- (30) Pravda 25 February 1976, p.3.
- (31) Pravda 6 April 1977, p.2.
- (32) Pravda 11 September 1979, p.1.
- Cold War International History Project Bulletin, Issues 8-9, pp.190-193.
- (33) Dominguez, J. To Make a World Safe for Revolution, Cuba's Foreign Policy, 1989, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, pp.226-230.
- Morley, M.H. Imperial State and Revolution. The United States and Cuba 1952-1986, 1987, Cambridge University Press, pp.241-243.
- (34)Chernenko, K.U. Izbrannyye rechi i stat'i, 1984, Politizdat, Moskva, pp.424-428.
- (35) Ibid.

(36) Pravda 24 February 1981, pp.2-6.

(37) Pravda 6 August 1983, p.1.

(38) Pravda 2 November 1984, p.1.

(39) Pravda 11 November 1984, pp.1,4.

(40) Ibid p.1.

(41) The 1964 agreement set the amounts of sugar and the price which the Soviet Union would pay for this until 1970.

These levels were 2.1m tons in 1965, 3m tons in 1966, 4m tons in 1967 and 5m tons in both 1968 and 1969.

The price was to be 6 US cents free alongside ship. This meant that delivery was included in the price.

Pravda 23 January 1964, p.1.

(42) Trade for 1972 was 938,464 million pesos and 1,287,685 million pesos.

Anuario Estadístico de Cuba 1975, Comité Estatal de Estadísticas, La Habana, p.159.

(43) Ibid 1980, p168 & pp.184-205.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), 1980, United Nations, Santiago, Chile, pp.193-195.

Ibid 1985, p.232.

Ibid 1989, pp.321-322.

(44) Cuba announced a five point programme for the resolution of the crisis. They were: the US embargo to be ended, US subversive activities to be ended, "pirate attacks" from offshore bases to be prevented, violations of Cuban airspace to be stopped and the withdrawal of US Navy from Guantanamo.

Revolucion 29 October 1962, p.1.

(45) Pravda 24 May 1963, pp.3-4.

(46) Pravda 18 January 1964, pp.1-2.

(47) Pravda 12 November 1964, p.4.

(48) Guevara, E. "Discurso en el Segundo Seminario Económico de Solidaridad Afroasiática" in Ernesto Che Guevara escritos y discursos, 7, 1985, Editorial De Ciencias Sociales, La Habana, pp. 341-354.

(49) Granma 7 February 1966, p.1.

(50) Pravda 2 April 1966, p.7.

(51) Granma 2 May 1966, pp.2-5.

(52) Fidel Castro Speaks, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, London, 1969, pp161-180.

(53) Cuba was not on the list of participating Communist parties at this conference.

Pravda 28 February 1968, p.1.

Cold war International History Project Bulletin, Issues 8-9, pp.339-342.

(54) Rudolph, J.D. The Evolution of a Crisis, Praeger, London, 1992, pp.53-76.

Granma 16 October 1967, pp.1-4.

(55) Goldenberg, B. The Cuban Revolution and Latin America, 1965, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, p.311.

(56) Granma 24 August 1968, pp.2-4.

(57) Granma 5 September 1970, p.1. Granma 8 December 1970, pp1-7.

(58) Pravda 3 April 1971, pp.6-7.

(59) Pravda 28 June 1972, pp.1-2.

(60) Pravda 4 July 1972, pp.1,4.

(61) Granma 30 June 1974, pp.1-3.

(62) Ibid.

After the failure of the 10m zafra in 1970 Cuba started to become more institutionalized. In 1971 the Cuban version of the Soviet GOSPLAN was created: JUCEPLAN. The Soviet-Cuban Commission of Economic Scientific and Technical Collaboration was also created in 1971. In July 1972 Cuba gained membership to the CMEA.

All these changes meant that economic policy was more centrally controlled and under joint leadership.

(63) Granma 19 December 1975, pp.2-7.

(64) Granma 25 July 1976, pp.1-4.

(65) Granma 19 December 1975, pp.2-7.

Munck, R. *Revolutionary Trends in Latin America*, 1984, Monograph Series, No 17, Centre for developing Area Studies, McGill University, pp.53-57.

(66) Ibid.

(67) Ibid

(68) Pravda 26 February 1976, p.6.

(69) Granma International Weekly Review 11 November 1979.

(70) Pravda 27 February 1981, p.1.

(71) Morley, M.H. Imperial State and Revolution, 1987, p.366.

(72) II Congreso del Partido Comunista de Cuba Informe central Lineamientos Economicos y Sociales para el quinquenio 1981-1985 Resoluciones, Editora Politica, La Habana, 1982, p.311.

(73) Pravda outlined the events in the last few months of 1975. Pravda 6 January 1976, p.5.

- Somoza fled Nicaragua for the US in July 1979. Pravda 19 July 1979, p.5.
Granma 31 August 1979 pp1-2.
- (74) Fidel talked about Cuban involvement in Angola during his speech to the First Congress of the PCC. Granma 19 December 1975, pp.2-7.
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- (75) Castro, F. "Angola: African Giron" in Fidel Castro Speeches. Cuba's Internationalist Foreign Policy, 1981, pp.91-92.
- (76) Castro, F "Solidarity with Africa, Ethiopia" Fidel Castro Speeches, 1981, p.122.
- (77) Castro, F. "Interview with CBS" in Fidel Castro Speeches, 1981, p267.
- (78) Granma 2 November 1980, pp.2-7.
- (79) Anderson, J.L. Che Guevara A Revolutionary Life, 1997, Transworld Publishers Ltd, London, pp630-669.
- (80) Granma 19 December 1975, pp.2-7.
- (81) Castro, F. "Interview with CBS" in Fidel Castro Speeches, 1981, p.267.
- (82) Granma 28 July 1980, pp.2-7.
- (83) Granma 28 July 1980, pp.2-7.
- (84) Granma 19 December 1975, pp.2-7.
- (85) Granma 26 March 1978, pp2-5.
- (86) Erisman, H.M. Cuba's Foreign Relations in a Post-Soviet World, 2000, University of Florida, Gainesville, pp.98-103.
- (87) Erisman, H.M. Cuba's International Relations, 1985, pp.68-70.
- (88) "Document 7: Risquet to Fidel Castro, Luanda, 29 January 1976" in Cold War International History Project Bulletin, Issues 8-9, p.15.
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Francisco, pp.19, 23.

(89) Castro, F. "Angola: Africa Giron" in Fidel Castro Speeches, 1981, p.92.

(90) Granma 6 August 1978, pp.2-7.

(91) "Transcript of Meeting between US Secretary of state Alexander M.Haig, Jr, and Cuban Vice Premier Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Mexico City, 23 November 1981" in Cold War International History Project Bulletin, Issues 8-9, p.210.

(92) Ibid pp.210, 212.

Gleijeses, P. *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington and Africa, 1959-1976*, 2001, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, p.351.

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Chapter 3

The Early Years of General Secretary Gorbachev

(1985-1986)

On 10 March 1985 Konstantin Chernenko died and on the following day was succeeded by Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary of the CPSU. These events marked the beginning of a period of time when significant changes would occur in the Soviet Union, which would affect its relationship, not only with the rest of the world, but, for this study more importantly, Cuba. Changes to personnel appeared in the top echelons of the CPSU and Ministry of Foreign Affairs after Gorbachev's appointment as General Secretary and alterations in policy soon followed. These were highlighted by the events of (a) the Central Committee plenum held in April 1985, (b) Gorbachev's announcement on 15 January 1986 on nuclear disarmament and (c) the 27th CPSU Congress held in February 1986.

A major policy alteration also occurred in Cuba in April 1986, when Fidel introduced the campaign of rectification of errors to solve the island's own problems. How would the changes in both the Soviet Union and Cuba affect the relationship between them?

This chapter will examine the reasons why these changes occurred in the Soviet Union and Cuba and the effect that they had on the relationship between the two countries up to the end of 1986. This will be done in three sections with the first concentrating on the problems facing the Soviet Union in 1985, the "new thinking" which was required to resolve these, and the personnel changes that also occurred at this time. The second section will concentrate on what effect these changes had specifically on the relationship with Cuba. It will also see if, in retrospect, the opinion of the Soviet elite, on these events, has changed in the years since they occurred. Examining participants' memoirs will do this. The third will examine the structural dynamics of Soviet/Cuban relations in this period and how Cuba viewed the Soviet Union and the

changes that were starting to occur there. This will include a study of trade between the two countries.

Gorbachev, The Elite and Foreign Policy

In March 1985 when Gorbachev became General Secretary of the CPSU the Soviet Union was undergoing a period of uncertainty. With his appointment, he became the seventh person to hold this position since the time of the Russian Revolution, but the fourth within a three-year period. This, in itself, would have a destabilising effect but the Soviet Union faced an array of other problems (1). On becoming General Secretary Gorbachev commented on this.

On taking office as General Secretary in 1985 I was immediately faced with an avalanche of problems...The Soviet Union faced tremendous internal problems (2).

The state of the national economy was one of the biggest internal problems that he faced as it had for some time been showing signs of deterioration with falling growth rates. Apart from this, Soviet science and technology were becoming increasingly antiquated in comparison with those in the West. In April 1985 Gorbachev addressed these problems in his speech at the Central Committee plenum. He stated that more efficiency was generally required but in particular, with relation to raw materials, growth rates had to increase, scientific and technological progress was expected and better

planning and management were also needed. This he hoped would improve the economic position of the Soviet Union (3).

Gorbachev believed that it was not just the Soviet Union which faced problems but the whole socialist world system. He thought that the Warsaw Pact countries needed "revitalising" since the system had become stagnant and the member countries were simply too obedient to Moscow. He believed that the Council For Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) also needed reconstructive surgery performed on it as it had become too bureaucratic, inefficient and technically it was falling further behind the West. At the 27th CPSU Congress Gorbachev said of the CMEA

In our view, changes are also required in the activity of the headquarters of socialist integration itself - the Council for Mutual Economic Aid. The main thing is that in the implementation of the programme there should be less administration fiat, fewer committees and commissions of all kinds, and more attention to economic levers, initiative and socialist enterprise, and that labour collectives should be involved in this process (4).

This also applied to Moscow's relations with communist parties that were not in power. He wanted to see these relations modernized and become more forthright (5).

If the Soviet Union's internal situation was causing concern for Gorbachev so too was the external one. The Cold War had taken a turn for the worse in the early 1980s, with the period of détente of the 1970s, when a closer relationship with the US was achieved, by this time long dead. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979

had adversely affected the relationship between the two superpowers. There had also been an increase in anti-communist rhetoric emanating from the White House, after Ronald Reagan had become President. Reagan and his advisers were concerned by events such as the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua as they believed this illustrated the trend of creeping communism throughout the world and were determined to try and “roll back” communism. This had the effect of making relations between Washington and Moscow more strained. Tensions became even greater when the US invaded the Caribbean island, of Grenada in 1983. Reagan’s proposed Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI) or “stars wars” programme, which in reality was going to move the arms race into space, did not help relations between the US and the Soviet Union as it only intensified the feelings of distrust between the two countries.

Moscow’s foreign policy faced other dilemmas since for over five years; the Soviet Union had been embroiled in a war in Afghanistan. This was resulting in not only spiraling costs for Moscow, but also loss of lives. This war appeared to be becoming more and more unwinnable. Gorbachev realised this and would later comment

We needed to withdraw from the damaging and costly war in
Afghanistan (6).

Gorbachev’s concern at the Afghan situation became apparent when he publicly voiced them at the April 1985 Central Committee plenum. His concern over this situation can be illustrated by the fact that, in the preliminary drafts of Gorbachev's report to the 27th CPSU Congress, he wanted to announce the withdrawal of Soviet troops from

Afghanistan. Shevardnadze stated that this was only omitted at the last minute (7). At this congress Gorbachev, however, did call Afghanistan

...a bleeding wound...We would like in the very near future to return to their homeland the Soviet troops who are in Afghanistan (8).

The West had made it clear that for relations between the two military blocs to improve Moscow had to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan. Improved relations with the West were certainly important to Gorbachev due to the fact that the Cold War, as stated, had taken a turn for the worse in the early 1980s. This could well have been in Gorbachev's thinking when he made these statements on Afghanistan. Kornienko, a Soviet diplomat, in his memoirs suggested that this could have been a primary reason for Gorbachev making these announcements (9). Gorbachev was also very concerned with the increasing tension that existed in various regional conflicts around the world and was bold enough to delegate blame. At the April 1985 Central Committee plenum he took as an example Nicaragua when he accused the US for the increasing tension around this country. On regional conflicts Gorbachev stated

We favour the expansion of all-round co-operation with the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The CPSU and the Soviet state invariably support the right of all peoples, making their own choices, to determine their social and economic present and to build their future without any

outside interference (10).

Later in this speech he turned to the nuclear problem when he said

Mankind faces a choice: either the continued aggravation of tension and confrontation or constructive searches for mutually acceptable accords that would halt the process of material preparations for nuclear conflict (11).

Although this was the case, Gorbachev, in this speech, also stated that he wanted improved relations with the US that would lead to an increase in trade relations, economic ties and increased scientific and technical development between the two countries. He stated that he had already offered the US a moratorium on nuclear research in space and strategic nuclear weapons, but the US had rejected them (12).

On 15 January 1986 in a speech at Vladivostok, Gorbachev outlined a plan that would help in this area of the nuclear arms race spiraling out of control. He went further than ever before when he stated

The Soviet Union proposes that, by acting in successive stages, a process of ridding the earth of nuclear weapons be carried out and completed in the next 15 years, by the end of the century (13).

This plan consisted of three stages, each lasting between five and eight years, so that by the year 2000 his aims could be achieved (14). During this speech he also announced that the Soviet moratorium on nuclear explosions, which had ended on 31 December 1985, would last for another three months. This shattered Washington's belief, that these Soviet statements had been a mere tactic to gain time in order to re-arm. In August 1986 this moratorium was again extended. Gorbachev realised that the world had changed and that the view on nuclear weapons must also change when he said

It is time to abandon the thinking of the Stone Age, where the chief concern was to get a bigger club or heavier stone.

We are against weapons in space (15).

Gorbachev reiterated his ideas on both the internal and external problems facing the Soviet Union at the 27th CPSU Congress held in February 1986 (16). In the section of his speech on the world situation, he stated that every country has a sovereign right to choose its own government, political solutions should be found to international and regional crises, and measures should be introduced to strengthen trust between states and help stop international terrorism. In the economic field, he believed there should be a stop to economic blockades and sanctions, a solution to indebtedness should be found, economic security for all should be the goal for the international community, an increase in welfare in the world community should be used to find solutions for global problems. The last area he commented on was in the humanitarian field. An increase on ideas of peace, disarmament and international security should be attempted, genocide,

apartheid and fascism should be prevented, international laws on political, social and human rights should be modernized and an increase in collaboration on culture, arts, science, education and medicine should also be attempted (17). This is an extensive list of goals but Gorbachev hoped that by introducing these to Soviet foreign policy it would reduce tension in the world. In reality it would also start to deideologise Soviet foreign policy.

The changes in personnel that Gorbachev had made since coming to power also aided him in this. All parts of the Soviet decision-making apparatus had been affected, but, significantly for foreign policy, A.A. Gromyko was removed as Minister of Foreign Affairs and became President of the Soviet Union (18). The Georgian E.A. Shevardnadze surprisingly replaced him as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Gorbachev wrote of this

Why was it necessary to replace the Minister of Foreign Affairs?...

A sharp change of direction in this area would be impossible if foreign policy remained in the same hands. Such a task was already beyond Gromyko's capacities (19).

Changes took place in the whole of the foreign policy-making apparatus. Over the next 18 months there was a huge turnover of officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (20). This, as with the Politburo, resulted in younger and more dynamic people being promoted to the leading positions of the organization (21).

The "purge" of old officials also extended to ambassadors. Again, this took place in the period up to the end of 1986. Latin America was no different, but change took

longer to occur in this area of the world. Moscow's two most important partners in Latin America (Cuba and Nicaragua) also had their ambassador changed in 1986 and 1987 (22). Due to these changes, in a short period of time Gorbachev had been able to place his own stamp on Moscow's foreign policy making apparatus and thus, also its foreign policy.

These alterations to Soviet foreign policy, which Gorbachev implemented can be seen to have taken effect in various meetings he attended and speeches he gave after the April 1985 Plenum. In May 1985 he met the Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega and put forward his ideas for a peaceful settlement in Central America. In December 1985 Saddam Hussain visited the Kremlin and was told by Gorbachev that he wanted a peaceful end to the Iran/Iraq war. On 28 July 1986 Gorbachev gave a speech, while in Vladivostok, on how the Asian and Pacific regions could be made less volatile. During this speech he also announced that six regiments of Soviet troops would be removed from Afghanistan by the end of 1986 (23). In November 1986 Gorbachev met Ronald Reagan in Geneva. This was the first meeting of the two superpowers in seven years. Although this was a significant event, it ended without any major agreements being signed (24).

Some of the new directives that Gorbachev introduced in both internal and foreign policy had been discussed before in the Soviet Union but Gorbachev was the person who implemented them. This was for a number of reasons: (a) the poor state of the economy, (b) the return of the Cold War in the early 1980s or (c) the realisation that the Soviet Union was falling behind the West and the US in particular. Gorbachev, younger and in better health than his immediate predecessors when he came to power, may well have felt more inclined to make sweeping changes to both personnel and

policy once he realised that by the mid 1980s the Soviet Union found itself in a fairly precarious position.

Gorbachev, "New Thinking" and Cuba

While at university, Gorbachev had studied law but, before March 1985, when he became General Secretary of the CPSU, he had spent most of his career in the top echelons of the party in the field of agriculture. As a result of this, his knowledge was limited to these two areas, but primarily agricultural issues. Did he therefore have any experience of foreign affairs issues or of events in Cuba, in particular? In his memoirs he devotes a whole chapter to his relationship with Cuba and Fidel himself with the first part being dominated by a brief history of Soviet/Cuban relations up to the 1980s (25). In this Gorbachev stated that he first had contact with Cubans in the 1960s. This had taken place while he had been working in Stavropol and a number of Cubans had been studying there. He states that from this time he had always had sympathetic feelings for Cubans, their country and for Fidel, himself. He wrote

...I was convinced of the character of the Cuban revolution (26).

On the nature of the revolution he went on to write

The Cuban revolution appeared under the name of anti-dictorial, anti-american logo (27).

This would give the impression that Gorbachev had a great knowledge and sympathy for Cuba dating back to the 1960s, but was this actually the case? In his Selected Speeches and Articles Cuba is only mentioned three times before March 1985, when he became General Secretary of the CPSU. Moreover Cuba is mentioned by itself only once. This is in a speech at the 10th Congress of the Portuguese Communist Party on 16 December 1983. In this speech he denounced the US blockade against Cuba. This was quickly followed by an attack on the US blockade against Nicaragua and its aggression against Grenada (28). This speech would appear to be have been motivated more by US foreign policy in Latin America (the US had just invaded Grenada), than by a great interest in Cuba.

In an article that was published in the journal Problems of Peace and Socialism in 1982 Gorbachev mentioned Cuba twice (29). He stated

In the assistance which the USSR gives to various countries and some in socialist countries, like Mongolia, Cuba, Vietnam, Laos and North Korea, work and manage more than 1000 projects (30).

Cuba is, again, mentioned in relation to the US blockade against the island. Here he simply states that the blockade has lasted for more than 20 years. Again, this is quickly followed with an attack over the similar treatment that Nicaragua was receiving from the US (31). Gorbachev had not only never traveled to Cuba before he had become General Secretary, but he had also written very little about the island. If, what he wrote is analysed, what becomes apparent is that he had not really written about the island, but only about US foreign policy towards Latin America. He was merely using Cuba as

an example of this. The only time he does not do this is when he comments on joint projects that the Soviet Union carried out with some of its less important socialist partners. He had bracketed Cuba along with Mongolia, Vietnam, Laos and North Korea. After analysing these speeches and articles it could be concluded that he knew very little about the "island paradise" when he became General Secretary despite the comments contained in his memoirs. Would this lack of knowledge affect the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba after March 1985?

In March 1985 Cuba was represented at Chernenko's funeral not by Fidel but by his younger brother, Raul, instead. This appeared to go against protocol since Cuba was one of the few socialist countries not to be represented by its leader (32). This, however, did not mean that relations between Havana and Moscow were strained since Raul was, at the time, the head of the Cuban army and President of both the Council of State and Council of Ministers. Relations between the two countries could in fact be seen to be extremely close at this time as the agreement signed in November 1984 signified (33).

As has been stated in the previous section, Gorbachev soon started to implement changes in the Soviet Union with the creation of perestroika and "new thinking" in foreign policy becoming apparent (34). It could be thought that the Cuban government would be unsure of these changes, but also more alarmingly by the increased dialogue between the Soviet Union and the US. Moreover Havana would also be concerned by the idea that the CMEA needed to be transformed. How would this effect the Soviet Union's relationship with Cuba?

Over the eighteen-month period from March 1985 until the end of 1986 the Soviet leadership's statements on Cuba changed very little from those made before Gorbachev

had become General Secretary. An example of this was in May 1985, America Latina published an interview with the then Soviet ambassador to Cuba, K. Katushev. In this he praised the advances made in the Cuban economy and stated

...the Soviet Union's help to the country of Jose Marti has created an economy independent, strong and the optimal productive structure (35).

Surprisingly, the number of statements that Gorbachev made on Cuba did not increase as much as would have been expected, when he became leader of the Soviet Union. The language that was used in these statements, also, did not change from that which had been used before 1985. This is seen by the report in Pravda, when Raul was in Moscow for Chernenko's funeral and met Gorbachev, which stated

The resolve to continue strengthening friendship and cooperation between the Soviet Union and Cuba on the basis of the principles of socialist internationalism was confirmed (36).

At the end of October 1985 the new Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze visited Cuba and Pravda described the meeting as follows:

There was a detailed exchange of views on questions pertaining to Soviet-Cuban relations...(The sides) expressed their mutual satisfaction with the dynamic development of multilateral

fraternal Soviet-Cuban relations and confirmed their mutual resolve to continue to deepen and expand every aspect of co-operation between the Soviet Union and the Republic of Cuba in all spheres on the basis of the principles of Marxist-Leninist and socialist internationalism (37).

In February 1986 the 3rd Congress of the PCC was held in Havana. The Soviet representative was E. Ligachev. His speech contained the standard Soviet line on the Cuban Revolution: he praised the Cuban education system, the way the state was organised and the Marxist-Leninist nature of the PCC. Ligachev also stated that the Soviet Union and Cuba, along with the rest of the socialist world, were still working together in harmony in all fields including outer space (38). Pravda reported on the congress and applauded its outcome by saying

...the Communist party of Cuba and its dignitaries are in the vanguard of the construction of socialism in Cuba (39).

Ligachev, however, partly qualified this praise when he spoke of the changes that the Soviet government wanted to introduce in their own country. He talked of the new CPSU party programme and statutes that were required for socio-economic change for, not only the five year period 1986/1990, but also up to the year 2000. Even more importantly for Cuba was that Ligachev stated that modernisation in science and technology was required in all CMEA countries (40). This is important as it heralded the start of criticisms, although relations between the two countries appeared, on the

surface, to still be good. Ligachev praised the Cuban revolution in his speech but, by mentioning the introduction of a new CPSU party programme and that acceleration in science and technology was required in CMEA countries, he was, in reality, criticising the Cuban government, since in many ways it very closely resembled the present Soviet one.

At the end of the following month, the 27th Congress of the CPSU was held in Moscow. Gorbachev's speech, as has been stated, contained many new ideas but more specifically what mention was there of Cuba? Surprisingly the speech made little reference to Cuba. It was not mentioned in relation to the Third World or even when Gorbachev talked of Latin America and the Caribbean, but only in relation to the other socialist states (41). Cuba could have portrayed this as a snub especially when Gorbachev also made no reference to national liberation movements either. The first time this had been omitted since the 1960s. No open change in Soviet policy towards Cuba resulted from this congress, but what is apparent is that changes from previous ones had taken place, as this major omission illustrated.

In other areas this change was not apparent, as Moscow's statements closely resembled those from before March 1985. An example of this was Gorbachev and Fidel's joint denunciation of the massive foreign debt that had engulfed the Third World and Latin America in particular, from the early 1980s. In January 1986 Gorbachev made his feelings on the reasons for Third World debt very clear

The developing countries' present difficulties are, to a certain extent, linked to the impact of crisis phenomena in the economies of imperialist states and their endeavour to

extricate themselves from this situation by stepping up their exploitation of the 'Third World' (42).

Fidel's ideas on this were similar and he believed that the Cuban economy had weathered this economic storm better than the rest of Latin America, due to its close ties to the Soviet economy (43). In July 1985 a Trade Union Conference of Latin America and Caribbean Workers on the Foreign Debt was held in Havana. This conference placed the blame for the economic crisis squarely at the door of the capitalist world (44). Pravda's reporting of this conference stated this Cuban belief that its economy was in a healthy state due to its close ties to the Soviet one. During 1985 and 1986 this was systematic of Pravda since it printed many articles on the Latin American debt and Fidel/Cuba's reaction to it (45).

Pravda in this period carried a great number of articles that concentrated on joint co-operation between the Soviet Union and Cuba. By reporting these Soviet successes Pravda was merely giving evidence of the worth of the relationship, to its readers. A vast array of different subjects were covered in these articles on joint co-operation such as, the Soviet help in the electrification of Cuba, increased co-operation in science and technology, a new geographical centre being opened, a joint effort to explore for oil near Santiago de Cuba, the delivery of Soviet planes to Cuba and the publication of a Cuban science book in the Soviet Union. One article even concentrated on modern Cuban life and the benefits that the island and Cuban people had gained from the relationship with the Soviet Union and the implementation of socialism there (46).

In this period Pravda also attacked US policy towards both Cuba and Latin America as a whole. On 22 May 1985 Pravda reported that the anti-Cuban

government/anti-Fidel radio station, Radio Marti, had started broadcasting from the US. On this matter the article stated

The radio war that Washington has unleashed against Cuba is further graphic evidence of who is responsible for whipping up international tension (47).

On the question of US policy towards Latin America Pravda stated

The Soviet government strongly condemns the escalation of the aggressive US policy in Central America, demands that a stop be put to the criminal preparations directed against the Nicaraguan people, and calls on the US to show restraint, realism and responsibility (48).

This at first appeared strange since Gorbachev hoped to improve relations with the West and the US. However, in reality Gorbachev was never slow to blame the US for the increased international tension of the early 1980s or to lay the blame at the US's door for the failure of the Geneva talks in November 1986. These articles were merely continuing Moscow's policy towards Washington, as the Soviet government believed the US was acting incorrectly.

Soviet reporting on the relationship with Cuba in this period closely resembled that which had taken place before March 1985. This was the same trend as shown in reports on Cuba. Analysing what was said in the Soviet press and government

statements, there was little evidence that changes were taking place in Soviet foreign policy towards Cuba although some problems might have been fermenting. Various reasons for the lack of change in Moscow's policy towards Havana in 1985 and 1986 can be suggested: Moscow had just signed a new 25 year agreement with Havana, which made changes difficult; Moscow was too busy concentrating on the changes to policy and personnel in Moscow itself to quickly make changes to relations with Havana; Gorbachev and the new personnel were still learning about Soviet/Cuban relations at this time; more established members of the ruling elite may have not wished to see the status quo with Cuba altered or, as Gorbachev states in his Memoirs, he believed that Cuba was not in a position to withstand the changes occurring elsewhere. As a result of this, the changes to Soviet/Cuban relations would have to go at a slower pace. All of these reasons, or various combinations of them, are why there was so little change in the relationship between Moscow and Havana in the eighteen months following Gorbachev's ascent to power.

In the years since these events took place, has a re-thinking, with the aid of hindsight, taken place? In his memoirs, A. Kopto, the first secretary of the CPSU in Kiev and a former ambassador to Cuba, stated that relations were still good in 1985 and 1986. He also said that he held Fidel in very high regard at the time of his 60th birthday in 1986 (49). In his memoirs V.I. Vorotnikov, a former ambassador to Cuba and member of the central committee of the CPSU, stated how happy Gorbachev was with the meeting he had with Fidel, while he was in Moscow for the CMEA meeting held in November 1986 (50). No general re-thinking on this period has taken place.

What effect had the introduction of rectification of errors campaign, which Fidel had started at the celebrations of the Bay of Pigs victory in April 1986? Pravda carried

an article on his speech that, in itself, was not surprising since it was the 25th anniversary of this victory. The article concentrated on Latin American debt and US policy in this area and towards Cuba, but carried no information on the rectification of errors campaign (51). Kapto stated that this campaign was introduced to solve purely Cuban problems, but Dr O. Gridchina, a researcher at the Cuban government funded Centro de Investigaciones de la Economía Internacional (CIEC) in Havana, muddied the water when she said that, although the rectification of errors campaign was different from perestroika, there were many similarities between them. Both had the same goal, that being, the improvement of their respective systems. Gorbachev has stated that in the years 1985 and 1986 the campaign of rectification of errors was in accordance with perestroika (52). Some re-thinking with the aid of hindsight on the campaign of rectification of errors has taken place, but as both campaigns were still in their infancy in this period, they had not been in progress sufficiently long for differences to be completely apparent.

The View From Havana

Konstantin Chernenko's death, on 10 March 1985, meant that Cuba had to come to terms with the third Soviet General Secretary in three years. It could have been thought that this would cause uncertainty amongst the Cuban leadership. However, it does not seem to have been the case in early 1985, as Havana appeared not to have expected any great change to Soviet policy with the appointment of Mikhail Gorbachev as General Secretary of the CPSU. On 12 March Granma stated

Mikhail Gorbachev is associated with the strategy elaborated at the 26th CPSU Congress and the plans of the Central Committee which he participated in with Yuri Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko, was invariably continued (53).

In May the Soviet periodical Latinskaya Amerika published an interview with Lionel Soto, the Cuban ambassador to the Soviet Union. During this interview Soto stated that Soviet/Cuban relations were

...a great example of just relations between an industrial country and a small country (54).

Despite yet another new General Secretary in Moscow, the early indicators were that Havana did not appear to expect any change to occur in its relationship with the Soviet Union. This occurred for a number of reasons: previously no great changes had occurred in Soviet policy towards Cuba with the appointment of a new General Secretary of the CPSU; the Cuban governing elite may not have known a great deal about Gorbachev due to his lack of previous contact with the Caribbean island up to March 1985 and at this time the government in Havana may have been more concerned with the internal problems that faced its island.

Forty-five official visits between the Soviet Union and Cuba took place in the 22-month period between March 1985 and the end of 1986 (55). The highest echelons of the two governing elites participated in these visits. In this period Shevardnadze visited Cuba twice, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez visited the Soviet Union three times, Raul once

and Fidel himself travelled to Moscow twice (56). The first of these high level visits to take place, as has been stated, was in March 1985 when Raul represented Cuba at Chernenko's funeral. During his stay in the Soviet Union he held meetings with various high-ranking CPSU officials and on 20 March he had talks with Gorbachev himself (57). Shevardnadze first visited Cuba in October 1985 when he stayed for three days from 28 October (58). This was important for Soviet/Cuban relations since it was the first high-level meeting between the countries, after Gorbachev had had time to implement some changes in the Soviet Union. Would there be signs of any tension existing between the countries? Granma described the talks as taking place in a warm and fraternal atmosphere: exactly the same language that had been used to describe such meetings throughout the 25 years of the relationship's existence (59).

During 1986 Shevardnadze made his second visit to Cuba. This took place on 6 October 1986 almost exactly a year after his first but this was a much shorter one, since he did not even leave the airport. He did, however, hold talks with Fidel who had travelled to the airport to meet him (60). Fidel's two visits to Moscow both occurred in 1986. The second of these visits was in November when he travelled to Moscow for a high-powered CMEA meeting of the leaders of the member countries (61). During this visit he held talks with Gorbachev and was awarded the Order of Lenin by the Soviet leader (62).

Fidel's earlier visit to Moscow had been for the 27th CPSU Congress in February/March of that year. During this stay he, again, held talks with Gorbachev but also with Ryzhkov and Ligachev. He also addressed the Congress (63). Just as Ligachev had done at the 3rd Congress of the PCC during his speech to the Congress

Fidel partly qualified his praise of Gorbachev and the changes in the Soviet Union by commenting on national liberation movements, when he said

We do not owe our freedom to the charity of the imperialists.

It is a result of our struggles to achieve and preserve it; blood was shed for it and the lives of the best sons of our people were sacrificed for it... There is something more powerful than nuclear weapons. It is the people's love of freedom (64).

This is significant since Gorbachev's speech had contained no reference to these movements and Fidel's comments could be seen as a public reminder to Gorbachev of the importance of them.

If this was the first appearance of some semblance of problems appearing between Moscow and Havana this can partly be dispelled by Fidel's reaction to his meeting with Gorbachev. Fidel said in an interview to the Soviet paper Novosti about Gorbachev:

a most serious person, very modest, intelligent and with great integrity...I am very content with my meeting with Gorbachev. They were fraternal, warm and also profound. They left a great impression on me (65).

Granma on 3 March stated that during the meeting between Gorbachev and Fidel

They examined ways to increase the efficiency of economic co-operation between the two countries and also the possibilities for the programme of economic and science-technological collaboration between the USSR and Cuba until the year 2000 (66).

The meeting between the two leaders may have appeared cordial, Fidel certainly gave this impression with his remarks to the Soviet press, but as this quote from Granma illustrates, both leaders were aware that the relationship needed to evolve. Although this was the case, Gorbachev was still happy to discuss continuing collaboration between the Soviet Union and Cuba until the year 2000.

Havana had appeared to realise for some time that some change was likely as a result of the 27th CPSU Congress. On 9 November 1985 Granma had written of the economic plans

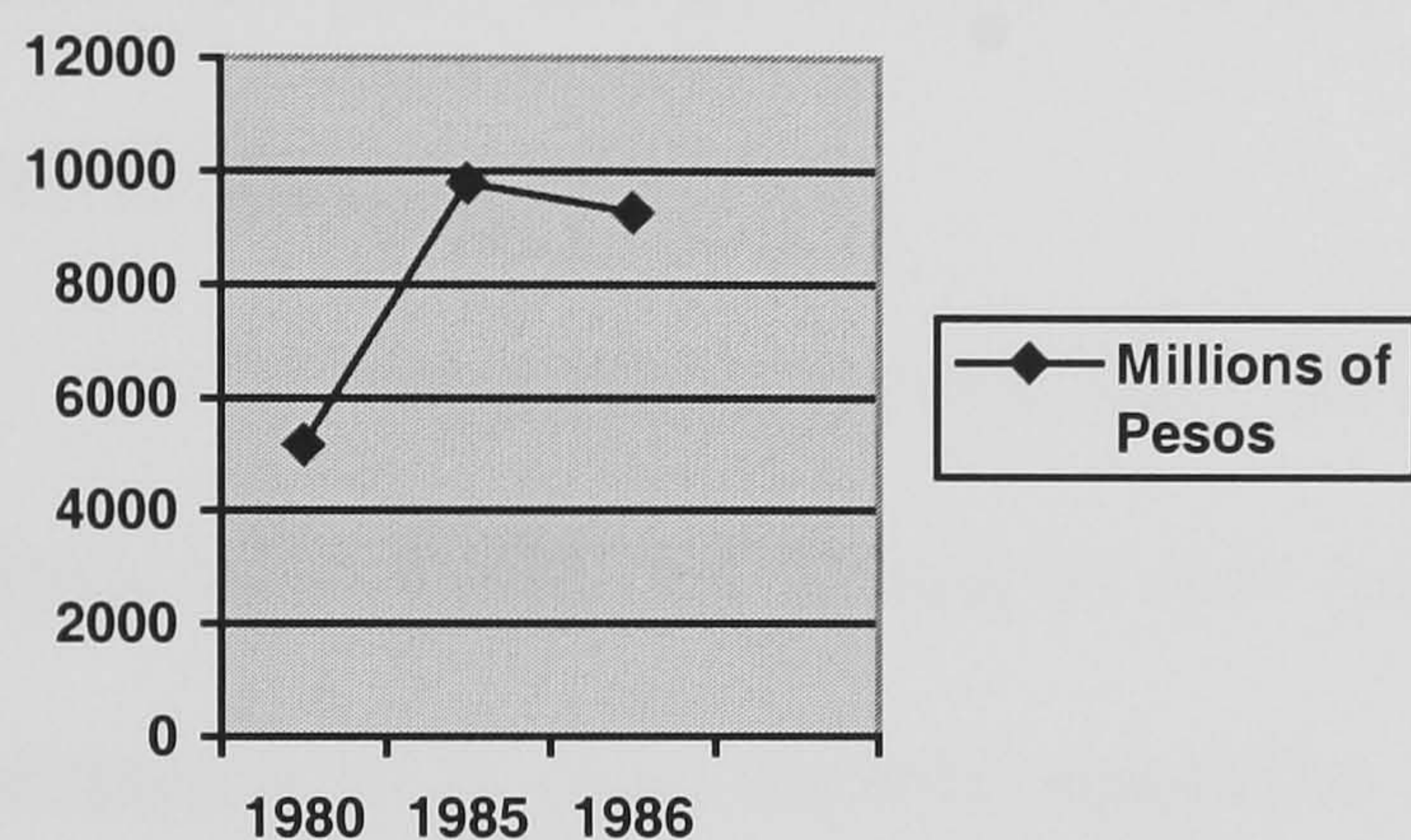
The economic strategy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union tries to invariably increase the levels of material and culture in the life of the Soviet public. For this it is necessary to accelerate the socioeconomic development in the Soviet nation and intensify and elevate the methods and efficiency in the bases of production and in the process of science-technology (67).

This realization was further acknowledged when the 27th Congress of the CPSU opened and Granma stated that it would usher in a "new stage of socialism" (68). Since CPSU Congresses traditionally stated what had been achieved since the previous one and the goals to be achieved before the next one, this realization was not so strange. Havana, however, may have been surprised by the "radical" content of Gorbachev's speech at the congress. Granma did print the full version of his speech in a special supplement, but did not print any analysis or a government reaction to it: this reaction would become very common over the next few years (69). This makes analysing the Cuban reaction to this speech more difficult, but Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, a member of the Cuban politburo, did mention it in an interview he gave to America Latina in August 1986. He said that the result of the 27th Congress of the CPSU and the changes instigated at it would renovate the world communist movement and return it to real Leninism (70). As this interview was with a Soviet periodical, it was unlikely that Rodriguez would have given any sign of Cuban displeasure at the Congress or of its outcome.

Various agreements between the Soviet Union and Cuba were signed during the course of these visits by the governing elites. Fourteen agreements were signed in this period with seven being confirmed in both the last nine months of 1985 and the whole of 1986 (71). These agreements covered a vast range of topics ranging from joint collaboration between Pravda and Granma, and collaboration on culture, to the trade agreement for 1986 (72). On 5 June 1985 an agreement was signed which stated that the Soviet Union would help Cuba build the reactor for the nuclear power station at Juragua in the Cienfuegos province of Cuba. On 14 October 1986, N.D. Komarov and German-Blanco Fernandez signed a trade agreement for the five years from 1986 to 1990. This agreement, as with the previous 5-year agreements, was of extreme

importance to the relationship between Moscow and Havana, since it not only set the prices, which were to be paid for goods between the two countries in the next five years but also the type and quantity of the goods. The agreement signed in 1986 was based on what had taken place in 1985 between the two countries in trade.

Figure 3.1 Soviet Trade with Cuba



Data analysed from Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) 1987, p.254.

Surprisingly, after this new trade agreement, trade between the two countries fell in 1986 when compared to 1985. The reason for this fall can be explained, since Cuban exports to the Soviet Union fell in 1986. In 1985 Cuban exports to the Soviet Union were 4,482 million pesos but in 1986 this had fallen to 3,934 million pesos. It was in this year that Fidel introduced the campaign of rectification of errors to try and help the economy. He blamed the poor state of the Cuban economy was due not only to a hurricane that hit the island in late 1985, but the continuing US economic blockade. In the aftermath of the 1985 hurricane the Cuban agricultural harvest would be badly affected resulting in the export of primary goods to the Soviet Union falling drastically. It can be concluded

that trade between the Soviet Union and Cuba fell, due to problems that had hit the Cuban economy, and not as a result of Moscow reducing its trade to Cuba.

This is borne out if Cuban sugar exports to the Soviet Union are studied. The Cuban zafra in 1986 was smaller than the 1985 one. The 1985 level was 7,889 thousand tons but 1986 was 7,467 thousand tons. In 1986 Cuba still sold in excess of 50% of its zafra to the Soviet Union who continued to pay well above the world market price. In 1986 Moscow paid 41.8 US cents per pound compared to 6.05 US cents per pound (73).

An interesting comparison can be made between the 1986 trade figures and those from 1965, as it was in this year that the original 5-year trade plan came into existence. It is then clearly apparent how Soviet trade figures with Cuba had altered over a longer time period. If 1965 is given the base figure of 100, 1986 has a figure of 1231. Trade between the two countries in 1986 had increased by over 12 fold when compared to the level of the first 5-year plan, illustrating the massive support that the Soviet Union gave to the Cuba economy. This can be further shown by the fact that Moscow once, again, allowed Cuba to delay the start of payment of their debt to the Soviet Union (74). Trade between the two countries may have fallen in this period, but as illustrated, this was not due to any disagreement between the two countries, but instead was the result of climatic problems in Cuba. Moscow appeared still to be more than willing to keep supporting Havana for a number of years, due to the duration of the trade agreement and the continuing high levels of trade conducted between the two countries.

Awards were also presented to various dignitaries during these official visits, showing the good state of relations between Moscow/Havana at this time. The most

significant presentation during this period, was Fidel's acceptance of an Order of Lenin, a further 15 were also awarded (75). In November 1985, Fidel awarded Katushev the Order of Solidarity, for his work done in Cuba (76). This was significant, since Katushev left his post as Soviet ambassador in Havana to become the head of Foreign Economic Relations in Moscow. This was just the latest example of a dignitary, with close or personal ties to Cuba, being in an important and influential position, once they returned to the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union and Cuba were involved in 18 sets of CMEA talks, either individually or with the other member states between March 1985 and the end of 1986 (77). The CMEA meeting held in Moscow in May 1985 attended by Ricardo Cabrisas (78), the Minister of Exterior Trade, showed the need for change in this organization, since, at this meeting the Soviet Union agreed to increase its exports to Cuba, but said Cuba must increase its sugar supply to the Soviet Union or it would obtain its supplies from elsewhere (79). This would appear to coincide with the economic drive that Gorbachev hoped to achieve in the Soviet Union, and was one of the first signals that as a result of it, change would occur in its relationship with Cuba. This idea was repeated at a CMEA science meeting in March 1986 held in Moscow, when it was said that acceleration in science was required in Cuba, Vietnam and Mongolia (80). The fact that the three non-European CMEA members, Cuba, Vietnam and Mongolia were to be treated differently from the rest was reiterated at the 42 CMEA meeting in Bucharest in November 1986 (81). As change was initiated in Moscow, the realization that this would affect Soviet/Cuban relations soon became apparent. The 15th Cuban-Soviet Commission of Economic, Scientific and Technical Collaboration was held in Havana in

April 1986. The Soviet representative was I.V. Arkhipov, first vice-chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers (82).

What was the Cuban reaction to the changes that Gorbachev wanted to make to Soviet foreign policy? As has been stated, one of the keynote speeches on this subject took place in Vladivostok in January 1986, when he announced that he wanted to reduce the size of the Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal. Granma published the whole speech but, again, gave no analysis or government statement on this speech (83). This was exactly how it reported Gorbachev's speech at the 27th CPSU Congress, suggesting that the Cuban government may have been unsure or caught unaware by this speech.

As has been stated, the 3rd Congress of the PCC was held in Havana in February 1986. During his speech to this congress, Fidel made surprisingly little comment on the Soviet Union, but he did say that the relations that Cuba enjoyed with the Soviet Union were of an "exemplary nature" (84). Fidel did, however, comment on Gorbachev's statement in Vladivostok in January 1986:

This was the first time since the appearance of these awesome weapons of mass destruction - which have become a nightmare for all humanity-that such a categorical, resolute and concrete proposal had been made (85).

Fidel's speech is not surprising in its content towards the Soviet Union and Gorbachev, since the 3rd PCC Congress took place one month before the 27th CPSU

Congress. Although some desire for change may have started in the Soviet government, the blueprint had still not been made public. Gorbachev's Vladivostok statement did not directly affect Cuba, so it would have been very surprising indeed if Fidel had criticised it. The Soviet press was very positive in their outlook towards this congress and Granma illustrated this when they printed articles describing how the Soviet press had reported it. It reported that the television news, Vremya, showed extracts from Fidel's speech and also published extracts from Pravda's coverage of the congress. Pravda's coverage was what would be expected, when it applauded the outcome of the congress and said

...the Communist Party of Cuba and its dignitaries are in the vanguard of the construction of socialism in Cuba (86).

If dignitaries, while making speeches were beginning to imply that there might be some problem between Moscow and Havana, Fidel did not add to this at the 3rd PCC Congress.

Granma, on 21 April, in a special supplement, published Fidel's speech on the 25th anniversary of the Bay of Pigs. During this speech, he addressed the problems that he believed had become apparent in Cuban society, and introduced a campaign to try and solve them. The economy in 1985 had slowed down and Fidel blamed this on the hurricane that had hit Cuba in late 1985 and the continuing US embargo against the island (87). In his eyes, increased bureaucracy and the effect of allowing some forms of private enterprises to exist on the island, since the early 1980s, had been detrimental to the economy. These private enterprises had taken a number of different forms but some

Cubans had been able to earn anything up to 150,000 pesos a year as a result of them. This worried Fidel as inequality throughout the island was increasing and this had the effect of eroding the Revolution.

Fidel's proposed solutions to these problems were significant for Soviet/Cuban relations. He wanted to reduce bureaucracy, inefficiency, outlaw private enterprises and increase voluntary work (88). The first of these ideas may be similar to the goals of Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, but the methods to achieve these were very different. By introducing his so-called rectification of errors campaign, Fidel wanted to try and solve Cuba's problems by returning to more idealistic ways, similar to those that had been implemented in the 1960s.

Apart from these economic problems, it has also been suggested that Fidel introduced the campaign of rectification of errors for other reasons. It has been suggested differences of opinion, between idealists and Soviet trained technocrats, had started to appear in the Cuban government by the early 1980s. A number of articles by A. Kapcia have examined this situation (89). By introducing this campaign, Fidel hoped that this would result in his influence being re-exerted over the government in Havana. These methods were the very opposite of Gorbachev's. How would the introduction of this campaign affect the relationship between Moscow and Havana?

Interestingly both sides concentrated on the closeness of the relationship and tried to show the similarities between perestroika and the rectification of errors campaign. On 21 October 1986, Granma reported a meeting between the Cuban ambassador, Julio Camacho, and Shevardnadze taking place in Moscow. It reports these discussions as

the satisfaction over the collaboration between the USSR and Cuba on the basis of the principles of Marxism-Leninism and international socialism. At this time, the correctness of the decisions of the 27th Congress of the CPSU and of the 3rd Congress of the PCC and the continuing bilateral relations and acceleration of efficiency (90).

The close nature of relations between Havana and Moscow can also be seen in the fields of sport and culture. In sport, Soviet and Cuban teams participated in events that took place in each other's country; for example the Soviet Union was represented in the tennis Friendship Cup in Cuba in May 1985, the Moncada International Gymnastics Competition in June of the same year and in the Cuban Cup for motor cross in October 1986. Cuba also sent teams to participate in sporting events in the Soviet Union: rowing in May 1985 and female basketball competition in Riga, in May 1986 (91). In cultural terms, there were also Cuban visits to the Soviet Union. In June 1985 the ballerina Alicia Alonso danced in the Bolshoi Theatre, while in January 1986, the Cuban National Symphonic Orchestra visited the Soviet Union for the first time. The world famous dancers from the Tropicana nightclub also toured the Soviet Union in August 1986 (92). These visits were reciprocated by the Soviet Union, with the Soviet cellist A. Rudin playing at the National School of Music in Cuba, in June 1986, and, in October of the same year, the Modern Theatre of Ballet from Leningrad participated in the 10th Modern International Festival of Modern Dance in Cuba (93).

In 1986 two collections of Fidel's writings were published in the Soviet Union. The first was incorporated into the book The CPSU and the Fight for Peace and Social

Progress and a second book that was a collection of his writings from 1952 to 1986, went on sale in September 1986 (94). During the previous year Cuba had been well represented at the International Book Festival held in Moscow with over 1200 Cuban titles being on show (95).

A re-thinking of these events, with the aid of hindsight by Cuban participants, is more difficult to ascertain, due to the lack of memoirs from this time. Although this is the case, Dr Hichiam Marquetti and Dr Julio Diaz Vazquez, Professor Consulate and Professor at CIEC in Havana, reiterate what Kapto wrote in his memoirs. This was that the campaign for the rectification of errors had been introduced for purely Cuban problems and perestroika for purely Soviet ones. Marquetti and Vazquez did stress that rectification of errors had indeed been introduced before perestroika (96).

What seems apparent is that, both sides wanted to give the image that relations at this time were as strong as they had ever been when government statements and press releases about the relationship from both sides are examined, there is very little change in their tone from earlier times, even after the introduction of perestroika and the campaign for the rectification of errors. This was certainly the case with Gorbachev's lack of comment on Cuba in this period. As has been stated, this could have been for a number of reasons: Gorbachev concentrating more on the internal situation, he was still learning about relations with Cuba and he was concentrating more on the relationship with the European CMEA-member states or with improving the Soviet Union's relationship with the West. At the end of 1986, both of these processes were still in their infancy and their effects could not really be judged. Cuba, even if concerned, could not be too vocal in its protests of changes in the Soviet Union, since as it was so reliant on

Soviet trade, and, therefore, had too much to lose if a schism appeared in the relationship.

Although this is the case, some dark clouds had started to appear on the horizon: Ligachev, stressing more efficiency was required within the CMEA, in his speech at the 3rd PCC Congress, and Fidel's comments on national liberation, while at the 27th CPSU Congress. The darkest cloud on the horizon was the introduction of the rectification of errors campaign, in April 1986, since its methods differed so greatly from those of perestroika. It appeared, that an attempt was made to conceal this, by showing that both sides were working towards the same goal, but were using very different methods to try and achieve this. On the whole, it appears that relations between the two countries were as strong as ever, at the end of 1986, although some differences, in methods for achieving goals, had started to appear.

What can be concluded from this period up until the end of 1986 was, that no great change had occurred in the relationship between Moscow and Havana. Both sides might have introduced separate campaigns, which differed greatly in content, to try and deal with their own internal problems, but the introduction of these campaigns had not had an effect on the relationship between the two countries in 1985 and 1986. This could be for the very simple reason that these campaigns had not been in existence for long enough for their results to be analysed. Soviet foreign policy may have started to change, but its policy towards Cuba remained as it had been, before Gorbachev came to power. Cuba also had not altered its policy towards the Soviet Union. No great re-thinking has taken place by the participants, from either side, in the years since 1985 and 1986. This analysis of participants' memoirs, gives more credence to the events

that took place in this two-year period. At the end of 1986, both Moscow and Havana continued to be positive about the state of their relationship.

Endnotes

(1) Brezhnev had died on 10 November 1982. Andropov on 9 February 1984.

Chernenko had died on 10 March 1985.

For a description of the internal problems facing the Soviet Union at this time see:

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(2) Gorbachev, M.S. Zhizn i Reformy Kniga 2, 1995, "Novosti", Moscow, p.277.

(3) Pravda 24 April 1985, p.1.

(4) Pravda 26 February 1986, p.5.

(5) Gorbachev, M.S. Perestroika i novoe myshlenie, 1987, p.158.

For a description of the problems facing the communist community see: Ibid pp.166-176.

White, S. Gorbachev and After, 1991, pp.197-203.

(6) Gorbachev, M.S. Zhizn i Reformy Kniga 2, p.312.

For a description of the external situation facing the Soviet Union at this time see:

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(7) Akhromeev, S.F.& Kornienko, G.M. 1992, Glazami marshala i diplomata: kriticheskii

vzgliad na vneshniu politiku SSSR do i posle 1985 goda, 1992, Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, Moscow, p.55.

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(8) Pravda 26 February 1986, p.5.

(9) Kornienko, G.M. Kholodnaia voina: svidetelstvo ee uchastnika, 1994, 'Mezhdunar otnosheniia', Moscow, p.200.

(10) Pravda 24 April 1985, p.2.

(11) Ibid.

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Twayne Publishers, New York, pp.163-206.

Brown, J.M. Explaining the Reagan Years in Central America. A World System

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(13) Pravda 16 January 1986, p.1.

(14) Ibid.

(15) Ibid.

(16) Pravda 26 February 1986, p.6. p.1.

Gorbachev, M.S. Perestroika i novoe myshlenie, 1987, pp.46-52.

(17) Pravda 26 February 1986, p.6.

(18) Izvestia 3 July 1985, p.1.

(19) Gorbachev, M.S. Zhizn i Reformy Kniga 1, p.287.

(20) Rahr, A. "Winds of Change Hit Foreign Ministry" in Radio Liberty Research 16 July

1986, RL 274/86, pp.2-10.

(21) Ibid.

(22) The slower pace of change in Soviet ambassadors to Latin America is illustrated by Peru when L.F. Kuzmin was replaced by A. Filatov as the Soviet ambassador. The only other change was in Cuba when A. Katushev was replaced by A. Kapto. The Europa World Year Book 1985 & 1986.

"Of particular importance for Soviet foreign policy are recent changes at the top in Cuba (A.S. Kapto) and Nicaragua (V.I. Vyalyas)" Rahr, A. Winds of Change, p.2.

(23) Pravda 7 May 1985, p.1. Pravda 17 December 1985, p.1. Pravda 29 July 1986, p.3.

(24) Pravda 22 November 1986, p.1.

(25) Gorbachev, M.S. Zhizn i Reformy Kniga 2, pp.418-422.

(26) Ibid.

(27) Ibid.

(28) Gorbachev, M.S. "Speech at 10th Congress of Portuguese Communist Party on 16 December 1983" in Gorbachev Izbrannye Rechi i Stat'i Tom1 , 1987, Potitizdat, Moscow, pp.445-450.

(29) Gorbachev, M.S. "World Problems and Socialism" in Gorbachev, M.S. Izbrannye Rechi i Stat'i Tom1 pp.339-351.

(30) Ibid.

(31) Ibid p.350.

(32) Raul being the Cuban representative at Chernenko's funeral. Granma 12 March 1985, p.1.

(33) Pravda 11 November 1984, pp.1&4.

- (34) Shevardnadze, E. Moi Vybor v Zashchitu Demokratti i Svobody, p.51.
- (35) "Entrevista a Konstantin Katushev, embajador de la URSS en Cuba" in America Latina no5, 1985, p.77.
- (36) Pravda 21 March 1985, p.1.
- (37) Pravda 30 October 1985, p.4.
- (38) Granma 6 February 1986, p.7.
- (39) Granma 10 February 1986, p.5.
- (40) Granma 6 February 1986, p.7.
- (41) Pravda 26 February 1986, p.5.
- (42) Pravda 10 January 1986, p.4.
- (43) Granma International Weekly Review 23 June 1985, p.8.
- (44) Ibid 28 July 1985, p.12.
- (45) Pravda 20 July 1985, p.5.
- (46) The electrification of Cuba in Pravda 5 May 1985, p.4. Science and technical collaboration in Pravda 6 June 1985, p.5. The opening of a geographical centre in Pravda 18 July 1985, p.5. Oil exploration in Pravda 7 August 1985, p.5. Delivery of Soviet planes in Pravda 22 May 1986, p.5. Publication of science book in Pravda 11 May 1986, p.5. An article on modern life in Cuba in Pravda 20 June 1985, p.4.
- (47) Pravda 22 May 1985, p.5.
- (48) Pravda 17 November 1986, p.1.
- (49) Kapto A. Na pereskrestkakh zhizni: politicheskie memuary, 1986, Sotsialno-politicheski zhurnal, Moscow, p.392 & p.399.
- (50) Vorotnikov V.I Mi Verdad (Notas y reflexiones del diario de trabajo de un miembro

del Buro PCUS), 1995, Casa Editora Abril, La Habana, p.107.

(51) Pravda 21 April 1986, p.5

(52) Kapto, A. Na pereskrestkakh zhizni, 1996, p.392.

Gorbachev, M.S. Zhizn i Reformy, p.422.

Dr O. Gridchina expressed these views to me in an interview in Havana on 24 November 2000.

(53) Granma 12 March 1985, p.6.

(54) "Entevista a Lionel Soto, embajador de Cuba en la URSS" in America Latina no5 1985, p.73.

Goldenberg, B. The Cuban Revolution and Latin America, 1965, Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers, New York, pp312-340.

(55) Own calculations from Granma 1985 & 1986.

(56) Shevardnadze travelled to Cuba twice in this period. Granma 29 October 1985, p.1 & Granma 6 October 1986, p.1.

Fidel went to the Soviet Union twice also. Granma 27 February 1986, p.1 & Granma 10 November 1986, p.1.

Raul was in the Soviet Union once during 1985 and 1986. Granma 13 March 1985, p.1.

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez travelled to the Soviet Union three times in this period.

Granma 17 December 1985, p.6, Granma 25 February 1986, p.1 & Granma 10 November 1986, p.6.

(57) Granma 21 March 1985, p.1.

(58) Granma 28 October 1985, p.1.

(59) Granma 30 October 1985, p.1 & p.3.

(60) Granma 6 October 1986, p.1.

(61) Granma 10 November 1986, p.1.

The Hungarian President Kadar was the only leader who was not present at this Meeting. Granma 11 November 1986, p.1.

(62) Granma 12 November 1986, p.1.

(63) Granma 7 March 1986, p.1. Granma 3 March 1986, p.1.

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(64) Pravda 27 February 1986, p.7.

(65) Granma 4 March 1986, p.1.

(66) Granma 3 March 1986, p.1.

(67) Granma 9 November 1985, p.7.

(68) Granma 24 February 1986, p.1.

(69) Supplement to Granma 4 March 1986.

(70) Rodriguez, C.R. "La Oportunidad Que No Podernos Rehusar" in America Latina no 8, 1986, pp.4-8.

(71) Own calculations from Granma 1985 & 1986.

(72) Ibid.

(73) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), 1987, United Nations, Santiago, Chile, p.252.

Ibid 1990, p.321

(74) Granma 6 June 1985, p.1 & p.7. Granma 15 October 1986, p.2.

(75) Own calculations from Granma 1985 & 1986. Granma 12 November 1986, p.1.

- (76) Granma 23 November 1985, p.1.
- (77) Own calculations from Granma & Pravda 1985 &1986.
- (78) Granma 30 May 1985, p.6.
- (79) Trade was to be increased to 8200million roubles for 1986. Granma 31 May 1985, p.1.
- Interview with Dr H. Marquetti in Havana on 28 November 2000.
- (80) Granma 27 March 1986, p.5.
- (81) Granma 7 November 1986, p.5.
- (82) Granma 7 April 1986, p.1.
- (83) Granma 16 January 1986, p.5.
- (84) Granma International Weekly Review 16 February 1986, p.20.
- (85) Granma International Weekly Review 16 February 1986, p.17.
- (86) Pravda 4 February 1986, p.4.
- (87) Supplement to Granma 21 April 1986.
- (88) Mesa-Lago, C. "The Economic Effects on Cuba of the Downfall of Socialism in the USSR and Eastern Europe" in Mesa-Lago, C. Cuba After the Cold War, 1993, pp.135-138.
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- (90) Granma 21 October 1986, p.6.
- (91) Granma 25 March 1985, p.5. Granma 26 June 1985, p.4. Granma 27 October 1986, p.4. Granma 10 May 1986, p.6.

(92) Granma 15 June 1985, p.6. Granma 11 January 1986, p.3. Granma 30 August 1986, p.3.

(93) Granma 7 June 1986, p.3. Granma 8 October 1986, p.4.

(94) Granma 20 February 1986, p.4. Granma 4 September 1986, p.4.

(95) Granma 11 September 1985, p.4.

(96) Interview with Dr H. Marquetti in Havana 28 November 2000.

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Chapter 4
Reform Accelerates
(1987-1988)

In 1987 and 1988, the changes that Gorbachev had implemented in Soviet society and foreign policy not only continued but the ideas of perestroika and glasnost even accelerated in this period. The “new thinking” in Soviet foreign policy started to produce tangible results in these years. Not only did Gorbachev meet Reagan again, but he also made his first trip to the US. During this trip, in December 1987, he signed an agreement with the US over medium range and tactical nuclear weapons. In May/June 1988, Reagan reciprocated this trip when he travelled to Moscow. At the end of 1988, the US Presidential election was held, which could have had repercussions for both the Soviet Union and Cuba (1). The Soviet Union also started to untangle itself from its Afghanistan nightmare, with the first Soviet troops returning to the Soviet Union (2). During this period, the Cuban government continued its ideological drive with the continuation of its rectification of errors campaign. Would these changes, or the continuation of the ideas of perestroika, glasnost and rectification of errors start to affect Moscow's relationship with Havana?

An answer to these questions will be offered in three separate sections. The first section will examine the official Soviet government position towards Cuba in this period and will be done by analyzing Soviet government statements, press releases, speeches and visits that the Soviet elite made to Cuba during these two years. The second section will concentrate on Soviet academia and social/political works towards Cuba. Had the introduction of glasnost affected the way in which Cuba was being perceived within these circles in the Soviet Union? Was there a difference between what Soviet academics and social/political commentators were writing and Soviet government statements? In answering these questions, academic works, from March 1985 to the

end of 1988, will be examined to see if a reconceptualization of the relationship between Moscow and Havana had commenced in the Soviet Union.

The third section will study the Cuban reaction to the events, which unfolded in the Soviet Union in this period. Analyzing Cuban government statements, press releases, speeches and visits by the Cuban elite to the Soviet Union will do this. The Cuban academia's work on the Soviet Union will be examined to see if their content was different from the official Cuban government position. Had the continuation of the rectification of errors campaign, Cuba's idealistic drive to solve its problems, affected the way that Cuba perceived events in the Soviet Union in 1987 and 1988? Trade between Cuba and the Soviet Union will also be examined before a study of participants' memoirs will be carried out to discover if a re-thinking, with the benefit of hindsight, has taken place since the years 1987 and 1988.

The Official Soviet Line Towards Cuba

If Gorbachev's Selected Speeches and Articles are analysed, the trend that had become apparent from the earlier period (March 1985 to the end of 1986), when he had made very few statements on Cuba, was continued in 1987 and 1988. In this period the only reference to Cuba in his Selected Speeches and Articles is when he wrote a letter to Fidel, on 23 December 1988, in which he concentrated on the situation in southern Africa and in it praised Cuba's diplomatic position in this area of the world (3). This trend was continued at the 19th All-Union Conference that was held in June/July 1988. Cuba is not mentioned once in Gorbachev's speech and, in fact, he made very little reference to foreign policy throughout it (4). This is surprising, since it could have been

thought that by the end of 1988 Gorbachev would have become more accustomed to the relationship between Moscow and Havana and, therefore, he would have made more references to Cuba. Although this is the case, Gorbachev certainly did not add to the "veiled attacks" on Cuba, which had started in 1985 and 1986, simply due to the fact that he wrote so little about the "island paradise".

In this period, a great number of official visits, to Cuba by the Soviet elite took place. B. Yeltsin visited the island, on route to Nicaragua, at the beginning of March 1987. This was the first visit to take place, but after this, the number of visits quickly rose (5). Later in the same month, P.Y. Silesco, Vice President of the CPSU Department of Propaganda, visited Havana and at the end of the same month V.M. Chebrikov, Chairman of the KGB, travelled to Cuba. While there, he held discussions with Fidel and explained to him the processes of change occurring in the Soviet Union. During his stay, Chebrikov was awarded the order of Playa Giron (6). At the end of April, A. Kachanov, Vice President of the Commission, was in Havana for the 17th session of the Intergovernment Commission (7). In October, Shevardnadze again visited the island and met both Castro brothers, during his short stay (8). In December, A.A. Obukhov, the Soviet ambassador at large in the US, visited Cuba. He had accompanied Gorbachev throughout his recent visit to the US and travelled to Cuba to inform Fidel personally, of the outcome of Gorbachev's US visit (9).

Official Soviet visits to Cuba continued apace in 1988 when at the start of January 1988, B.I. Aristov, Minister of Exterior Commerce, met Fidel, when economic, scientific and social issues were discussed (10). Later in the same month, V.M. Kamentsev, Vice President of the Council of Minister visited Cuba and during his stay

not only met Fidel, but also gave an interview to Granma (11). In this interview Kamentsev stated

The perestroika process in the USSR, and the efforts by the PCC to eliminate negative tendencies in the socio-economic development of the country, create favourable conditions for the further development of relations between our countries in the economic, trade, scientific and technical fields.

With perestroika, the USSR seeks to create economic, organisational and legal conditions which facilitate the profound integration of our economy with that of sister nations (12).

In March, A. Dobrynin and V. Medvedev, both Secretaries of the Central Committee of the CPSU, were in Havana for a meeting of all secretaries of communist parties of communist countries (13). Later in the same month, E. Chazov, Minister of Public Health, was awarded the Order of Solidarity, by Fidel, while he was in Cuba (14). At the end of that month, A. Adamovich, Vice Chancellor of the Soviet Union, travelled to the island, to inform Fidel of the latest talks between Shevardnadze and his US counterpart Shultz (15). Kamentsev returned to Cuba, in May 1988, for the 28th Session of the Intergovernment Commission, where bilateral relations, for the next 15 to 20 years, were discussed (16). In July, Marshal S.F. Akromeev met both Fidel and Raul and discussed military collaboration, while he was in Cuba (17). As has been illustrated, a great number of official Soviet visits took place in this period and no sign of strain was apparent, as they all followed previous protocol.

Six agreements between Moscow and Havana were signed in this period, with another three documents being signed during the meeting of the Intergovernment Soviet-Cuban Commission on Economic and Scientific Cooperation, which was held in Havana, in May 1988 (18). These covered a wide range of areas from co-operation on the building of an oil pipeline in Cuba, to a book agreement. At the book agreement, signed at the International Book Fair in Moscow, it was reported that

The Cubans are especially interested in books published on the occasion of the October Revolution anniversary (19).

In January 1987, an agreement was finalised for processing wood in the far east of the Soviet Union. This would involve the creation of an industrial forestry complex, which would be partly operated by Cuban workers (20). A protocol for two years, on direct co-operation in education, was signed in January 1988, which covered methodological and scientific research projects in training for workers (21). In September 1988, an agreement on science and technological co-operation was signed between the Soviet Ministry of Railways and the Cuban Transport Ministry (22). Carlos Rafael Rodriguez commented on the three documents signed at Intergovernment Commission when he said

I think we have signed very important agreements determining the development of our relations for a period of 15 to 20 years.

The fact that we now are working on such long-term basis shows the degree of maturity of the Cuban economy (23).

Not only were agreements still being signed, but joint co-operation also continued. This was illustrated by the fact that, in August 1987, when the Moscow Domestic Service reported that an IL-18 flying laboratory was going to go to Cuba, with the purpose of helping the study of meteorology.

They are studying tropical cyclones and hurricanes, and active influence on clouds, with the aim of initiating rain over Cuba (24).

A special operating bloc for eye microsurgery at a Havana hospital, was opened with Soviet help. At the opening ceremony Fidel personally thanked, the Soviet Professor Federov, for all the work that he had done on this project (25). As can be seen by the number and variety of agreements signed between Moscow and Havana in 1987 and 1988, the relations were still good and there was no evident sign of Moscow wanting to alter its relationship with Havana.

Had the introduction of perestroika and glasnost had any bearing on the relationship? Y. Zavivalov, economic adviser to the Soviet embassy in Cuba, gave an interview to Havana Tele-Rebelde Network, which was broadcast on 15 February 1988. During this he was asked what influence perestroika would have on Soviet-Cuban relations. He replied

Perestroika particularly provides for the substitution of a (word indistinct) trade for stronger scientific-technical production ties to develop co-operation (26).

This idea that perestroika would benefit Soviet/Cuban relations is further illustrated in a report from Moscow to Cuba, on 17 November 1988. This report stated

We know that the Cuban comrades devote a lot of effort to correcting their past errors and deficiencies. The removal processes undertaken in our countries have specific characteristics. This is logical because each country has its own traditions, idiosyncrasies, and way of life.

Nonetheless, I repeat that we have goals in common.

Therefore, it is very necessary to exchange views (27).

A broadcast from Moscow to Cuba, on 27 September 1987, expanded this when it stated

The composition of the Soviet and Cuban economies is different. They have their specific characteristics, but, ... there is a common characteristic in the future development: intensification. That is the result of the general process of passing from the methods applied until some time ago to the intensive methods of today (28).

N.Tikhonov, a member of the CPSU politburo, gave an interview that was broadcast on 18 April 1988. In this he stated

We follow with great interest the process to correct economic

mistakes and eliminate negative aspects in society. Our interest in this process, which has been amply implemented in Cuba, is understandable because this rectification is actually similar to a struggle now being implemented in one way or another by the peoples of socialist countries to maximise the moral and material potentials of socialism. We believe that this rectification is the same as perestroika in the USSR (29).

Importantly, it appears, that the Soviet Union was trying to draw similarities between perestroika and the rectification of errors campaign. This is significant, since it shows Moscow realised problems existed in its own society and in Cuba's, but at this stage did not want to greatly alter its relationship with Havana.

As has been stated in Chapter 3, Gorbachev said, at the 27th CPSU Congress, said he wanted the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) to undergo reconstructive surgery. This organization provided Cuba's economic lifeline, but how would Gorbachev's wishes affect Cuba's position within this organization? An extraordinary session of the CMEA was held in Moscow in October 1987. On 15 October, Pravda printed the communiqué from this meeting (30). It stated

In co-ordination with the aforementioned concept, it is planned to work out special comprehensive programmes of multilateral co-operation between CMEA member-states and Vietnam, Cuba and Mongolia, programmes that envisage specific measures to deepen mutual scientific, technical, production, economic and

trade ties (31).

In July of the following year, the 44th session of the CMEA was held in Prague and Ryzhkov's, Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, speech expanded on these ideas, when he said

Essentially the same tasks of structural restructuring will be accomplished by implementing programmes of co-operation between the CMEA's European countries and Vietnam, Cuba and Mongolia on a multilateral basis. Up to now the procedure was different - the aid to those countries was not provided in a well-coordinated or comprehensive fashion, which visibly reduced its effectiveness. Now each of the three programmes has been organized collectively on the basis of the combined capabilities of Europe's fraternal countries. These programmes will be implemented on preferential economic terms, but in their basic thrust they are quite similar to the collective concept. It is of paramount importance to make economic assistance significantly more effective and to improve the use that Vietnam, Cuba and Mongolia make of their own resources, as well as of outside resources, to resolve key problems in these countries' social and economic development and ensue their participation in the international division of labour (32).

These two statements are important in perceiving Cuba's position in the CMEA. They show that Cuba is seen by Moscow, and the other European members of the CMEA to be behind them, in terms of development. This, although important, is not the most important thing that comes from these statements, but the fact that they admit that Cuba has not been using its own resources and those that it gained from the other CMEA countries, to the best of its abilities. As in other areas of co-operation, Moscow was stating, that Cuba needed to improve its use of resources and its efficiency.

This is a great change from previous CMEA meetings, since the criticism of Cuba is much more open and direct than it had been before. In CMEA matters Moscow was no longer dealing in "veiled" threats, as it would have done before. This coincides with other statements at this time, which were emanating from Moscow about Cuba. Moscow still believed in the relationship, and praised many of things that Cuba had achieved, but more open criticism was starting to take place. As glasnost increased, even aspects of the Soviet/Cuban relationship became justifiable targets. The "veiled" threats, which had started to appear in 1985 and 1986, were coming to an end as more open and brutal assessments of the situation became more common. This occurred for a number of reasons: Gorbachev and his "new" officials would have acquired a greater knowledge of Cuba; they may have become more confident in their new positions and felt able to challenge the more established and conservative members of the ruling elite in regards Soviet foreign policy and importantly, enough time had now passed to enable these changes to come to fruition. Although criticism had started it all was based on trying to improve the situation. There were no signs of Moscow wanting to terminate its

relations with Havana as everything was based on trying to improve and increase the efficiency of the relationship between them.

The Unofficial Soviet Line Towards Cuba

In the aftermath of Gorbachev coming to power in the Soviet Union, a new openness or glasnost in society soon started to appear. This process started slowly but soon speeded up with most parts of society being affected but was Soviet foreign policy and Moscow's relationship with Havana, in particular, included in this new openness? An answer to this question will be given by analysing Soviet academic work and the writings of social/political writers, from the time when Gorbachev came to power, until the end of 1988. These works can be split up into two distinct groups: those supportive of Cuba and those who had started to question aspects of the Cuban Revolution. Within these two groups subdivisions are also present. Those of a positive nature consist of (a) a historical study of the Cuban guerrilla war and the early period of the Cuban Revolution, (b) the successes which have been achieved in Cuba since 1959, (c) the achievements of joint collaboration between the Soviet Union and Cuba and (d) Cuba's increasing prestige in the international arena. Some of the content of these articles covered more than one of these areas. The articles that questioned aspects of the Cuban revolution consist (a) problems that had appeared in Cuba, (b) difficulties that had become apparent in joint collaboration between the two countries and (c) Soviet policies towards the island. Added to these two general groups there were also articles on Che's life and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

In July 1987, America Latina published an article by L. Poskonina, a postgraduate student at the Latin American Institute in Moscow, in which she discussed the problems, which faced the July 26th Movement with the liberal bourgeoisie in Cuba in the 1950s. She wrote that this theoretical problem was one that affected all of Latin America and not just Cuba, but in the Cuban case it had been advantageous, as it had speeded up the process of the radicalization of the revolution (33).

The successes that had been achieved in Cuba, since 1959, were a common subject of articles in this period. International Affairs, in February 1986, published an article in which the author, I.Nemira, quoted statistics to prove this. He wrote that in 1986 Cuba had one doctor per 486 people and that over 200,000 teachers had been trained since 1959 (34). The article "Heart Transplants: Problems and Hopes" in Literaturnaya Gazeta, on 26 November 1986, also praised Cuban medical advances, since, although it criticised the lack of heart transplants in the last 20 years in the Soviet Union, it praised the fact that 12 had already taken place in Cuba in 1986 alone (35). In August 1985 America Latina printed an article by its contributor, A. Merstsalov, in which he stated the role that Cuban youth had played in creating this new society in Cuba as their level of education increased, after the victory of the Revolution (36). Selskaya Zhizn, on 1 January 1988, commended Cuba on the fact that illiteracy had been eradicated and the number of doctors had increased dramatically since 1959. It also commented on the fact that the Soviet Union's help had been important in achieving these successes (37).

In February 1988, International Affairs published an article by K.Leno the subject of which was, the economic advances, that Cuba had made since 1959 and the positive effects that these achievements had made to the standard of living in 1986, compared

to 1958. He also wrote, that by 1986, the Cuban standard of living was higher than in the rest of Latin America (38). He further praised the revolution, when he stated that all these successes had been achieved despite the fact that imperialism had tried to crush the Cuban Revolution since its birth (39).

This idea, that Cuba had had to overcome many problems, which had made its internal and external achievements even more commendable, was also commented upon in "The Cuban Revolution and Fidel Castro" in Kommunist, in August 1986, by M. Zubatkin, which was published to celebrate the publication of Fidel's Selected Works 1952 to 1986, in the Soviet Union. This article stated the problems that had faced Cuba: the fact that it was a small country, the problem of geography and the close proximity of imperialist states and that this made its successes even more remarkable (40). In February 1987 International Affairs published "Cuba: 27 Years of Struggle and Labour" by Y. Khrunov. He wrote that Cuba had also had to overcome the debt crisis, which had hit Latin America in 1980s, but had weathered it better than the rest of the continent (41). Apart from this, Cuba's prestige, in the international arena, had increased, due to the fact that since 1959 over 150,000 Cubans had worked in 45 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America (42).

Cuba's external achievements continued to be written about, when in January 1986, America Latina published an article by P. Yamashkin, a postgraduate student at the Latin American Institute in Moscow, in which he charted the historic, ethical and cultural ties between Cuba and Africa. He stated that these explained Cuba's involvement in Angola, since the 1970s and the importance of this in relation to the international arena (43). Cuba's involvement in Angola was again discussed in America Latina, in October 1986, when it was praised for helping to create a new society in

Angola, with the help of a vast number of construction workers and doctors, who had worked in the African country, since the mid 1970s (44).

Cuba's status in international affairs had not only risen, due to its involvement in various countries around the world and Angola in particular, but also, because the political isolation that it had suffered in the 1960s had, by the 1980s, started to disappear as Cuba was by then enjoying diplomatic relations with many more countries. In International Affairs, in April 1985, A. Alexeyev wrote a critique of E.A. Grivenich and B.I. Gvozdarev's book Cuba in International Politics in which he commented on this very fact, when they stated that, despite the US desire to isolate Cuba, Cuba by 1980 enjoyed relations with 17 other Latin American countries (45). On 11 March 1987, Pravda political commentator A. Moiseyev published "Just Who Is In Isolation?" during the Uruguayan Foreign Minister E. Iglesias's trip to Cuba. This was the first official Uruguayan official visit, since relations had been restored between the two countries in October 1985. Again illustrating the end of Cuban isolation in the western hemisphere (46).

Articles also appeared, written by Soviet academics, at this time celebrating the successes of joint collaboration between the Soviet Union and Cuba. In January 1986, a conference was held in Moscow to celebrate the 25th anniversary of relations between the two countries. At this conference the Soviet writer A. Bekarevich is quoted as having said

The economic, political and diplomatic collaboration from the Soviet Union and other socialist states was an important factor in the achievements of the revolution, and the

consolidation of the armed forces (47).

Exactly two years later, on 1 January 1987, Pravda published "Creative Steps" to mark the 28th anniversary of the victory of the Cuban Revolution. This article concentrated on joint collaboration projects between Moscow and Havana and the achievements that had been made, such as the electrification of the island and the use of the Soviet built KTP-2 combine-harvester in the Cuban sugar harvest or zafra (48). In July 1987, to mark the 34th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks in Santiago de Cuba, Izvestia stated in an article

The examples of Cuba's truly just, mutually advantageous economic co-operation with the fraternal socialist countries cannot fail to attract the attention of peoples of developing countries that are victims of shameless plunder by imperialist multinational corporations (49).

In the second edition of America Latina in 1988, an article by one their writer, M. Manson, was printed, which was very positive about the state of Soviet/Cuban relations since Gorbachev had come to power. He concentrated on the collaboration in education, which existed between the two countries, and the results that this had achieved (50). The articles that have been cited, although on various topics, were all published in the period from March 1985 to the end of 1988 and are all of a positive nature regarding the Cuban Revolution and its relationship with the Soviet Union. Their

content was no different from what was written in the Soviet Union about Cuba prior to March 1985 when Gorbachev came to power.

As has been stated, articles had also started to appear in this period, which questioned not only general issues, but also some successes of the Cuban Revolution. On 21 October 1987, Literaturnaya Gazeta published an article by the economist, Dr V. Karavayev, in which he wrote

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, there had been a tremendous increase in the CMEA countries' hard-currency foreign debt, and some of those countries - particularly Poland, Romania and Cuba - began experiencing financial difficulties and essentially found themselves on the brink of insolvency (51).

This article was very different from the one that Khrunov had written earlier in the same year (42) in which he stated that Cuba had weathered the economic problems, which had hit the rest of Latin America in the early 1980s, better than the other countries in the continent. Not only did Karavayev paint a very different picture from Khrunov, but he was, obviously, also very open about his criticism of the economic position, which Cuba had found itself, in by the late 1970s and early 1980s.

O. Bogomolov, the prominent Soviet economist, also criticised Cuba's economic position when it was compared to the European CMEA countries. He wrote

The European CMEA countries call for more co-ordination and purposeful assistance in raising the structure of the economies

of Vietnam, Cuba and Mongolia so to reduce the differences and make export potential more equal (52).

Although this idea, that the non-European CMEA countries were behind their European counterparts economically was not new, Bogomolov's article was important, since it again illustrated different views which existed on the Cuban economic performance within Soviet academia at this time. Pravda published an even more forthright account of Cuba's economic situation, on 22 July 1987. It stated

The republic is learning to live economically and manage zealously and thriftily, although this also requires a difficult and often painful reappraisal of former concepts about free or very cheap access to municipal and other services (53).

Just a few days later, on the 34th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks (26 July), Pravda continued its tradition and printed an article on Cuba to mark the occasion, but this was different from previous years, since, although it started positively, it soon broached the subject of problems that faced Cuba. It admitted that the rectification of errors campaign had been introduced to try and eradicate them. It stated

A thorough review of production norms and the system of labour remuneration is now under way throughout the Republic and the struggle against negligence, irresponsibility, bureaucracy, and unearned income has become acute (54).

In its last issue of 1988, America Latina published the first of two special issues to mark the 30th anniversary of the victory of the Cuban Revolution. A. Sujostat, its Cuban correspondent, wrote:

At the moment in Cuba the direction in which the country is going and the necessity to analyse the need for change is being reflected upon, the need to mark out accurately the highs and lows, abandon some ideas, cleanse others which have not worked and look for new ways in life, particularly in the economy and in production. This process in Cuba is called "the correction of errors and negative tendencies or rectification" (55).

If articles had started to appear, which were critical of aspects of the Cuban Revolution, New Times, in August 1987, published "An Uphill Task" by V. Chirkov, that was so forceful in its criticism of Cuba, that it drew a response from Carlos Rafael Rodriguez two months later, in the same publication (56). Chirkov's article was, again, positive at the start, but quickly criticisms appeared:

Yet in spite of its favourable tropical climate, the country has to ration certain foods. Cuba still has many overcrowded homes, and not all have the necessary amenities. Last year the plan for the construction of state housing was only 82.4%

fulfilled and in the co-operative sector only 41%. Of a total of 1368 farm co-operatives 270 have no electricity (57).

Cuba's labour productivity also came under scrutiny,

Labour productivity is still very low in Cuba and this results in production capacities being under used. One-third of all enterprises operate at a loss. The number of co-operatives at a loss increased from 11% in 1982 to 30% in 1985 (58).

He was also highly critical of the fact that the Soviet Union and other CMEA countries bought Cuban sugar, nickel and citrus fruit at prices that massively exceeded the world price, due to the organization's agreements (59). Cuba's military spending did not escape Chirkov's wrath either:

But I feel special attention should be made of the heavy burden - in view of the smallness of the population - of its defence expenditure. This burden became even heavier after territorial units of people's militia were set up in addition to the regular Revolutionary Armed Forces and the Ministry of the Interior forces. For they too require a considerable amount of arms, as well as time off for training and exercises. All that is a loss to the economy. Does the US (I see no other candidate) intend to attack

Cuba? There may be different views on this subject, but as far as the Cubans are concerned, they prefer to have a strong defence (60).

In October 1987, Rodriguez countered these criticisms in "A Difficult But Steady Ascent", in which he was critical of aspects of Chirkov's article. He suggested that Chirkov had fallen into the trap, which many in the US did, by ignoring Cuba's colonial and semi-colonial past, which would take a long period of time to overcome. Rodriguez also stated that Chirkov had failed to mention that the rest of Latin America was undergoing difficulties at this time too, and that the Cuban economy was still growing in 1987. Chirkov's comparisons of Cuba's labour productivity to the US, West Germany and Japan and not eastern bloc countries were also criticised by Rodriguez (61). Rodriguez responded curtly that Soviet military specialists had been consulted and that they had agreed that this high level of military spending was required to safeguard the Cuban Revolution (62).

Chirkov may have been so extremely critical of problems in Cuba, that he drew a response from Rodriguez, but he did not blame the island for causing them all. Neither did he wish Moscow to terminate its relationship with Havana either. He wrote:

The fault, however, does not lie only with the Cuban side - its CMEA partners are also to blame. I can not speak for the other countries, but of the Soviet Union this can be said ...It was pointed out that there are considerable reserves for boosting the effectiveness of the construction and operation

of enterprises built with Soviet economic and technical assistance in Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam. The need was stressed for a comprehensive solution to questions of co-operation an optimal approach to the choice of projects, stricter contract discipline, and greater responsibility of the parties concerned for the satisfactory fulfilment of obligations (63).

In June 1987, Pravda printed "Plans by the Ocean. Journalist Raises Problem" by P. Bogomolov, its Cuban correspondent. The subject of this article was the eastern province of Oriente and the joint projects that had taken place there. It stated

Industrialisation of Oriente is one of the key tasks of Cuba's development. At the same time it is an important avenue of Soviet-Cuban co-operation. And, as in any serious matter, there are many problems here: great and small, objective, and subjective, and indeed problems which they could do without (64).

The article expanded on these problems, when he commented about the Che Guevara nickel plant at Moa:

...construction is already in its 10th year. Unfortunately 10 years have been spent not only on effective work but also

a shortage, squabbling, and all kinds of red tape and shortcomings. The deadline for commissioning the plant has been extended twice (65).

Bogomolov also criticised the Rente thermal electric power station in Santiago de Cuba as being too big for the island and that sugar cane production in Holguin was being hindered by the poor quality, Soviet made, KTP-3 harvester (66). For this article, he conducted an interview with Y. Zavivalov, the economic adviser to the Soviet embassy in Cuba. Zavivalov was quoted as saying

There are indeed many difficulties here and the press is rightly noting them...They are problems of development, problems of growth and they are being resolved successfully as a whole, although sometimes more slowly than we would like (67).

On 15 October 1988, Pravda printed "Time Won't Wait" by A. Moiseyev, its political commentator, in which he was also critical of certain aspects of the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba. He wrote

The time necessitates bolder and more vigorous resolution of all the problems that have accumulated in our co-operation and necessitates progressive thought and a rational approach. It is a question not only of eliminating 'bottlenecks' but also of establishing and developing direct production and patronage

assistance and transferring to co-operative forms of co-operation actively developing these on a barter basis and on the basis of customer-supplied raw materials and extensive organization of joint enterprises (68).

In this period, Soviet policy towards Cuba also started to be criticised. On 8 November 1987, Moscow News published an article by A. Sakharov, physicist and human rights activist, in which he gave his views on the Soviet film "Risk", which was directed by D. Barshchevsky. He wrote:

One of the film's main episodes is the Caribbean Crisis. However, it does not say that the crisis began with the employment of our missiles on Cuba. These were extraordinary dramatic events. The film uses the language of documentary movie making to show that the world was on the brink of thermonuclear catastrophe at that time (69).

Although Sakharov was not attacking Cuba in this article, he was attacking earlier Soviet policy towards the island.

On 19 June 1988, Pravda published an interview with Professor V.I. Dashichev, who was the head of the Department of Socialist Countries' International Relations at the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of the Economics of World Socialist System. He made no mention of Cuba throughout this interview, but he did criticise the foreign policy of the Soviet Union in the 1970s towards the Third World. In reality, when he did

this, he was criticising Soviet policy towards Cuba, but also Cuban foreign policy, as it was in many ways similar to Soviet policy at this time. He wrote

Nonetheless, we launched an attack on imperialist positions in the Third World. We attempted to expand socialism's sphere of influence to various developing countries, countries that, in my opinion, proved totally unprepared to adopt socialism. And what was the upshot? A sharp clash of political contradictions with the Western powers and not only with the West - even China took a stand against our actions in the Third World (70).

The life and times of Che Guevara was a subject that received much attention by Soviet academics, in the period from March 1985 to the end of 1988. The first article appeared in Kommunist, in March 1985, by the historian Dr N. Leonov entitled "A Glorious Son Of Latin America". On the whole, this article was positive about Che's life and what he had achieved and attempted to achieve. It, however, was much more negative about his actions in Latin America, and Bolivia in particular, in the second half of the 1960s. He wrote

That country, which Che saw as the future base of revolutionary movement in South America, was not a real powder keg...Che's attempt to give impetus to the continental revolution came at a time when the revolutionary movement in Latin America had gone into marked decline (71).

In March and April 1986, America Latina published two articles on Che by the Soviet historian V. Mironov. He stated that much hype and propaganda existed in the West about him, but that he was a shining example to society (72). The following month he was more critical of Che and wrote that the idea of the “guerrilla foco” did not work, as the Sandinista victory in Nicaragua illustrated, and went as far to say that these ideas closely resembled Maoism (73). What is very important about these two articles was that, in October 1987, America Latina published a further article on Che, which consisted of two academics, I. Dololski and I. Kliamkin, debating Mironov's two articles. Doloski, a history professor, criticised Mironov for concentrating too much on Che's character and wrote that, although Che could not be blamed for the "Nechaev-Pol Pot" line, his theories and actions did cause many problems, as he closely followed the ideas of Bakunin and resembled a figure from a Tolstoy play (74). Kliamkin, a postgraduate student, believed that Mironov had turned Che into a superman, by concentrating on the ultra left and his ability to provoke revolutions (75).

These four articles were important, since, although their subject matter, Che's life and theories, were not the most sensitive in Soviet/Cuban relations in the mid to late 1980s, it did signal that Cuba and its history had become a topic for debate amongst Soviet academics and social/political commentators. In September 1988, America Latina printed a special section to mark the 60th anniversary of Che's birth. This edition returned to type and its content was much more positive on Che and did not include the contrasting views, which had appeared in earlier editions of the periodical (76).

An article in America Latina, in April 1988, added to the idea that parts of Cuban history had at this time become subject for debate amongst Soviet academics. It

reported on a three way debate on the Cuban Missile Crisis, where the participants were S. Mikoyan, the editor of America Latina, Raymond Garthoff, a historian from the US, and R. Hernandez, a Cuban historian (77). This illustrated that openness in the Soviet Union to parts of Cuban history had reached a level where debate existed with participants, not just from Cuba, but also the US.

In the early part of this period, 1985 to the end of 1986, the unofficial Soviet line towards Cuba was very similar to the official Soviet line, as all the articles were still very supportive of the Cuban Revolution and the successes, which it had achieved. It was only in 1987 that criticisms of Cuba started to appear. Although, this was similar to the official line it was even more forthright in its criticism of the island. Cuban history, and in particular Che's life and achievements, were criticised. History was a "softer" subject to criticise than more contemporary affairs and would therefore, not offend the Cuban government so greatly. Efficiency within Cuba was also attacked. This increase in criticism, from 1987 onwards, would be the result of glasnost in the Soviet Union as it had had time to be fully felt and analysed. Criticism may have started, but no one was yet openly calling for an end to the relationship. By the end of 1988, Soviet foreign policy and its relationship with Cuba appeared to be open for criticism from Soviet academia and social/political commentators.

The View From Havana

In the period 1987 and 1988, there are eight main areas in the relationship between Moscow and Havana on which the Cuban government or academia commented. (a) Official Cuban visits to the Soviet Union by the Cuban elite, (b) areas

where joint collaboration between the two countries took place, (c) economic ties, (d) the Cuban reaction to the 19 CPSU party conference in June/July 1988, (e) Soviet foreign policy and the alterations which had taken place to it, (f) Cuban participation at CMEA meetings, (g) the Cuban reaction to the continuing processes of perestroika and the rectification of errors campaign, but also (h) internal problems in the Soviet Union which had appeared in these years. Each of these areas will be examined and analysed to conclude the Cuban reaction to, not only events in the Soviet Union, but, also, to the relationship between the two countries.

As has been stated earlier in this chapter, a great number of official Soviet visits to Cuba took place in this two-year period, but the number of official Cuban visits to the Soviet Union was also significant (78). The first one took place at the start of January 1987, when Jorge Risquet, a member of the PCC politburo and secretary of the Central Committee, travelled to Moscow to meet E.Ligachev and the last one took place, as late as the end of October 1988, when Ernesto Melendez, minister-president of the Special Commission of Economic Collaboration, visited the Soviet Union (79). Amongst this number of visits, Fidel and Raul travelled to Moscow at the start of November 1987 for the celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution (80). This trip can be seen to have been a success since Fidel, not only praised the successes of the Russian Revolution and Gorbachev's role in the celebrations, when the two leaders met on 6 November, but three days later Fidel was awarded the honour of accompanying Gorbachev, Gromyko and Rizhkov on the Lenin mausoleum for the celebrations (81).

The healthy state of relations between Moscow and Havana were further underlined when on 3 December 1988, it was announced that Gorbachev was going to visit Cuba, after he had been at the United Nations in New York. This visit was,

however, postponed five days later, after a massive earthquake hit Armenia, which resulted in Gorbachev returning directly to the Soviet Union from the US. This tragedy further illustrated the closeness between the two countries, however, since, in the aftermath of this earthquake, Cuba sent assistance to the Soviet Union. This included supplies of human plasma (82).

Joint collaboration between the two countries took various and different forms. In August 1987, Granma reported on how the Soviet made KTP-2 harvester had helped in the sugar harvest or zafra at Holguin. This sentiment was repeated the following September when Granma had a very similar article on how Cuba had received 600 KTP-2s, to mark the 60th anniversary of the Russian Revolution in 1917, and what a great benefit they had been (83). During his speech for the 26 July celebrations in 1988, Fidel, not only praised the achievements of the Soviet Union since 1917, but also thanked the Soviet Union for all the help that it had given to Cuba including military assistance as Cuba had received the most up to date military equipment (84). On 2 December 1987, during a speech, Fidel touched on the subject of Cuban workers, who were helping in the construction of timber plants in Siberia. He said that as many as 8 to 10,000 Cubans had been involved. This subject was returned to when on 2 March 1988, Granma printed an article on it (85).

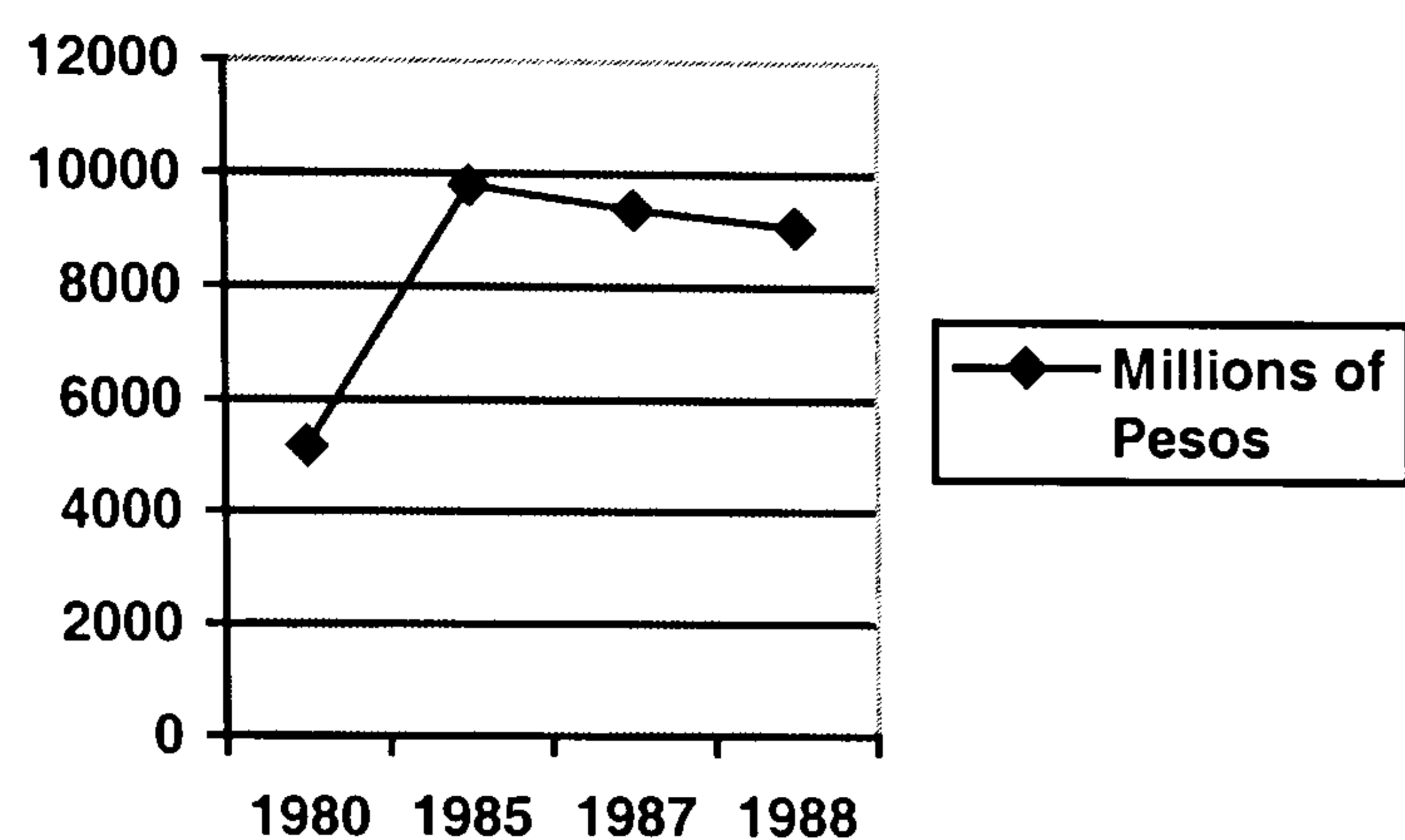
In April 1987, America Latina published an interview with Rosa Elena Negrin, a candidate member of the Central Committee of the PCC and the President of the Academy of Sciences of Cuba. During this interview she thanked the Soviet Union for all its help in the sphere of science over the previous 25 years, which had not only caused Cuban science to make large steps forward, but had even resulted in the first Cuban going into space in 1980 (86). In November 1987, America Latina printed an article by

Jorge Risquet in which he, not only charted the history of relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union, but also thanked the Soviet Union for all its contributions in helping to modernize the Cuban economy. The nickel plant, Rene Ramos Latour at Nicaro, was given as an example of the achievements in joint collaboration as it had been overhauled with Soviet help (87). The Cuban perception that joint collaboration was in a healthy state was added to when, in April, Granma reported on a meeting between Cuban and Soviet officials in Leningrad. Granma stated:

The new model in Soviet-Cuban collaboration shows the improvement in the rational plan, and confirms the norms of Cubans and the specific conditions in our country (88).

As stated, Cuba was still happy with joint collaboration with the Soviet Union, although this quote from Granma showed that new ideas were beginning to be used in this field. Compared to the Soviet perception of joint collaboration, the Cuban reaction did not show the same questioning attitude that had started to appear in the Soviet Union. Cuba's continuing positive attitude can be explained by the fact the island had much more to gain from the continuation of this joint collaboration than the Soviet Union.

Figure 4.1 Soviet Trade with Cuba



Data analysed from Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) 1986, p.235 & 1988, p272

Total trade in 1987 and 1988 was, again, less than the 1985 level but just as with 1986 this was because of a reduction in Cuban exports to the Soviet Union. By 1988 they had fallen to 3,683 million pesos (89). Reasons for this could be because the price that the Soviet Union paid for Cuban sugar remained the same in these two years. The price paid in these years was 41.90 US cents per pound. Although still well above the world market price the situation was not quite so advantageous for Cuba since it had increased to 10.19 US cents per pound compared 6.76 US cents per pound in 1987 (90). This would partly explain the reduced total amount of Cuban exports to the Soviet Union in 1988 but, perhaps, the campaign of rectification of errors was not having the desired positive effect on the Cuban economy. Although this was the case, trade was still extremely healthy in 1987 and 1988. Again a comparison to first five-year plan in 1965 will be made. If 1965 is given the figure 100 then 1987 has a figure of 1246 and 1988 1204. Trade in 1987 and 1988 was still over 12 times higher than in 1965.

Trade levels may have fallen marginally, but agreements on trade were continuing to be signed. In January 1987, Granma reported on a trade protocol for that year being signed by the two Ministers of Exterior Commerce, Ricardo Cabrisas and B. Aristov (91). In September 1988, an agreement between the two countries was signed so that Cuba would provide the Soviet Union with computers and other electronic goods (92). America Latina, in July 1987, published an article by Ernesto Melendez, Minister President of the Special Commission of Economic Collaboration in Cuba, in which he wrote:

It is true, without the terms of commercial exchange, without the economic and financial relations that our country has with the Soviet Union and the other countries of the socialist community, it would not have been possible to make the extraordinary economic and social advancements that have been made in Cuba for 25 years (93).

The social advancements, that Melendez referred to, were in the fields of health and education, but this illustrated the importance, that the Cuban government still associated with the continuation of the economic aspect of its relationship with the Soviet Union even if total trade figure had slightly fallen in 1987 and 1988.

As with joint collaboration, some clouds on the horizon may have started to appear when, in November 1988, Granma reported that during the meeting between Cabrisas and V.M. Kamentsev, Vice-president of the Council of Ministers and President of the Soviet Intergovernment Commission with Cuba, although "cordial and friendly",

had broached a change in the commercial exchange for 1989 (94). The Cuban perception of economic ties was the same as that of joint collaboration with the Soviet Union still extremely positive.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the 19th CPSU Party Conference was held in June/July 1988. In Granma's report on the conference it said

Mikhail Gorbachev proclaimed the process of perestroika as the advancement in the Soviet Union permitting to show the undoubted advantages of socialism for the human rights: social, political and individual (95).

Three days later Granma stated:

...Gorbachev's opinion that the Conference was in the spirit of Leninism and reflected the political atmosphere which had consolidated in the Soviet Union (96).

The Cuban government reaction to this conference was positive. Granma appeared to be drawing as many conclusions as it could from the fact that Gorbachev had made links to Leninism and improvements to socialism: the Cuban government were also striving to make these same advancements in their own country. Instead of concentrating on changes in the Soviet Union, the Cuban government reaction to this conference seemed to be of a supportive nature.

Gorbachev, soon after becoming General Secretary, had started to make changes to Soviet foreign policy. This was commented upon by Sofia Hernandez, a researcher at the Cuban government funded Centro de Estudios Europeos in Havana, when she wrote, in 1987, that these changes were soon evident after the 27th CPSU Congress in February 1986 and Gromyko's replacement by Shevardnadze as Soviet Foreign Minister. She wrote that other changes had quickly become apparent with the increased Soviet use of television and press conferences in particular (97).

It was not just the changes to personnel and style in Soviet foreign policy that was commented on in Cuba. When Fidel was in the Soviet Union in November 1987, for the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, he praised Gorbachev for his attempts to create peace and attempts to keep nuclear weapons out of the Third World. In February 1988, he stated in an interview

I share the Soviet peace policy, and to me, their concern is one of the most constructive things which has happened recently (98).

Jorge Valdes, a member of the politburo of the PCC, wrote in November 1987

...comrade Mikhail Gorbachev, presented the Programme For Peace which has received the growing interest of all progressive mankind, to aim for the world the extermination of weapons for mass wars and in space and also in the Third World. The PCC agrees with the energy of the Programme

For Peace (99).

In 1988, Eloy Ortega, another researcher at the Centro de Estudios Europeos in Havana also wrote about the alterations in Soviet foreign policy. She wrote that since March 1985 the term "regional conflict" had become part of everyday vocabulary. She also wrote

Nobody could dispute the existence of profound changes to Soviet Foreign Policy since Gorbachev's ascension. The "new thinking" is ingrained in the Soviet Foreign policy philosophy, it is very flexible, active and dynamic. This has been used in regional conflicts (100).

Also in 1988, a fellow researcher at the Centro de Estudios Europeos in Havana, Vivian del Rosario Hernandez, wrote that, since 1985, Moscow had been attempting to make the world more peaceful. He had done this by attempting to reduce the chance of nuclear war especially in Europe. Havana appeared unworried about the friendship that was steadily growing between the Soviet Union and US. She wrote that ties and talks between the two had been done with the desire of achieving the above stated goals (101). Havana appeared unworried about the friendship that was steadily growing between the two superpowers. In the same publication, Rafael Hernandez, head of the the Cuban government funded Centro de Estudios Sobre America (CEA) in Havana, expanded on these ideas when he wrote that economic ties were also increasing between the Soviet Union and Western Europe (102). The Cuban government and also

Cuban academics noted that changes in Soviet foreign policy had occurred since Gorbachev had become General Secretary, but they were complimentary about both the changes and the aims of them.

In October 1987, Granma published the communiqué from the 43rd session of the CMEA that had been held in Moscow on 13 and 14 October. This communiqué was very similar to previous ones and again stated that the European members would help the non-European ones in science-technology and with their economies (103). Carlos Rafael Rodriguez reiterated this in his speech at the 44th session held in July 1988 in Prague. He thanked the movement for the help that they had given to Cuba and was glad that talks on relations up to the year 2005 had commenced (104). Cuba's status within the CMEA did not change in the years 1987 and 1988 and Cuba was still content with its position within the movement at this time.

The Cuban reaction to changes in Soviet foreign policy, the events of the 19th CPSU party conference and CMEA congresses had all been positive, but how did they stand in relation to the processes of perestroika and glasnost which had, by this stage, been in operation long enough to allow their consequences to be analysed? Had the Cuban position on these altered? When Fidel and Raul were in the Soviet Union for the 70th anniversary of the Russian Revolution they both gave speeches in which they talked of not only perestroika, but also the campaign of rectification of errors. They both stated, that information on these, would be shared between Moscow and Havana and, although their experiences were different, they were both working for the improvement of socialism (105). The following year during an interview with the US television network, NBC, Fidel returned to this when he said:

What the Soviets are doing is to apply Soviet formulas to Soviet problems and what we Cubans are doing is to apply Cuban formulas to Cuban problems (106).

In another interview later the same year, Fidel said that he agreed with the aims of improving science and technology in the Soviet Union - one of the goals of perestroika (107). Jorge Valdes in November 1987 wrote:

From the time of the 27th CPSU Congress there has been a move to renovate Soviet society in conjunction with the Party. We greet the spirit of the fight against the errors and defects, for practical application to improve science and technology, to intensify and accelerate the change in the economy and society. For the attempts to form superior democracy, socialism, for the continuing flowering of the new forms of life, the new civilisation which represents the superior socialism against the regimes of the oppressor, exploiter, violence, egotism of imperialism (108).

This would all seem to suggest that Cuba, at this time, was still relatively happy with the process of perestroika in the Soviet Union. The Cuban government admitted that differences existed between it and their own rectification of errors campaign, but, that both had the same goals - the improvement of socialism. This picture is altered,

however, when a re-thinking with the benefit of hindsight, of this time is introduced. Dr H. Marquetti, consultant professor at CIEC, stated that, as early as 1987, Fidel was privately warning that the process of perestroika must be treated carefully. By the end of the following year, Marquetti said that the hoped improvements to the Soviet economy, as a result of perestroika, had not been forthcoming. This had had a knock on effect on Cuba (109). In 1988, Gorbachev's Perestroika i novoe myshlenie dlia nashei strany i dlia vsego mira was published in Cuba. Dr R. Fonte, ideologue to the Central Committee for the PCC, commented that he believed, at the time of publication, that this book was not the work of a socialist mind and that he could foresee problems as a result of the ideas in this book (110). What can be concluded from this was, that publicly the Cuban government was still being supportive of the process of perestroika in the Soviet Union, but privately some reservations were becoming apparent as early as 1987 and certainly by 1988.

An article entitled "The Far East in the USSR", which appeared in Granma on 17 October 1987, can expand this idea that the Cuban government was not content with the processes and aspects of the internal situation within the Soviet Union in 1987 and 1988. It stated that although the far east of the Soviet Union contained oil it had many problems also, but it suggested that these problems could only be solved by making changes, including large-scale construction (111). This was not the first time that Granma had commented on internal problems in the Soviet Union, but what was more unusual was that this article contained possible solutions to the problems in this area.

The more normal reporting on internal problems was that which occurred over the situation in Nargorny-Karabakh. Granma merely reported that problems existed in this area between Armenia and Azerbaijan and made no comment on the reasons for this

situation. This type of reporting was again used on 25 November 1988, when Granma simply reported that a state of emergency had been declared in Azerbaijan (112). Although merely stating the facts this was still important since it meant that the Cuban government were unhappy with some of the results of perestroika and glasnost as why else would they print these articles? If Cuba had criticized internal problems in the Soviet Union and suggested solutions for them a schism may have arisen between the countries. Cuba just simply could not afford to allow this to happen.

Another problem area also became apparent in 1987 and 1988. This was over the way that the Soviet Union conceptualized its own history. As the process of glasnost intensified, questions had started to be asked about various aspects of the Soviet Union's own history. This reconceptualization even included aspects of the Soviet system with former CPSU actions also being questioned. If Soviet history, from the 1960s onwards, was being re-questioned, so too would Cuban history, due to the close ties which existed between the countries from this time onwards. Dr H. Marquetti has suggested that this problem for the Cuban government first appeared in this two-year period (113).

Up until the end of 1988 the Cuban government's reactions, to events in the Soviet Union or its relationship with it was positive. Cuba's perception of the relationship remained as it had from the time before Gorbachev had come to power. In public everything appeared normal with even Fidel and Raul praising the goals and aims of perestroika. Reports in the state press about internal problems in the Soviet Union did start to appear, but these simply stated the facts and gave no analysis: this type of reporting offered no clues to what the Cuban government might have thought of these problems or reasons for them. It is only once a re-thinking, with the aid of hindsight;

about these events is introduced does it become apparent that Cuba may have been becoming increasingly uneasy about the course of events in the Soviet Union at this time. No public evidence of this was apparent due to the fact that Cuba had simply too much to lose if problems or a schism appeared in its relationship with the Soviet Union.

In this period, changes to the relationship between Moscow and Havana did start to occur. Officially the Soviet policy remained the same, but calls for improved efficiency to take place did commence. The unofficial line took this questioning attitude even further with Cuban history, in particular, being scrutinized. More contemporary subjects were questioned less. The change to the unofficial line was a result of the effects of glasnost being felt in the Soviet Union. Although this was the case, there were still no official or unofficial calls for the relationship to be terminated. The Cuban reaction, meanwhile, was still positive with no questioning of the relationship in either official or unofficial circles evident for the reasons stated above. It is only once a re-thinking is introduced, does it become apparent, that the Cuban government was not entirely content with the unfolding events in the Soviet Union. This period is important since it is in these two years that questioning attitudes towards the relationship first started to appear. Although this questioning attitude had commenced, no great public changes occurred in 1987 and 1988 in the relationship between Moscow and Havana.

Endnotes

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- (13) Granma 5 March 1988, p.1.
- (14) Granma 17 March 1988, p.1.
- (15) Granma 30 March 1988, p.1.
- (16) Granma 17 May 1988, p.1.
- (17) Granma 13 July, p.1.
- (18) Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1230 GMT 21 May 1988 (FBIS-SOV 24 May 1988, p.48, LD2105205388)
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- Moscow Television Service in Russian 2210 GMT 7 September 1988 (FBIS-SOV 13 September 1988, p.35, LD0809024288)

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- Moscow in Spanish to Cuba 0200 GMT 19 December 1987 (FBIS-SOV 29 December 1987, p.56, PA231250)
- (19) Moscow in Spanish to Cuba 0100 GMT 12 September 1987 (FBIS-SOV 18 September 1987, p.30)
- (20) Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 0000 GMT 17 January 1987 (FBIS-SOV 20 January 1987, p.2, FL170108)
- (21) Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0245 GMT 19 January 1988 (FBIS-SOV 25 January 1988, p.38, LD200334)
- (22) Moscow Television Service in Russian 2210 GMT 7 September 1988 (FBIS-SOV 13 September 1988, p.35, LD0809024288)
- (23) Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 1230 GMT 21 May 1988 (FBIS-SOV 24 May 1988, p.48, LD 2105205388)
- (24) Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 0730 GMT 14 August 1987 (FBIS-SOV 17 August 1987, p.12)
- (25) Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 0930 GMT 30 April 1988 (FBIS-SOV 2 May 1988 pp.52-53, LD301511)
- (26) Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1407 GMT 15 February 1988 (FBIS-SOV 15 February 1988 pp.54-55, FL151548)
- (27) Moscow in Spanish to Cuba 0200 GMT 17 November 1988 (FBIS-SOV 23 November 1988, pp.36-37, PA1811120388)

- (28) Moscow in Spanish to Cuba 0244 GMT 27 September 1987 (FBIS-SOV 6 October 1987 p.33, PA021650)
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- (108) Risquet, J. America Latina No11 1987, p.10.
- (109) Interview with Dr H. Marquetti in Havana on 28 November 2000.
- (110) Interview with Dr R. Fonte in Havana over a number of days between 14 and 30 November 2000.
- (111) Granma 17 October 1987, p.6.

(112) Granma 25 February 1988, p.6. Granma 14 July 1988, p.5. Granma 19 July 1988, p.6.

Granma 25 November 1988, p.4.

(113) Interview with Dr H. Marquetti in Havana on 28 November 2000.

Chapter 5

Gorbachev's Visit to Cuba and Dramatic Events in the Socialist World (1989-1990)

1 January 1989 was the 30th anniversary of the victory of the Cuban Revolution. In April 1989, four months later Gorbachev made his first visit to Latin America, when he visited Cuba in April 1989 and while there he signed a treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Cuba (1). The 30th anniversary of the recommencement of relations between the Soviet Union and Cuba was celebrated in 1990. These events should have been a cause for great celebration for both the Soviet Union and Cuba but events, not only in both countries, but also around the world, would dampen these celebrations.

The processes of perestroika and glasnost continued in the Soviet Union, as did the internal problems in various Soviet republics (2). Gorbachev continued his dialogue with the US when he met the new President of the US, George Bush, twice in this two-year period (3). During a traumatic few months Gorbachev had witnessed not only the events of the "velvet revolution" unfold in late 1989 and their consequences in Eastern Europe but also, in December 1990 Gorbachev, had seen the resignation of his trusted foreign minister E. Shevardnadze (4). Cuba a fellow member of the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), had watched these events unfold with increasing trepidation, as they were unsure of the effect they would have on the Caribbean island.

Cuba also faced the loss of its closest Latin American partner with the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in February 1989 and, in December 1989, witnessed the unfolding events in Panama, as the US invaded the Central American country to overthrow its leader General Manuel Noriega (5). Domestically the campaign of rectification of errors, the idealistic drive to solve Cuba's internal problems, continued at this time. From 1989 onwards Cuba had to deal with the problems that its returning soldiers from Angola caused for the island including amongst other things swelling the job market. One of the highest profile returnees was the former head of the army in

Angola, General Arnaldo Ochoa, who in June/July 1989 was arrested, faced trial and was subsequently executed (6). To add to these difficulties in 1989 one of its leading air-force generals in the shape of Rafael del Pino defected to the US (7).

How would Moscow and Havana adjust to these events and would readjustments effect the relationship between them? The answer to this question will be given in three sections. The first will examine the official Soviet line towards Cuba in 1989 and 1990 and this will include Gorbachev's visit to the island. This examination will involve an analysis of Soviet government statements, press releases and speeches by the ruling elite. Trade between the two countries in these two years will also be scrutinised. The second section will examine the unofficial Soviet line towards Cuba in 1989 and 1990. Did the debate that had started amongst Soviet academics and social/political commentators continue in this period? This section will contain an examination of participants' memoirs to conclude whether a re-thinking, with the benefit of hindsight, of this time has occurred in the years following 1989 and 1990. The third section will be an analysis of the Cuban reaction to events unfolding in the Soviet Union during this period and this will be done by examining Cuban government statements, press releases, speeches by members of its government and also Cuban academics' works to evaluate the island's position towards the Soviet Union in these years.

The Official Soviet Line Towards Cuba

In the years 1989 and 1990, I suggest, there were nine different areas that formed the official Soviet line towards Cuba. These areas were (a) the speeches and events of the 28th CPSU Congress which was held in June/July 1990; (b) joint

collaboration between the two countries including economic links; (c) agreements signed at this time between the Soviet Union and Cuba; (d) involvement by the two countries within the CMEA; (e) visits by the Soviet elite to Cuba, including Gorbachev's trip to the island in April 1989; (f) the special meeting of the USSR Supreme Soviet Commission for Foreign Affairs held in December 1990; (g) Moscow's response to US actions towards Cuba in these years; (h) its reaction to the events of General Ochoa's trial in July 1989 and (j) the context of Moscow's policy towards Cuba in relation to its overall foreign policy towards the other socialist countries but also to Latin America. As different areas are analysed it will be seen that some overlap will occur.

As has been stated, the 28th CPSU Congress was held in Moscow in June/July 1990. In the four years since the previous congress Soviet foreign policy had changed a great deal but did further change occur to it as a result of this latest congress? Surprisingly Gorbachev's speech at this congress contained very little on foreign policy and Cuba was not mentioned once (8). Cuba's omission was not so surprising as Gorbachev had also made no mention of Cuba at the 27th CPSU Congress in 1986, when his speech did, in fact, contain a great deal on foreign policy. This continued the trend that since coming to power, Gorbachev seemed to seldom mention Cuba. When Shevardnadze addressed the conference, he too made no comment on Cuba. This did appear unusual, since he was, after all, the Soviet Foreign Minister. Even more unusually his speech also contained no reference to the Third World (9). Cuba's omission did appear strange since not only had the Soviet Union invested much time and money on the island over the previous three decades, but continued to do so and Gorbachev had visited the island only 14 months before this congress. It can, therefore,

be concluded that Soviet policy underwent no change as a result of the 28th CPSU Congress.

The traditional positive tone of government statements and press releases on Soviet/Cuban relations and joint collaboration projects continued in 1989 and 1990. On 26 July 1989, Granma published the traditional letter of support from the Central Committee of the CPSU on the date of the attack on the Moncada barracks in Santiago de Cuba in 1953. This letter was positive in nature and emphasized the importance that Moscow still associated with its relations with Cuba but also on the shared goals that the two countries had in the international arena at this time (10). In the aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster in the Ukraine, affected children had been sent to Cuba for a period of convalescence in Cuba and this practice continued in this period. In October 1989, a TASS statement commented on the excellent level of care these children were received while in Cuba and that this matched the general overall standard of the health care system on the island (11).

In an interview, in January 1990, the Soviet ambassador to Cuba, Yuriy Petrov, showed the Soviet Union's continuing support when he defended the Soviet involvement in Cuba and said

I categorically disagree with those who state that Soviet aid to Cuba is like throwing money down the drain. In the past 30 years the Cuban economy has developed substantially. Many problems characteristic of developing countries have been solved (12).

In January 1990, International Affairs published "The Foreign Policy and Diplomatic Activity of the USSR. A Survey by the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs (April 1985-October 1989)". This also praised the Soviet involvement in Cuba and listed their successes: over 400 industrial enterprises had been refurbished in Cuba with Soviet help, another 200 were being refurbished at this time and that in 1988 trade with Cuba had amounted to 7% of the Soviet external trade. It concluded by stating

There is no reason to assume that all-round Soviet-Cuban co-operation will continue to strengthen, helping to fully unlock socialism's potential in our two countries and to resolve the problems that humanity is encountering today (13).

On 8 May 1990, Granma published an interview with Yuriy Petrov to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the recommencement of relations between Moscow and Havana. As with his previous interview he was very positive about relations between the two countries: general Cuban achievements since 1959, the advances made in both countries in science and technology due to their collaboration and the close economic ties that existed between them were praised (14).

In August 1990, America Latina printed an interview with L. Abalkin, who was the Director of the Institute of Economics and one of Gorbachev's advisers, and who had recently returned from Cuba. In this he repeated the sentiments of another interview he had given in April 1990 to Pravda, when he defended Soviet involvement in Cuba and highlighted the help that the Soviet Union had received (including human plasma) from Cuba in the aftermath of the Armenian earthquake and the gas explosion at Bashkiria

(15). He also praised the successes of the Cuban Revolution and stated that he believed that the relationship between the two countries had enormous potential and could move to a new even more efficient level (16). In November 1990, a Pravda editorial stressed the advantageous nature of the relationship to both countries when it stated

...disrupting the stability of these ties would lead to a worsening of the situation in both countries. Suffice to recall that 1/3 of the sugar consumed in the USSR comes from this far-off island. And tomorrow, if we cope together with the difficulties that have arisen, the Cubans will be prepared to deliver to the USSR sizeable quantities of the latest medical equipment, preparations and medicines that we need so badly (17).

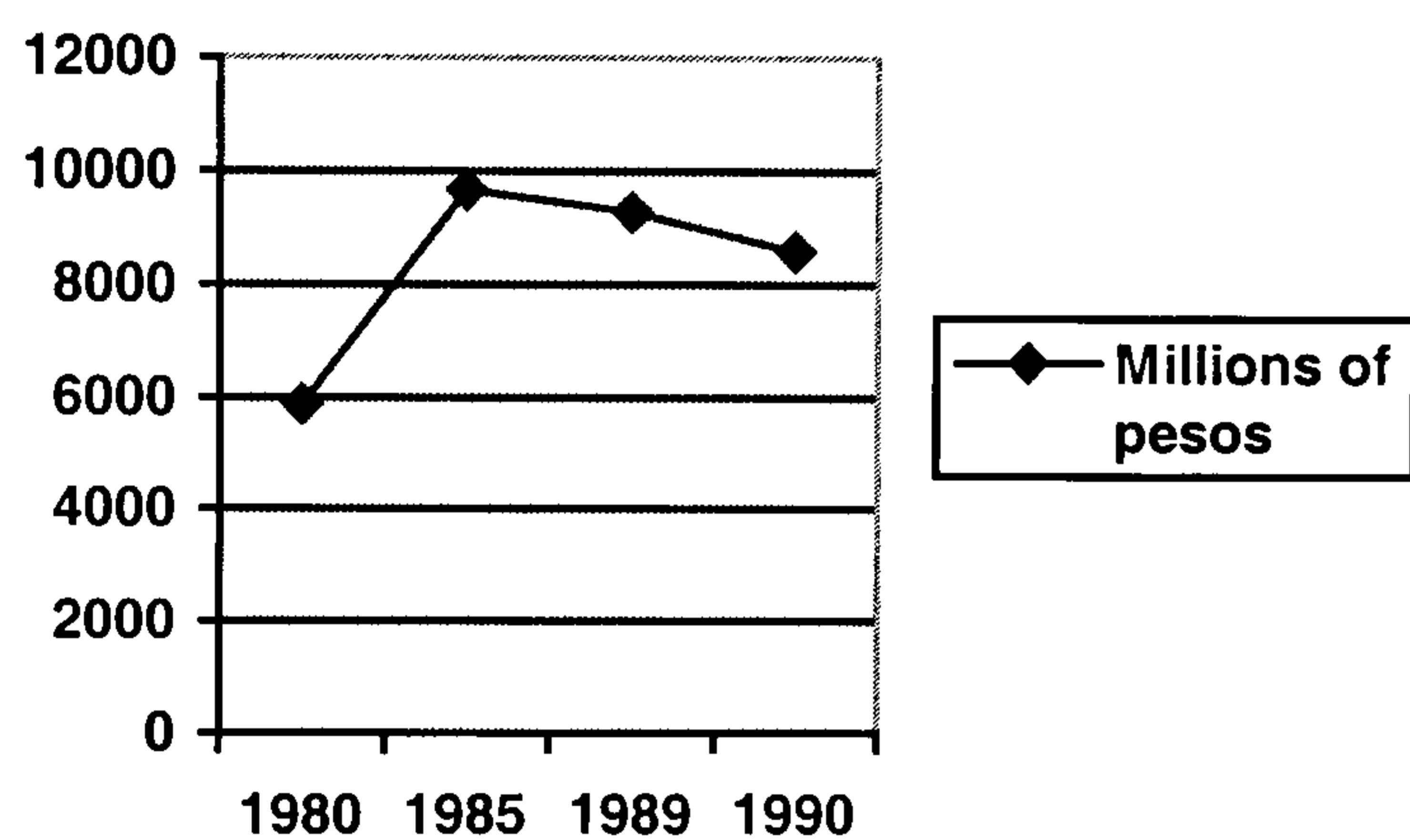
The official Soviet line towards Cuba at this time was not, however, completely positive. In April 1989 in an interview A. Kachanov, who worked in the State Commission for Economic Relations, admitted problems existed in the relationship between the two countries. He stated

As in any major integration process, Soviet-Cuban collaboration has encountered some problems and difficulties. These problems are due to unfavourable conditions in the international market and the great distance between the two countries (18).

P.I. Kormiltsin, a trade representative in Cuba, commented that delays had occurred in deliveries to Cuba in 1989, when he said

For all practical purposes, all 1989 commitments were met. There was a slight delay in the delivery of fats and oils, due to a shortage of cold-storage ships, and in advance shipments of grain (19).

Figure 5.1 Soviet Trade with Cuba



Data analysed from Vneshiaia Torgovliia v 1989-1990, p.5 & Vneshiaia Torgovliia v 1986, p.259 & p.265.

Exchange rate of 1.21 pesos to 1 rouble used. Exchange rate from Mesa-Lago, C. "The Economic Effects on Cuba of the Downfall of Socialism in the USSR and Eastern Europe" in Cuba After the Cold War, p.144.

Total trade in 1989 and 1990 was, again, less than the 1985 level. This would be partly explained by the problems stated above but the Soviet Union also continued to pay above the world price for Cuban sugar. It again paid 41.90 US cents per pound but the world market price had continued to rise to 12.81 US cents per pound (20). This

meant that the situation regarding the sale of Cuban sugar to the Soviet Union was not as advantageous compared to the world market price for the Caribbean island.

A comparison of trade in 1989 and 1990 to the first five-year plan in 1965 will now be given. If 1965 is given the base figure of 100 then 1989 has a figure of 1217 and 1990 a figure of 1125. Trade in 1989 was still over 12 times greater than 1965 and trade in 1990 over 11 times higher than the level in 1965. Interestingly this was continuing the trend of this figure falling in the period 1986 to 1990. This meant that the terms of trade were turning against Cuba even although the Soviet Union was still paying well above the world market price for sugar. This situation can be explained by the fact that Cuba was actually paying above the world price for Soviet oil. In December 1989 J.L. Rodriguez in Cuba Business made this very point about the price that Cuba paid for Soviet oil (21).

As 1990 brought to an end the 1986/1990 five-year plan, discussions for the 1991/1995 had commenced. Problems also existed in these and Kormiltsin stated

There are some difficulties, of course. But disputes are a natural, normal stage in any negotiations (22).

On 29 March Izvestia printed

...negotiations on a plan for the next 5-year period are not going as smoothly as in the past, largely as the result of the growing "incompatibility" of economies of which one is developing toward a market system, while the other rejects the market as a

"concession to capitalism". Nonetheless, both have declared unambiguously that they intend to maintain a high level of co-operation (23).

B. Sokolov, the economic adviser to the Soviet embassy in Cuba, expanded on this idea in an interview he gave. In it he said

I cannot make predictions but I think there will be a treaty for 1991 alone - an annual intergovernment protocol which would not be as broad as the one which existed before. It will only mention the products which the Soviet government can guarantee, but the main articles will be included (24).

It can be concluded that the official Soviet line towards Cuba in regards to joint collaboration and economic ties had undergone change as it was now much more open in its admission that problems existed in its relationship with Havana. Much was still positive but an increasing number of public statements from Moscow were becoming quite negative in nature. It was now public knowledge throughout the world that problems existed in the relationship and that it was undergoing some form of change.

Although Moscow was being more open in its admission of problems existing and that talks for the 1991/1995 5-year plan had been difficult, it did not stop agreements between the two countries being signed in 1989 and 1990. The first was signed at the end of January 1989 when an agreement on joint cultural collaboration for 1991 to 1995 was signed in Moscow (25). Although not on the most important subject, it

at least showed that Moscow was still thinking about its relationship with Havana in the medium to long term. In March 1989, the protocol for trade for that year was signed by K. Katushev, Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, and R. Cabrisas, the Cuban Foreign Minister, which stated that trade between the countries would reach 9 billion roubles for that year and this was, indeed, met (26). An agreement on joint collaboration on micro-electronics, which would help modernize this field in Cuba was signed in the penultimate month of 1989 by, V. Koleshnikov, the Minister of Electronic Industry, and Pedro Miret (27). Another agreement for commodity circulation and payments for 1990 was reached during the 20th meeting of the Soviet-Cuban Intergovernment Commission in April 1990 (28). In May 1990 an agreement on communications was signed. The terms stated that the Cuban communications service, including improving the main cable between Havana and Santiago de Cuba, would be modernized with Soviet help. The "Caribe" ground-based space communications centre would also be upgraded as part of this agreement.

On 29 December 1990 Katushev and Cabrisas signed a trade agreement between the two countries. This agreement illustrated the change that was taking place in Soviet/Cuban relations in this period. Not only was it signed extremely late in the year but unlike previous agreements it was to last for only one year and not five as had been the case before. This agreement, although important, was a watershed in Soviet/Cuban relations as it showed the change in attitude towards the island in Moscow. It gave rise to the question of what would happen at the end of 1991 since negotiations for this one had been so difficult (29).

Significantly for Cuba, a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation was signed by Gorbachev and Fidel, while the Soviet leader was in Cuba in April 1989. This was

important since it illustrated Moscow's continued support for Cuba at this time and, significantly, was to last for at least a 25- year period which further showed that Moscow saw relations with Havana lasting well into the 21st century. If this treaty is analysed questions, however, start to arise. Although prestigious for Cuba, a great deal of it concentrated on the international scene and only repeated what had been said many times before (30). During 1989 and 1990 agreements were still being signed but with the exception of one on cultural collaboration and the Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation, which stated nothing new, none of the agreements were to last for a duration of more than one-year. This, coupled with Moscow's admission that problems existed in talks for the 5-year plan for 1991/1995, showed that changes were occurring and Moscow by 1989/1990 was being more careful in the treaties that it signed with Cuba.

If changes, or the likelihood of changes, were starting to appear between Moscow and Havana, one area where change definitely did occur was within the CMEA. In the aftermath of the "velvet revolution" in Eastern Europe, a decision was made at the 45th meeting of the CMEA in Sofia in January 1990 to have all transactions, within this movement, carried out in convertible currency. Although not directly affecting relations between Moscow and Havana it still had grave repercussions for Cuba since over 80% of Cuba's trade was still conducted with CMEA countries. N.I. Ryzhkov, a member of the CPSU politburo, and Moscow's representative at this meeting, highlighted Cuba's uncertainty at these events when he said

I want to emphasise first of all that in Sofia, there was solid agreement that the situation is in need of fundamental change. There are nuances, of course. Cuba, for example,

expressed the opinion that the CMEA's status quo should be maintained. The Cuban side believes that we should not switch to world prices or settle our accounts in convertible currency (31).

Ryzhkov partly countered Cuba's uncertainty over the events at this conference when he went on to state

I said at the session and will point out once again that three of the countries - Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam-all require a special approach, and we are obliged to find special solutions (32).

This was not a new idea and would have at least partly reassured the Cuban government of the sentiment still being made by the Soviet representative. It also showed that although great changes were occurring within the CMEA, Moscow still did not want to terminate its relationship with Cuba and was prepared to be involved with it.

The Soviet elite continued to visit Cuba throughout this period. The first visit took place in the first few days of 1989 when V.I. Vorotnikov, Premier of the Russian Federation and a former Soviet ambassador to Cuba, travelled to the island to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution (33). In October 1989 Shevardnadze made a short stopover on the island on his return journey to the Soviet Union after visiting both the United Nations in New York and Nicaragua. This was his fourth visit to Cuba and while there he met Fidel. TASS described the meeting as follows

A committed exchange of information was held about CPSU policy of revolutionary perestroika in the USSR and about the PCC's implementation of a rectification programme in its republic (34).

In November 1989, B.M. Belonov, Minister of Industry for the Defence of the Soviet Union, was in Cuba and, he too, met Fidel during his stay. These talks concentrated on collaboration for the production of tractors and domestic electrical products (35). During the following month V.G. Komplektov, the deputy Foreign Minister, met Carlos Rafael Rodriguez in Havana where they discussed the international situation but in particular the recent events surrounding the US invasion of Panama (36).

Visits continued in 1990 and as this has already been stated, Abalkin was in Cuba in April 1990 (15). In May 1990, O. Baklanov, secretary to the Central Committee of the CPSU, was in Cuba and met Raul. Granma reported that he had said that the relationship between the two countries had always been of a very solid nature (37). General M.A. Moiseev, head of the Soviet army, met both Fidel and Raul in October 1990, while he was in Cuba and it was reported that this visit cemented relations between the two armed forces (38). Later in the month, Major V. Skomorov was the Soviet representative at the celebrations for the 30th anniversary of the creation of the Cuban army (MINFAR) (39). Again as has been stated, O.S. Shenin, a CPSU politburo member, was in Cuba also in October 1990. During his visit a Pravda editorial made very positive comments about the benefits which the Soviet Union were gaining as a result of its relations with Cuba (17).

These visits to Cuba by the Soviet elite in 1989 and 1990 were, on the whole, similar to visits that had taken place in previous years, and a visit by such an important figure as Shenin near the end of 1990 can be explained by the fact that talks for a new 5-year plan were required as the existing one ended in 1990. What had changed, however, was that Moscow, as has been stated, admitted that problems were occurring in the talks for the new 5-year plan. These admissions were the most obvious signs of disagreements occurring between Moscow and Havana by the end of 1990.

The most high profile and important visit by a member of the Soviet elite in this period occurred when Gorbachev himself made his much anticipated but delayed visit to Cuba in April 1989. On 5 April both Gorbachev and Fidel addressed Cuba's National Assembly of People's Power. In his speech Gorbachev stated:

...I want to state that the Soviet Union cherishes its friendship with socialist Cuba. Our solidarity with you, dear comrades, is not subject to transitory fluctuations. We are ready for the further development of Soviet-Cuban relations. We believe that both of us have extremely rich opportunities for this (40).

At a later press conference Gorbachev commented on speculation that had been rife in the western press before his trip.

It was alleged that Comrade Castro and I would not meet as the old friends that we in fact are, but almost as enemies. It was all fabrication. It's the way someone wishes it were. But it's not. We

have been friends, and today our friendship and our mutual understanding are even stronger (41).

These statements coupled with the fact that Gorbachev and Fidel signed a Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation during Gorbachev's visit would all suggest that both leaders were content with the way that the relationship was progressing in 1989. The survey on Soviet foreign policy, conducted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, was also very positive about this visit when it stated

The official friendly visit of General Secretary Gorbachev to Cuba in April 1989 was a milestone in Soviet-Cuban relations. It demonstrated the commonality of the stands of the USSR and Cuba on the key problems of world development and the unity of approaches to the change taking place in the international arena under the impact of new political thinking (42).

During his visit to Cuba, Gorbachev also, however, drew attention to the changes occurring within his own country, during his speech to the National Assembly of People's Power, he gave a detailed analysis of the need for perestroika, the reorganization of the CPSU and the elections that had just taken place in the Soviet Union. Significantly these processes were very different from the ones being carried out in Cuba at this time. Gorbachev went even further when he said:

Life does not stand still. The times are making new demands on

the quality of our interaction. This applies in particular to economic ties - they should be more dynamic and more effective, and they should produce a greater return for both our countries, for our peoples (43).

Gorbachev's visit to Cuba is an excellent illustration of the Soviet Union's policies towards Cuba in this period. The signing of the Treaty of Friendship and parts of his speech on 5 April were extremely positive about the state of the relationship, but other parts of this speech were much more cautious. By giving his analysis of the reasons for the processes of perestroika and glasnost he was, in reality, giving Fidel a public lecture on the reasons for them. No one was left in doubt about their differences from the rectification of errors campaign, the idealistic drive to solve the island's problems, in Cuba. He also very publicly stated that economic relations between the two countries must be altered.

In December 1990 the USSR Supreme Soviet Commission for Foreign Affairs held a special meeting on Cuba. Again this highlighted the fact that the Soviet Union felt economic relations must change and that problems did exist with its relationship with the island. On this meeting Pravda stated

...extensive ties are maintained between the two countries in the political, economic, cultural, and other spheres...At the same time the parliamentarians noted the difficulties and problems which have arisen in bilateral relations recently (44).

This was important for a number of reasons. Firstly, relations were still extensive and were carried out on a number of different levels but importantly for Cuba, none of these had been severed. Secondly, it was a further example of the much more open style that Moscow had adopted in relation to Cuba: it was now quite public in its assessment of the difficulties in the relationship with Havana. Most significant, however, was the fact that this special meeting had been held at all. If Moscow had been content with relations with Havana and had not felt they required to be changed this special meeting would never have been convened.

Mixed signals appeared to be emanating from Moscow at this time about its relations with Cuba: some were still very positive about the relationship and its benefits while others were much more freely open in their criticism of the island. Moscow's dealings with US behaviour towards Cuba further illustrated this. Moscow was very quick to attack the creation of the US based Jose Marti Television. This increased the pressure on Cuba as this television station concentrated solely on broadcasting anti-Cuban government material in Spanish from the US to Cuba. This appeared to be continuing the trend of more active US behaviour in the Western hemisphere that had started during the Presidency of Ronald Reagan and continued under his successor George Bush. This was illustrated by Bush's decision in December 1989 to invade Panama to remove from office, arrest and eventually extradite to the US General Manuel Noriega for drug smuggling.

US pressure on Cuba increased when, in March 1990, the US Senate special group held a meeting in the aftermath of the "velvet revolution" in Eastern Europe. Moscow policy, however, was not altered when it stated:

It seems that Washington is forgetting the new times in which we are living but not those of the cold war. The decision of the US Congress revives those absolute methods that have already been condemned by the international community. Once again we are witnessing an imperialist intervention in the domestic affairs of a sovereign state. The attempt to crush the Cuban people's will violates international law (45).

In December 1990 a TASS report stated

Helping defuse tension around Cuba and thus improve relations between the US and Cuba is a strategic policy of the USSR (46).

This TASS statement appears to be at odds with the above statements on US behaviour towards Cuba since it implies that Moscow wanted to try and improve the relationship between Washington and Havana, while the others are very forceful about their dislike for US actions towards Cuba. This illustrates Moscow's contradictory style and policies towards Cuba in 1989 and 1990.

In June/July 1989 Cuba held the trial and subsequent execution of one of its leading army officers, General Arnaldo Ochoa, on charges of drug smuggling in what very much appeared to be a show trial (47). With the Soviet Union undergoing an examination of its own history under the influence of glasnost it could have been assumed that Moscow would have taken a dim view of these events but if government statements are examined, this does not, however, appear to be the case. [Izvestia](#)

reported that Ochoa had done political damage to the Cuban revolution and Pravda commented

The disgraceful actions of A. Ochoa, of which the Cuban people have been broadly informed, are a betrayal of the motherland and its Revolutionary Armed Forces and a most flagrant violation of ethical and political principles (48).

These government statements could have been taken from any earlier era of Soviet/Cuban relations. They attacked the actions of Ochoa, therefore, they defended the Cuban Revolution. Moscow's reaction to this trial would suggest that it still backed Havana strongly, at the time of these events in mid 1989.

Moscow may still have been supporting Cuba in mid 1989 but by the end of 1990, as has been stated, Moscow was much more open and public in its admissions that problems existed in the relationship. Significantly the talks for the 1991/1995 5-year plan did not go smoothly and a one-year agreement was mooted instead of the previous five year duration. This appeared to be systematic of Moscow's policies towards Latin America and the Third World as a whole. Moscow wanted to maintain these relationships (since 1985 Moscow had increased its contact, relations and trade with Latin American countries as a whole with Shevardnadze making various trips to the continent to illustrate this) but they had to change and evolve. The main emphasis was that they had to become more efficient and beneficial for the Soviet Union. Moscow was much more concerned with its balance sheets being in order than it had ever been before. Moscow illustrated this by cutting back its aid to the Third World but it had been

involved in attempts to find a negotiated peace for the unrest in Central America. Moscow's involvement in the socialist countries in Eastern Europe in the aftermath of the "velvet revolution" also, obviously, became smaller. By this time Moscow was much more concerned with its own internal problems than in having an expansive and expensive foreign policy (49). Moscow's relationship with Havana by the end of 1990 illustrated this trend perfectly: everything had to be more cost efficient for Moscow.

The official Soviet line towards Cuba in 1989 and 1990 did undergo change. In many areas Moscow remained positive about its relationship with Cuba: agreements were still being signed at this time; various Soviet officials concentrated on the benefits which both sides gained from the continuation of the relationship; Moscow attacked what it saw as Washington's increased pressure on Havana especially in the aftermath of the "velvet revolution" and Moscow also defended the Cuban government in its dealings with Ochoa in June/July 1989.

Mixed signals did, however, continue to emanate from Moscow. Moscow may have attacked US behaviour towards Cuba but it also stated that one of its aims was to try and get the two countries to reduce the tension between them. Gorbachev's visit to the island, in April 1989, was the best example of these mixed signals. A Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation, praising aspects of the Cuban Revolution and stating the importance of the relationship to the Soviet Union was signed but Gorbachev also called for more efficiency in the relationship between the two countries and publicly lectured Fidel on the reasons for perestroika in his country. His visit gave out very mixed signals to Fidel and the Cuban government. By the end of 1990, these mixed signals were being replaced by much more open and public statements on problems existing between the two countries as Moscow freely admitted that the talks for the 1991/1995 5-

year plan had been difficult. Moscow wanted a more cost efficient approach to its dealings with all Third World countries at this time. Its relationship with Cuba showed this to be the case as it was only a one-year agreement for 1991 that was mooted. The relationship may have been undergoing change but at no point did the official Soviet line towards Cuba in 1989 and 1990 call for the termination of the Soviet Union's relationship with Cuba.

The Unofficial Soviet Line Towards Cuba

In the years 1989 and 1990, the unofficial Soviet line (made up of academic works and writings by social/political commentators), I would suggest, consisted of nine different areas that coincide with the nine points of the official Soviet line. These areas are (a) the achievements of the Cuban Revolution since 1959; (b) collaboration between the Soviet Union and Cuba; (c) Gorbachev's visit to the island in April 1989; (d) trade between the two countries but in particular the trade in sugar; (e) the ideology of the Cuban Revolution; (f) the recuperation of children affected by the Chernobyl disaster; (g) the foreign policy of the Soviet Union at this time; (h) the effects which glasnost were having on the relationship between Moscow and Havana and (i) the perception of Fidel and Raul within the Soviet Union. As these areas are examined some will again overlap. Once this has been done it will be possible to conclude the unofficial Soviet line towards Cuba in this two year period. An examination of participants' memoirs will also be undertaken to ascertain whether a re-thinking, with the benefit of hindsight, of this time has taken place in the years succeeding them.

In January 1990 America Latina printed "Panorama cubano" by its correspondent in Cuba, A. Sujostat, which gave an overall view of Cuba at this time. He praised: the achievements that the Cuban Revolution had made in the area of public health; its participation in Angola and the benefits which the African country had made as a result of this Cuban involvement and also the Cuban government efforts to remedy its own internal problems with the campaign of rectification of errors (50). In October 1990, Pravda published an article by the historian, K. Khachaturov, entitled "Understand and Give Due Credit". In this he wrote

You will not find homeless, impoverished, illiterate or unemployed people in Cuba. Just one indicator: life expectancy in Cuba is growing faster than in any other state. The Cuban enjoys a level of social protection than is higher than in any other Third World country (51).

The 30th anniversary of the victory of the Cuban Revolution in January 1989 was celebrated with the publication of commemorative issue of America Latina that contained a number of articles on the island. In one of these, Sujostat wrote that Soviet aid to Cuba in 1987 had increased by 3.4% on 1986 levels and had not been cut as the International Herald Tribune had stated. He also stated that the Soviet Union was assisting in the construction of nuclear plants at Juragua and the Centro Nuclear Investigaciones just outside Havana. To illustrate the benefits that the Soviet Union gained from this relationship, Sujostat also wrote that the Soviet Union had received 2600 electronic monitors from Cuba in 1987 (52). In October 1989, Komsomolskaya

Pravda published an interview with A.D. Bekarevich, deputy director of the USSR Academy of Sciences Latin America Institute, during which he stated:

And that is what we must do - speak openly of the size of our aid to Cuba. What are we ashamed of? Who are we afraid of? Our assistance saved Cuba from the blockade. It enabled it to hold out, survive, and create the foundations of a modern economy. We can only be proud of that (53).

Later in his interview he commented:

You can also frequently hear rebukes that by supplying Cuba with oil, we lose currency, because petroleum products could be sold on the free market. But Cuba supplies us with commodities which our country would have to pay currency to acquire. I mean citrus fruits, sugar, and nickel. Cuban deliveries meet 40% of our needs for oranges and lemons. 30% with regard to sugar, and approximately 20% for cobalt and nickel ores (54).

America Latina, in February 1990, printed an article "Relaciones culturales sovietico-cubanas-como seran?" which not only highlighted the close cultural ties between the two countries, which had existed for 30 years, but also the fact that meetings had already taken place with the view of extending these links (55). At the start of 1990, Selskaya Zhizn published an article by the Pravda correspondent, P. Bogmolov, to commemorate the victory of the Cuban Revolution. In this he stated:

I could start with Soviet-Cuban relations which by the end of the 1980s have reached their highest point in the 30-year history of the new Cuba. Over 8 billion in trade agreements, and enormous economic, scientific and technical cooperation between the two countries were not the only causes of that. Of no less importance was the fact that in the last year a qualitative breakthrough in our interactions. The breakthrough was M.S. Gorbachev's visit to Cuba and the Agreement on Friendship and cooperation that he signed there (56).

As Boglomov's article made clear, the unofficial Soviet line towards Cuba also placed great importance on Gorbachev's April 1989 visit to Cuba. At the end of March 1989, V. Volsky, the director of the Latin America Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences, commented on the forthcoming visit when he wrote:

Mikhail Gorbachev's visit to Cuba is bound to reaffirm the Soviet Union's resolute backing of that country in face of any encroachment upon its people to advance along the road they have chosen, on its place in the world (57).

B.Vasilyev and A. Kamorin continued this theme in "Havana's Enthusiasm and Cordiality" but also commented on the significance of the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation that had taken place during this trip.

The Soviet Union has always supported Cuba. Previously there was no treaty of friendship and cooperation between us, but no one could cast doubt on the friendship and cooperation of our peoples. The treaty which has just been signed is the confirmation of close Soviet-Cuban ties. It has been concluded for 25 years but does not limit the term of our friendship cooperation (58).

The periodical Argumenty i Fakty published an article "USSR-Cuba: The Cooperation is being Strengthened" during Gorbachev's visit. The subject of which was the positive nature of the relationship and the advances that had been achieved since its commencement in 1960 (59). Four months after Gorbachev's visit, America Latina printed "Esta es tu casa, Gorbachov" by Sujostat in August 1989. This article - its title was a play on the phrase "Esta es tu casa, Fidel" which Cubans wrote on banners in January 1959 to celebrate the victory of the Cuban Revolution and had again been used to welcome Gorbachev to their island - was very positive about his visit and the state of Soviet/Cuban relations in 1989 as various aspects of the Cuban Revolution were praised and the benefits that both countries gained from the relationship were highlighted (60).

In March 1990, Argumenty i Fakty printed an article by V. Borodayev, a postgraduate student of historical sciences, and G. Levykina, a postgraduate student of economic sciences, in which they wrote that both the UK and the US also bought sugar from the English speaking Caribbean at prices above the market level. It was not just the Soviet Union, with Cuban sugar, who did this (61).

However, in December 1989 A. Kortunov, a postgraduate student in history, criticised this very practice. He wrote

According to Western estimates...at least a 1/4 of the total volume of economic aid - nearly 3b rubles a year-goes to Cuba. It is generally known that we buy Cuban sugar at a price 4 times the average world price.

Meanwhile, state budget subsidies to Kirgizia in 1990 will amount to 555,453,000 roubles, and to Tadzhikistan, 405,784,000 roubles. In other words, the two Soviet republics combined will receive only a third as much money as the distant island in the Caribbean Sea (62).

The following April, Kortunov in America Latina stated that Cuba was costing the Soviet Union 3b roubles a year (63). In July of that year, he returned to the theme of Cuban sugar being expensive to buy for the Soviet Union when in Literaturnaya Gazeta he wrote

...multi-billion dollar programmes of aid to developing countries such as Cuba (\$5b to \$7b a year, according to Western estimates), Afghanistan (\$4b), Ethiopia and Vietnam continue. And these programmes are dictated by considerations that are by no means humanitarian: The countries are not the poorest in the world. L.I. Abalkin visited Cuba quite recently, where he signed a treaty on expanding trade with that country, trade that is extremely unprofitable for us. Where is a statesmanlike approach here? Where is the logic? (64).

Also in 1990, V. Pyatigorskiy, a contributor to Moscow News, wrote

During the last 5-year period, a ton of oil was sold to Cuba for 164 roubles, whereas a ton of sugar was sold to us for 850 roubles. What we got was 1 ton of sugar for roughly 5 tons of oil. On the world market, however, the rate is approximately 3 tons of oil for a ton of sugar (65).

A. Kamorin, Izvestia's Cuba correspondent, wrote in July 1990

In effect, each ton of sugar arriving in the USSR represents an automatically filled claim for economic assistance...Cuba's needs have grown, and so have our deliveries. As a result, we have raised sugar requirements so high that the republic now uses sugar produced in other countries to settle its accounts with us. It buys sugar from a French company on credit. And the USSR guarantees its debt, exposing itself to the risk of paying for the same sugar twice - with oil to Cuba and hard currency to the French. From a commercial standpoint, this is utterly absurd, though I could be mistaken considering that such a prominent economist as L.I. Abalkin considers such operations to be "standard practice" (66).

The general cost of Moscow's involvement in Cuba was also being questioned when A. Oskin, a political commentator, commented, at the end of 1990,

What does the Republic of Cuba cost the Soviet citizen today?...

How many more years is the leadership of the Soviet Union going to take the "bread ration" from the poor and ruined Soviet peasant and worker in order to pay for and maintain the inefficient and militarised economy of a state far away on the other side of the ocean (67)?

As has previously been stated, differences in methods existed between perestroika and the campaign of rectification of errors in the Soviet Union and Cuba, respectively. S. Mikoyan, editor of America Latina, wrote in June 1989 of the benefits that the Cuban Revolution had attained and the way in which it had provided a leading light for other Third World countries, most notably Nicaragua. He said that this had only been possible due to the Marxist-Leninist nature of the Cuban Revolution (68). In the aforementioned article "Esta es tu casa, Gorbachov" Sujostat wrote that during his visit to Cuba, Gorbachev noted the differences between perestroika and the rectification of errors campaign, but that both were working towards the same goal: the advancement and development of socialism (69). Sujostat returned to this idea in January 1990 when he repeated it, again, in America Latina (70).

Although articles appeared, which tried to point out the similarities between the two different campaigns, others also appeared, which criticised the internal situation in Cuba and the island's unwillingness to embrace the changes occurring in the Soviet Union. On 30 July 1990, Pravda published an article by A. Shargy, a political commentator, in which he questioned Moscow's continued involvement in Cuba due to the lack of change there. He commented

While both we and the Eastern Europe countries have already put an end to the one-party system and given the recent dissidents their way, and are now preparing to advance towards the market system, across the ocean they are following the principle "one ideology-one party-one people-one power" (71).

As has already been stated, some children from the Ukraine, who had been affected by the Chernobyl disaster, had been recuperating in Cuba and this continued in 1989 and 1990. In November 1990, Sovetskaya Rossiya printed extracts from T.V. Goncharavo, who was the secretary of the Ukrainian Komsomol Central Committee International Voluntary Service. He stated the children were placed in one of the best pioneer camps near Havana, the treatment that they received was excellent and that the Cuban government even paid for some of their flights from the Ukraine (72).

This practice even came in for criticism in the Soviet Union since, in August 1990, Komsomolskaya Pravda carried a letter from V.I. Ladyzhenko, the chairman of the "Chernobyl League", in which he criticised the treatment the children received whilst in Cuba: the conditions were spartan, they received no treatment while they were in Cuba and also received no fresh fruit during their stay even although Soviet officials did (73).

Soviet foreign policy had undergone change since Gorbachev had become General Secretary of the CPSU. Sujostat in America Latina stated that the Soviet government praised the Cuban position in Angola and the part played by them in Namibian independence, due to the changing world situation at the time of Gorbachev's visit to Cuba (74). In the next edition of America Latina its Argentine correspondent, P.

Yakovlev, reported on an academic conference held in Buenos Aires attended by both Soviet and Cuban academics at which the effects of perestroika on Latin America were discussed. It stated since March 1985 Moscow enjoyed improved relations with much of the Third World in general but its relations with the Western hemisphere countries had greatly increased (75).

Even with the “new thinking” in Soviet foreign policy, some people in the Soviet Union were still unhappy at the way its relations with Cuba were developing in the light of this. In July 1989, Izvestia published an interview with Ye. Arefyeva, a leading research associate at the USSR Academy of Sciences Institute of the World Economy and International Relations, in which she criticised, as she saw it, the continuation of ideology in Soviet foreign policy. She stated:

Then, incidentally, it will also be possible to discuss the discrepancy that now exists between professing to move away from ideology in international relations and maintaining a structure of subsidies such that the lion's share goes to support ideologically based relations with Cuba, Mongolia, Vietnam and several progressive regions in the Third World, for example (76).

In the article "A Taste For Cuban Sugar" the author A. Oskin stated:

It seems to me that the time has come to take the politics and ideology out of the Soviet-Cuban economic ties altogether (77).

In July 1990, Ye. Arefyeva took this ideological question one step further when she wrote

...I think the Americans are fully justified when they ask: Just where is our new political thinking? Where is the real confirmation of our new defence doctrine? And isn't it in order to preserve confrontation that we maintain close military ties with Cuba, ties supplemented with an infusion of economic resources (78)?

Since the recommencement of relations between Moscow and Havana in 1960 a great many Soviet specialists had travelled to Cuba to participate in projects which the Soviet Union and Cuba were working on together. A great deal of these projects had been completed by 1990 but a large number were still going on. Both governments were very proud of the successes of these joint projects, but even these were criticised within some circles in the Soviet Union. In April 1990, Pravda correspondent, A. Shary, wrote:

The extensive participation of Soviet specialists in dealing with Cuba's economic problems has also led to a situation in which we have transported our problems as well as our achievements overseas (79).

He also attacked the inefficient practice of Soviet ships being used to supply Cuba with grain purchased in Canada or European countries. Inefficiency only increased as Soviet ships were often kept waiting for long periods to be unloaded in Cuban ports (80). A. Snam, a former Soviet specialist in Cuba wrote that, not only were Soviet problems

being transported to Cuba by the use of Soviet specialists but, the ones sent were often not of a high standard. He explained that Soviet enterprises were unwilling to send their best employees to Cuba so instead sent poorer ones. Communication, once they were in Cuba, was often difficult since very few of the Soviet specialists spoke Spanish. These problems were added to since Soviet machinery was often poorly stored, while in transit, thus resulting in it arriving in a rusted condition (81).

In June 1989, at the Congress of People's Deputies, the extent to which glasnost had permeated Soviet society was illustrated when one delegate, the outspoken economist N.P. Shmelyev, criticised Soviet aid to Cuba during his speech. He said:

I must ask: Has anyone ever thought about how much our interests in say, Latin America, cost us? According to American professional estimates, \$6b to \$8b annually. A significant portion of that sum is hard currency. And it's impossible to understand what a significant portion of it goes for, when, for example, we pay 400% for Cuban sugar (compared to the world price), and pay it in hard currency.

This source also would be enough to maintain in the consumer market for the few years what we need to get turned around somehow and really set out on the road of reforms (82).

In February 1990, when the budget for that year was being discussed in the Soviet parliament, Shmelyev again attacked Soviet spending in the Third World when he said

There is insufficient reason for spending 10b roubles on aid to the third world countries - this is now an impermissible luxury for us (83).

This criticism continued in March 1990, when Izvestia published a letter openly attacking Soviet aid to the Third World in the wake of the Finance Ministry publishing figures, which showed that Moscow was owed the colossal sum of 85.6b roubles. The letter said:

To all appearances, it is the result of miscalculations - economic, ideological, political-military. For example, the debts owed by Syria, Cuba, Angola, Nicaragua and Mozambique include unpaid military supplies (84).

In November 1990, Moscow News published an interview with General Rafael del Pino, who had recently defected to the US. During this interview del Pino was particularly critical and scathing of the events surrounding the trial and subsequent execution of General Arnaldo Ochoa (85). This was a very different position from the official Soviet one, which had supported the Cuban government actions in dealing with this case. This illustrated the new openness in Soviet society since the unofficial Soviet position was shown to be very different from the official one.

Some Soviet academics, however, continued to follow the official Soviet position. Mikoyan commented on the growing trend to criticise Soviet policy towards the Third World and Cuba:

Our people have grown extremely tired after being deceived for decades on many issues. Thus, they now believe that everything that was regarded as positive in the past was truly not the best thing, but the contrary. This, is of course, a rather childish attitude that distorts reality (86).

Mikoyan's point was further illustrated, when even Fidel and Raul's personal lives came in for criticism in the Soviet press. Komsomolskaya Pravda printed an article "From Fidel's Personal Life" which stated that Fidel had been married twice and had had five sons with his second wife. Officially he had only one son and had been married just once. The article also said that Raul had separated from his wife, Vilma Espin, five years previously and was illegally married to a Bulgarian woman with whom he had had an illegitimate daughter. It even suggested that Raul's first marriage had been a pretence on the orders of Fidel (87). It also stated:

Fidel, for example has 32 houses (state-owned, of course) scattered throughout the country...Fidel's personal guard numbers 9,700 people throughout the country, 2800 of them in the capital (88).

This personal attack on Cuba's top two officials drew a very curt reply from the Cuban ambassador to the Soviet Union, Jose Ramon Balaguer, in Pravda eight days later when he countered this article with his own entitled "Lies and Insults" in which he stated:

Unfortunately, A. Novikov is interested not in the truth but in insults. This is the characteristic feature of his article, carried under what is an unbelievable head for the Soviet press - "From Fidel's Personal Life"...In doing so, he insults Soviet readers and the Cuban people. But it isn't enough for him to slander Fidel Castro. He extends his slander to Raul Castro (89).

Fidel's personal standing, within unofficial Soviet circles, was not all negative since in Khachaturov's article in Pravda, in October 1990, he wrote

But before we judge others, let us recall our own recent past, when the entire country used to wish "dear Leonid Ilyich" a long and prosperous life. Compared to him, F. Castro is an intellectual and moral giant, and Castro did not come to power as a result of palace intrigues.

Cuba's leader is one of the longest-serving state leaders. As such he is unique by virtue of his refinement, human decency, sincerity, unpretentiousness and accessibility. Cubans are on familiar terms with him, addressing him simply as "Fidel". And this is not the familiarity of an ecstatic crowd, but rather a sign of deep respect, as a rule. I would like to mention another, no less important feature: Cuba is the only socialist country that has avoided mass repression and political trials (90).

In the years since these events has a re-thinking, with the benefit of hindsight, taken place? Analyzing the participants' memoirs will conclude this. Yu. Petrov, Soviet ambassador to Cuba at this time, admitted that "occasional disagreements" occurred between the two countries (91). This idea that not everything was running smoothly is reiterated in Gorbachev's own memoirs. On his visit to Cuba he wrote

At the start our Cuban friends were guarded...This meeting allowed us to carry out discussions on Soviet-Cuban relations with them at the same time. And we emphasized... We endeavour to support our same course in the Soviet Union. And as a result of this we have no provocative questions.

After my statements the atmosphere changed before one's eyes (92).

Yu. Pavlov, head of the Latin American Directorate of the USSR Foreign Ministry, also stated that Fidel did seem to be nervous at the start of the talks with Gorbachev in Havana. He also states that the talks did not go as well as the public believed as he wrote

Despite these public mutual assurances, the talks between the two leaders at times resembled a dialogue of the deaf (93).

Pavlov believes that in general, Gorbachev's visit to Cuba achieved very little as both sides merely continued to do what they had been doing before April 1989. Some in the West believed that the Soviet Union would enforce reforms on Cuba during his visit but,

contrary to this, Pavlov states that the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation may have even strengthened Cuba's position (94).

As has been stated, Shevardnadze had made four visits to Cuba from 1986 to 1990. With this being the case it could have been thought that he would have written about Cuba and his relationship with Fidel in his memoirs, Moi Vybor. This, however, is not the case, as Cuba is not mentioned once in this book (95). Some light is shone on his trip there, in October 1989, by V.I. Vorotnikov, a politburo member and former Soviet ambassador to Cuba in his own memoirs. In this he describes the Politburo meeting that discussed Shevardnadze's meeting with Fidel. Vorotnikov writes

On Cuba he said they had a long conversation: Fidel was magnanimous during this but his position was not changed in the opinion of Shevardnadze (96).

Vorotnikov had also been the Soviet representatives at the 30th anniversary celebrations of the Cuban Revolution in January 1989. On 5 January 1989, he met Fidel and talks lasted throughout the day during which he gave Fidel a detailed analysis of the changes taking place in the Soviet Union. He wrote that Fidel asked a great many questions on various subjects such as perestroika, people's power in the Soviets, function of the Congress, sessions of the Supreme Soviet and change to the electoral system (97). Vorotnikov states that Fidel was worried about these changes as well as by Gorbachev's decision to reduce the size of the Soviet army. Fidel was concerned how the problems in the Baltics and Caucasus would be dealt with in the light of these troop reductions (98). On the overall discussions he had with Fidel, Vorotnikov wrote

Between us there was a lively discussion. We were reasonable, weighed up the situation, agreed with each other but also differed. These had taken place in a friendly nature and were interesting (99).

K. Brutents, head of the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU, hinted that by the late 1980s Moscow was not entirely happy with the relationship it had with Havana. He states that although Moscow was prepared to grant loans to Nicaragua, these were not going to be at the level that Cuba had received from the Soviet Union (100). By stating this, Moscow was really admitting that it should not have granted such high levels of aid to Cuba.

L. Abalkin, deputy chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers and one of Gorbachev's personal advisers, in his memoirs states that, although problems did exist in the relationship between Moscow and Havana, the meeting of Intergovernment Commission in April 1990 hoped to progress the relationship in a positive fashion but that much work still had to be done to it (101). A. Kapto, a former Soviet ambassador to Cuba, stated in his memoirs that in 1989

The Soviet Union hoped to raise its friendship with socialist Cuba (102).

The idea that Moscow hoped that relations between Cuba and the United States would improve but at the same time was not prepared to have Cuba put under more pressure by the US is also apparent from memoirs. Gorbachev states that during the two summit meetings that he had with US President Bush in 1989 and 1990 Bush had

told him that the US was unhappy with aspects of the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba. The US also believed that Cuba was still supplying weapons to guerrillas in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Bush said improved relations between Washington and Moscow would only be possible if Gorbachev helped to rectify these issues with Fidel. Akhromeev and Kornienko in their book also state that the US tried to put pressure on the Soviet Union regarding its relationship with Cuba (103).

These memoirs add more credibility to the idea that Moscow was not entirely happy with the way its relationship was developing with Havana by 1990 and that change was required but both sides were not in agreement on how this should be achieved. Even with the study of memoir sources it is apparent that Moscow showed no signs that it wanted to terminate the relationship with Cuba and did, in fact, still defend Cuba in the face of continued US hostility.

Parts of the unofficial Soviet line towards Cuba in 1989 and 1990 were much more critical than the official one in regards the continuation of Soviet involvement in Cuba. A questioning attitude even reached the Soviet Parliament. The process of glasnost had now permeated Soviet foreign policy or more specifically the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba and this scale of criticism was illustrated by the number of Soviet officials, academics and social/political commentators who were having to defend Moscow's continuing policy towards Havana. If criticism within the Soviet Union had not increased, a defense of Soviet policy would not have had to be staged. Criticism on the whole increased in these years. Some even wanted the relationship to end due to its cost to Moscow. This was very different from the official line since, although Moscow may have wanted to modernize its relations with Havana, it

never called for them to be terminated. The unofficial line became increasingly more radical as 1989 and 1990 progressed.

The View From Havana

In the years 1989 and 1990 the Cuban government, press and academia commented on nine aspects of its relationship with the Soviet and its own internal situation. This was the same number of points considered by the official and unofficial Soviet line towards Cuba. These were: (a) official visits by the Cuban elite to the Soviet Union; (b) Gorbachev's visit to Cuba in April 1989; (c) joint collaboration between the two countries; (d) Soviet foreign policy; (e) Cuba's involvement in the CMEA; (f) the situation in Eastern Europe; (g) the internal situation in the Soviet Union at this time; (h) the 28th CPSU Congress which was held in June/July 1990 and (i) the CPSU party plenum in December 1990 and the continuation of its own campaign of rectification of errors. These areas will be examined in turn to analyse whether any changes were occurring in the Cuban perception of its relationship with the Soviet Union in this two-year period. This will be done by analysing speeches by the Cuban governing elite, press releases and works by Cuban academics. Once this has been concluded an examination of Cuban memoirs and interviews will be undertaken to see if a re-thinking with the benefit of hindsight of this time, has taken place in Cuba in the years since 1989 and 1990.

In this two-year period neither Fidel nor Raul travelled to the Soviet Union but other members of the Cuban ruling elite did. In January 1989, Armando Hart, the Culture Minister, and Antonio Esquivel, vice-president of the Council of Ministers, were

in Moscow for a CMEA meeting and on, 26 January Esquivel, met K. Katushev. During this meeting trade between the two countries for the forthcoming year was discussed (104). On 12 April, Hector Rodriguez Llampart, a Central Committee member and Minister-President of the National Bank, met his Soviet counterpart, N.V. Garetaski. Seven days later Ernesto Melendez, Minister-President of the Special Economic Commission for Collaboration, also met Katushev when collaboration for 1990 was discussed (105). This meeting was important since it was the first to take place after Gorbachev's trip to Cuba. In May 1989 Carlos Rafael Rodriguez also met Katushev while he was in Moscow for the 19th meeting of the Soviet-Cuban Intergovernment Commission on Science and Technology (106). The number of meetings Katushev had had with Cuban dignitaries was significant since not only had they taken place in a short period of time but also as Katushev was the Minister of Foreign Economic Relations it meant that economic collaboration between the two countries was of high priority at this time.

Trips continued in 1990 and in May 1990, Rodrigo Alvarez Cambras, head of the Frank Pais hospital, travelled to the Soviet Union (107). This trip continued the collaboration that existed between this hospital and Soviet specialists. In June, the head of construction in Cuba, Ramon Rodriguez, met his Soviet counterpart A.V. Cherishov to celebrate 30 years of collaboration between the two countries in their particular field (108). Carlos Lage, a member of the politburo of the PCC, represented Cuba, in November 1990, at the celebrations for the anniversary of the Russian Revolution in Moscow. During his stay he gave a speech that appeared on Soviet Television in which he praised the Soviet Union and thanked them for their help since 1959. Later in the same month, Robert Robaina, head of the Cuban Youth Movement (UJC) made a short

stopover in the Soviet Union as he returned to Cuba from China (109). At a ceremony, on 24 April 1990, Jose Ramon Balaguer, the new Cuban ambassador to the Soviet Union, presented his credentials to Gorbachev who sent best wishes to his "friend" Fidel (110).

Fewer official visits by the Cuban elite to the Soviet Union took place in this two-year period, but is explained by Gorbachev's visit to Cuba in April 1989. Many high-ranking members of his own government, who were able to hold their own discussions with their Cuban counterparts at this time rather than the Cubans make separate trips to the Soviet Union, accompanied Gorbachev on his trip. This visit attracted great interest from around the world with nearly 1000 journalists descending on Havana for Gorbachev's four-day stay on the island. On his arrival over 500,000 Cubans lined the route of Gorbachev's motorcade from the airport to the Soviet embassy to greet the Soviet leader.

During this visit the Cuban press were very positive in their reporting of this trip. To illustrate the closeness of the two leaders the Cuban periodical Bohemia, stated that Fidel even used the familiar "tu" when conversing with Gorbachev. It stated that the visit

...showed evidence of the great friendship which is frank, open, solid, and very close between the first socialist country in the world and the first socialist country in the Americas (111).

When Gorbachev left Cuba on 6 April Trabajadores stated

The visit of Gorbachev to Cuba was a great defeat for those

who thought problems existed in the relations between Cuba and the Soviet Union, affirmed today the Commander in Chief, Fidel Castro, at Jose Marti International Airport (112).

Granma was also very positive about Gorbachev's visit and the talks that the other Soviet dignitaries, who had accompanied Gorbachev to Cuba, had participated in. Shevernadze and Kamentsev and A.N. Yakovlev, a politburo member and secretary to the CPSU central committee, had met Carlos Rafael Rodriguez and also Jorge Risquet, a member of the politburo of the PCC (113). Granma also commented on the signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between the two countries when it said that the actual signing had only taken four minutes to complete but this continued the 30-year relationship and showed the world the close nature of this relationship (114).

As has been stated, Gorbachev and Fidel both addressed the National Assembly of People's power on 5 April 1989. During his speech Fidel thanked the Soviet Union for all the help it had provided to Cuba since the victory of the Cuban Revolution and stressed the Marxist-Leninist nature of both countries (115). One anomaly of this trip, compared to previous ones, was that Gorbachev was not presented with an award from the Cuban state. Fidel was quick to dispel the notion that this might have been because of tensions existing between the two leaders or problems between the countries when he stressed that this was because the Soviet leader had requested that no award should be given. Fidel said that Cuba was merely respecting Gorbachev's wishes although he added that he could not think of anyone more deserving of the Jose Marti Medal (116).

As has been stated Gorbachev's visit may not have gone as smoothly as the two countries wished to portray to the world. In his speech on 5 April, Fidel may have thanked the Soviet Union for its help but he also stated that the task facing Gorbachev in trying to improve the Soviet Union and socialism within it was a very complex and hard one. Fidel continued this when he pointedly stated that Cuba was not facing the same problems as the Soviet Union: Cuba had never had a leader in the mould of Stalin; undergone collectivization; was a much smaller country and its population was only a fraction of the size of that of the Soviet one. As a result of these Cuba could never use the same methods as those being employed in the Soviet Union. He also said that every country had a sovereign right to choose its own course (117). This idea that both countries had their own problems and had to find their own methods of solving them was not new but Fidel's speech was a very public reminder to Gorbachev of, not only this, but also the problems facing Cuba.

In the talks between the other dignitaries, during this four-day period, it was stated that the Soviet Union hoped to create the convertible rouble within a ten-year period (118). This could be perceived as Moscow keeping Havana informed of what it proposed to do in the future, but can also be taken as showing that change, at least in trade, between the two countries was inevitable.

While Gorbachev was in Cuba, the Cuban press printed a number of articles on collaboration between the two countries. On 6 April 1989, Granma printed an article on Soviet help in the construction of the Jurugua nuclear plant, in which it reported that parts of the plant were being shipped from the Soviet Union for this purpose (119). Three days previously, to coincide with Gorbachev's arrival in Havana, Trabajadores had published a large article on joint collaboration and also highlighted the fact that

Soviet equipment had been sent to Cuba for the nuclear plant at Jaragua. It also reported on the Soviet help in modernizing the production of sugar on the island, the restructuring of the Hermanos Diaz oil refinery at Santa Clara and that 190 Soviet specialists had worked at the Nico Lopez oil refinery since 1980. This article included a history of collaboration between the two countries since 1959 (120). In September 1990, it was reported that the construction of the nuclear plant at Juragua was continuing with Soviet assistance (121).

Other articles on joint collaboration appeared in the Soviet and Cuban press. On 9 May 1990 Fidel gave a speech, in front of Baklanov in which he talked of the medical assistance that Cuba had given the Soviet Union over the preceding years: there had been 100,000 blood donations in the aftermath of the Armenian earthquake in December 1989 and it was expected that 30,000 children affected by the Chernobyl disaster would have enjoyed a period of convalescence in Cuba (122). Soviet veterans from the war in Afghanistan had also travelled to Cuba to aid their recovery, with 300 arriving in June 1990 and more in October 1990. Cuba had also sent more medical help to the Soviet Union in the aftermath of the explosion on a gas pipeline at Bashkiria in June 1989 (123).

In January 1989, Fernando Vecino Alegret, the Minister for Superior Education and a member of the PCC central committee, was interviewed by America Latina. In this interview he thanked the Soviet Union for all its help in education since 1959 and added that at that moment 8,000 Cubans were studying in 55 Soviet cities (124). On 7 April 1989, Granma reported that the first geographical 1:250,000 map of the island had been produced with Soviet assistance and, in August 1990, that Cuban and Soviet scientists

were collaborating on research on tropical storms around Cuba. A Soviet AN-12 research plane aided this project (125).

This rosy picture was partly discoloured, however, when Carlos Rafael Rodriguez travelled to Moscow, in May 1989, and met Katushev. On this meeting Rodriguez stated:

...the changes in co-operation agreements are a logical result of the Soviet perestroika and the Cuban process of rectification of errors and negative tendencies (126).

In his interview Vecino partly qualified his praise for Soviet assistance in education. He stated that the internal situation that the Soviet Union faced at this time would adversely affect the collaboration between the two countries in this field (127). A great number of articles written at this time on joint collaboration are, as illustrated, of a very positive nature. This would be expected since Soviet assistance continued to be absolutely vital to Cuba. The reporting of Cuban medical aid to the Soviet Union was merely the Cuban government, illustrating to their own population, the importance of their aid to the Soviet Union. The Cuban government was aware, however, that this situation was undergoing change and would continue to do so due to the situation within the Soviet Union.

In 1989 and 1990, "new thinking" in Soviet foreign policy started to produce tangible results. What was the Cuban perception of Soviet foreign policy during this two-year period? In his speech to mark the 30th anniversary of the victory of the Cuban Revolution, Fidel commented on Gorbachev's visit to the United Nations (UN) in December 1988. He stated

For us it is of great historic and strategic importance that Comrade Gorbachev spoke at the UN upholding these Third World banners and endorsing the goals for which we have been struggling over many years. We say the debts should be cancelled; Comrade Gorbachev spoke of a 100-year moratorium (128).

During Gorbachev's visit to Cuba, Bohemia praised the important role Gorbachev was playing in trying to rid the world of nuclear weapons and in his speech to the National Assembly of People's Power, on 5 April 1989, Fidel praised Gorbachev's foreign policy (129). On the question of nuclear weapons reduction, Fidel said that Gorbachev was the first person to attempt this since the creation of these weapons and said:

...we must recognise the tremendous personal merit of Comrade Gorbachev in this battle, with his intelligent, daring and courageous policy which has overcome tremendous obstacles. I think that for this effort the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Comrade Gorbachev deserve the recognition of humanity (130).

Carlos Lage, the Cuban representative at the celebrations for the Russian Revolution in November 1990, gave a speech, while in Moscow, which was broadcast on Soviet television, stating that the Cuban government supported the Soviet position regarding the uncertain situation around the Persian Gulf (131).

In 1989, Revista de Estudios Europeos published a special extra edition of this periodical between June and September. In this edition, the Cuban academic Eloy Ortega published an article on the effects that perestroika was having on Latin America. She wrote that since Gorbachev had come to power, the Soviet Union had taken a much greater interest in trading with Latin America, but, although this was the case, Moscow was only really interested in the "big three" economies of Argentina, Brazil and Mexico (132). She went on to write that "New Thinking" in Soviet foreign policy had reduced the difference between socialism and capitalism throughout the world and that the Soviet elite had started to attack former Soviet policies and particularly those of Brezhnev's time (133). On Moscow's Third World policy she wrote:

The reconstruction of the external economic relations of the USSR and the planned revision of mechanisms of aid to Third World countries is the function of the necessity to concentrate on internal perestroika (134).

At the beginning of 1990, Juan Valdes Paz, the head of the Cuban government funded Centro de Estudios sobre America (CEA) in Havana, wrote an article in Cuadernos de Nuestra America whose subject was the effect of perestroika on the Third World. This article was even more scathing about the effects of perestroika and he wrote that even the Soviet Union's place as a superpower was now being questioned as a result of it (135). He continued that the very existence of international socialism was under threat. The effect of this was that it was causing problems for the Third World because as the Soviet Union's power decreased so capitalism's power increased. He

wrote that only the enemies of socialism were gaining from perestroika (136). He concluded

The process of reform embarked upon in the socialist camp is against the ideological battle vis a vis international capitalism and will leave defeated the forces of anti imperialists and anti capitalists in the underdeveloped world (137).

The Cuban perception of Soviet foreign policy in 1989 and 1990 was mixed. Although they applauded certain aspects: the Soviet position over the troubles in the Persian Gulf; its statements on Third World debt and particularly its attempts to reduce nuclear weapons; Havana was concerned about the effects that perestroika was having for the Third World. It appeared to Havana, that the Soviet Union's position in the world was diminishing which resulted in the power of the capitalist countries increasing. This was particularly worrying turn of events for Cuba due to its geographical proximity to the US.

At the start of 1989, the CMEA celebrated the 40th anniversary of its creation and on anniversary, Fidel thanked the organization for all the help that Cuba had received from it since Cuba gained membership to it in 1972 (138). The following year a CMEA meeting was held in Sofia that Carlos Rafael Rodriguez attended. In his speech to this meeting Rodriguez stated that Cuba realised that changes to the CMEA were going to take place as a consequence of the "velvet revolution" having taken place in Eastern Europe. He also pointedly listed all the social achievements that Cuba had

made since 1959 and added that Cuba would not be renouncing its Marxist-Leninist heritage. The same heritage as that of the other CMEA states (139).

Later in 1989, Revista de Estudios Europeos published articles by two researchers at the Centro Estudios Europeos in Havana, Jose Peraza Chapeau and Ivan Ruano Barreras. The content of these two articles was the CMEA and the changes to it since the meeting in Sofia in January 1990. Their tone was very negative. Peraza stated that the alterations to the organization would mean that the CMEA was a totally different organization from that which had been originally been created and, in reality, would be a new one. He later wrote that these changes were the idea of the European members, would only benefit them and would hurt the non-European members who were against them (140). Ruano, however, admitted that problems had existed in the organization but commented that, due to the nature of the organization, economically the countries resembled each other and this had resulted in the worst aspects of each country's economy being transported to the other members. As a result of this, he concluded that change was necessary within the CMEA. He also wrote that the reforms already implemented meant that the countries had to negotiate individually and not through the central organization as before. The result of this and other changes that, pushed through in particular by Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, favoured the European members and not Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam (141).

This caused an abrupt change in the Cuban perception of the CMEA in 1989 and 1990. Change to the organization was inevitable after the turn of events in Eastern Europe, in this period, and this situation would greatly concern Cuba as the vast bulk of its trade and joint collaborations continued to be carried out with the CMEA countries. Any change to this organization would have great consequences for Cuba.

Fidel raised these very problems during his speech, on 26 July 1989 in Camaguey, to mark the anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks. He stated that the whole Third World would face problems, but in particular Cuba due to its economic links, if the socialist community disappeared. He stated that problems existed in both Poland and Hungary and criticised the anti-Lenin feeling which was evident particularly in Poland. He said that it was due to the Soviet Union's Leninist heritage that it had been able to defeat Nazism during the Second World War and it had, after all, been the Soviet Union that had liberated Poland from Nazi Germany at the end of the war. The message of this speech was very clear: Fidel did not approve of the events in Eastern Europe, he still strongly defended Leninism and Cuba was not going to follow the same path as Poland and Hungary (142).

In his speech at the National Assembly of Peoples' Power, in April 1989, when Gorbachev visited the island, Fidel described the processes that were being implemented in the Soviet Union as "hard and complex" (143). Three months later in his speech to mark the celebrations for the anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks Fidel said

It's clear that the Soviet Union, the bulwark of the socialist system, is experiencing difficulties (144).

The problems being experienced by the Soviet Union were made clearer when on 11 September, Granma reported Gorbachev's speech on Soviet television when he admitted that due to perestroika the Soviet Union was undergoing a period of change (145). In April 1990, America Latina printed an interview with Carlos Rafael Rodriguez in

which he stated that Cuba hoped perestroika would be successful. He reasoned that if perestroika succeeded in improving the Soviet economy, it could only benefit Cuba due to the close economic ties between the two countries (146). Rodriguez was more positive, but, by stating that he hoped perestroika would be successful, he too was admitting that this was by no means certain.

One situation that had steadily been becoming graver in the Soviet Union was unrest in the Soviet republics and this continued in 1989 and 1990 were no different. Granma reported on these events throughout 1989. It noted special powers had to be adopted in Nagorny Karabakh to deal with the increasing violence. Izvestia stated the violence in Tblisi, in April, was the result of anti socialist elements in society and, in July, the territorial conflict between Kirgizia and Tadzhikistan continued apace (147). Two days later in his aforementioned speech at Camaguey, Fidel said:

There are difficulties and the tensions between nationalities in the Soviet Union is increasing (148).

Fidel went on to paint a very apocalyptic picture, but also a very accurate one, when he continued:

Because if tomorrow or any other day we receive news of a great civil war in the Soviet Union, or even that the Soviet Union has fallen apart, things we hope will never happen (149).

The following month Granma reported that some people in the Soviet Union felt that finding a solution to the problems in Estonia could be the key to solving those that

existed throughout the whole of the Soviet Union. In December, it carried a similar article, when it reported that creating new borders between some republics could be the solution for much of the violence that had engulfed the Soviet Union (150).

The following year, 1990, Granma's reporting was no different with a great number of articles on the problems and violence that the Soviet Union had to face being printed. A state of emergency had to be imposed in Nagorny Karabakh in January 1990 and later in the same month 89 Cuban students who had been studying in Baku had to be evacuated due to the increasing violence there (151). In June, it reported that 48 people had been killed in fighting in Kirgizia and, in November, that General D. Yazov, the Soviet Defence Minister, was unhappy at the way the republics were being allowed to go their own way (152).

The Cuban state newspaper carried a great number of articles on the troubles in the Soviet Union and Fidel had spoken of these and even stated that the disintegration of the Soviet Union was a possibility but, analysis for the reasons behind these events, had never been printed. In the last quarter of 1990, Revista de Estudios Europeos published an article by Barbara Sarabia Martinez, a researcher at the Cuban government funded Centro de Estudios Europeos in Havana, where an analysis of this situation was at last provided. She wrote that the tensions that had exploded recently in the Soviet Union had been building up for some time. She believed that the various republics were trying to defend their own culture and ethnicity that had been threatened by the republics being made up of various different ethnic groups. She wrote that the Baltic States had a history of injustices at the hands of the Soviet Union stretching back to the time when they had been annexed by Moscow during World War Two (153). She wrote:

The political panorama of the Soviet Union has changed greatly in the last two years. The matter of independence of the republics or the right for autonomy has been the controversial result of perestroika (154).

Being an academic, Martinez, was perhaps freer in what she could write than the State newspaper Granma so was able to suggest the reasons for these internal problems that had arisen in the Soviet Union. She blamed the ethnic makeup of the republics, but laid the real blame for, the explosion of violence and problems, as the side effect of perestroika.

In his 26 July 1989 speech Fidel had also spoken of economic difficulties that faced the Soviet Union at this time. He said

...and we've seen the strike of hundreds of thousands of coal miners in Siberia, in Donetsk and other places (155).

In May 1990, Granma reported that Ryzhkov had stated that salaries in the Soviet Union were falling as a result of the poor economic situation in the country and in September announced a shock 550-day economic programme to move the Soviet Union towards a market economy. In November, Granma reported that Abalkin was unhappy at the economic situation as well as the general one in the Soviet Union and blamed the Soviet government for giving into the people's demands (156). As with problems in the republics, no analysis for the economic situation was given, but as early as his 26 July

1989 speech, Fidel was painting a very bleak picture of the economic situation Cuba was finding itself in.

In March 1990 he announced, in a speech to the Cuban Federation of Women's (FMC) 5th Congress, that a special period in peacetime (this meant that Cuba would have to make economic cutbacks) would be needed if the economic situation did not improve as a result of the situation in the Soviet Union (157). The Cuban state paper and public statements by Fidel gave no analysis for the internal problems facing the Soviet Union at this time, but Cuba was well aware of the consequences, not just for the Soviet Union, but also for itself, if this situation did not improve. It is only when Cuban academic work is consulted that the blame for this situation is placed upon perestroika.

In May/June 1989, the Congress of People's Deputies was held in Moscow. As has earlier been stated, some of the delegates at this conference had started to question the cost of Soviet involvement in Cuba. Granma merely reported the facts on this congress with very little analysis given but it did, however, state that the congress was very important due to the changes and modifications that had been recently been implemented in the Soviet Union. Pointedly it did quote Gorbachev as saying that the CPSU played the vital part in the changes in the Soviet Union and was against the conservative and ultra-left segments of society, who were unhappy with the unfolding events (158). The CPSU was still the dominant factor in Soviet political life but problems were being admitted to and some conservative sectors in the Soviet Union were concerned about the situation within the country. The government in Havana would also have watched this congress with growing trepidation.

The following March, Gorbachev was elected President of the Soviet Union. This would perfectly illustrate to the Cuban government the changes taking place in the

Soviet Union since Gorbachev was the first elected President of the Soviet Union. Four days after his victory of 16 March 1990, Fidel sent him a letter of congratulations in which Fidel praised Gorbachev, but also reminded him of the great responsibility he held for not just the Soviet Union but also the world as a whole (159).

At the start of July 1990 the 28th Congress of the CPSU was held in the Kremlin. The political landscape was very different when this congress opened in comparison with the opening of the previous one four year earlier. Granma alluded to this when it stated:

The 28th Congress presents, between many peculiarities, that this was the first time different tendencies and platforms existed within the party (160).

Throughout the rest of the congress, Granma reported on the various sessions and even stated that Gorbachev had defended the process of perestroika against its critics, but had admitted problems existed in the Soviet Union. His speech to the congress was also reported in Granma. As has already been stated, it made no reference to Cuba directly, but Gorbachev did say that Leninism must be retained in the new party programme that was to be drawn up. During this congress, Yeltsin, who by this time was the leader of the Russian Federation, renounced the CPSU and gave up his membership (161).

Bohemia carried two articles on the congress. The first consisted of a general report, but concentrated on delegates who continued to favour socialism. It did, however, admit that different opinions existed at this congress since a great many

different hypotheses and ideas had been put forward during it (162). The second article stated that the idea which was beginning to come from Moscow suggesting that conservatives had won was too simplistic and, unsurprisingly, it went on to blame the anti-socialist elements in Soviet society for the problems which the country was experiencing (163). As with the Congress of People's Deputies, no Cuban government statement was made about this congress, but it would have been concerned as these events unfolded in Moscow. The Congress illustrated the differing opinions that existed within the Soviet Union as a result of the changing situation there.

In December 1990, the CPSU Party Plenum was held by which time the situation in the Soviet Union had deteriorated even further. Granma reported that Armenia and Lithuania were not even going to participate in the plenum, the delegates wanted Gorbachev to call a state of emergency due to regional conflicts, and some even presented an anti-crisis programme, to help the Soviet government deal with the worsening situation in the country (164).

At this plenum E. Shevardnadze, the Foreign Minister, resigned. The reason he gave for his decision was what he perceived to be the increasing dictatorship in the country. No Cuban government statement on Shevardnadze resignation was forthcoming. This was surprising as the government in Havana had had so many dealings with him over the previous years but Granma did state that Gorbachev had said that Soviet foreign policy would not change due to this resignation. Granma did state that there could be repercussions for the Soviet Union's relationship with the West due to the close ties that Shevardnadze had built up with these countries. The Cuban state paper reported that N. Medvedev, one of the regional deputies, had been sorry that Shevardnadze had resigned but pointedly, also reported, that Colonels N.

Petrushenko and V. Alksnis had been glad since they had disapproved of the changes in foreign policy that he helped instigate (165). Shevardnadze's resignation was an important turn of events for Cuba. Gorbachev may have stated that no change in foreign policy was going to take place due to Sheverdnadze's resignation, but the Cuban government's assessment of this was deafening by its silence.

The campaign of rectification of errors continued during 1989/90 in Cuba. In the first edition of America Latina in 1989, Laureano Leon, President of the National Association of Cuban Economists, stated in an interview that the rectification of errors campaign was purely to solve Cuban problems and had no input from outside agencies (166). In the same month Fidel stated in a speech

And the greatest challenge is that this is a battle to improve socialism without resorting to the mechanisms and style of capitalism without playing at capitalism. That's what we are trying to do in the process of rectification (167).

This speech made it clear that Cuba was going to continue on its own path with its own mechanisms for trying to solve the island's problems and as has already been stated Fidel repeated these sentiments in front of Gorbachev at the National Assembly of People's Power in April 1989 with both Granma and Trabajadores reporting on them (168).

On 26 July 1989, at Camaguey, Fidel not only spoke of the problems in the socialist world but also of the situation within Cuba. He said:

I was thinking about how Che would have felt, he who so often advocated voluntary work and provided so many examples of personal dedication to voluntary work...He gave us his example.

Voluntary work had virtually disappeared, but the rectification process has raised voluntary work to unprecedented heights in the history of the Revolution (169).

Fidel went on in this speech to state that regardless of the situation in the rest of the socialist world, Cuba would continue on its own road and resist the capitalist world (170). Fidel repeated these sentiments in speeches, in November 1989, to mark the 30th anniversary of Camilio Cienfuegos's death and, in March 1990, at the 5th Congress of the FMC. On 28 August 1990 Fidel introduced the "Special Period in Time of Peace" in an attempt to deal with the economic crisis that had engulfed the island. This involved as much oil and energy as possible being conserved by Cubans using, for example, bicycles and horses instead of cars (171). In the afore-mentioned interview in America Latina, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez repeated these ideas when he said that the rectification of errors campaign was for purely Cuban problems and that the island was continuing on its own path (172).

Significantly, in November 1989, the Cuban government banned certain Soviet publications from being circulated on the island. At the start of December, Fidel commented on this:

We could not hesitate to prevent the circulation of certain Soviet publications which have been against the policies of the URSS and socialism. They are for the ideas of imperialism, change and the counterrevolution (173).

Cuba's unhappiness at the unfolding events in the Soviet Union was now being made even more public.

As stated earlier in the chapter, General Arnaldo Ochoa was arrested, faced trial and was eventually executed in June/July 1989 on charges of drug smuggling. This very much appeared to be a political show trial not only since Ochoa was former head of the Cuban army in Angola and one of only five people to be made Hero of the Republic but also because the two Castro brothers took part in the prosecution. This turn of events appeared somewhat strange since there had been few such high profile show trials since the victory of the Cuban Revolution in January 1959. Many in the West believed that the real reason for this was because Ochoa was a possible future contender to Fidel as leader of Cuba as he was extremely popular amongst his former soldiers. Although there was no evidence to support this it did show the differences that did exist amongst the Cuban leadership as Kapcia in The Cuban Revolution in Crisis and Political Change in Cuba: Before and After the Exodus discussed (174).

In the years since 1989 and 1990 has a re-thinking of these events, with the benefit of hindsight, taken place? As has already been stated, General Rafael del Pino defected to the US in this period and in 1990 wrote his memoirs. This is one of the few Cuban memoirs from this time that is in existence. In these, del Pino was very supportive of Gorbachev and what he was trying to achieve in the Soviet Union. He

stated that with these reforms Gorbachev was trying to correct many of injustices that had previously existed in the Soviet Union. He was also supportive of the economic policies that were being introduced in the Soviet Union and wrote that they were necessary, as the Soviet era had ruined the economy, even although the country was massively rich in natural resources (175). Del Pino also stated that the Soviet armed forces were also going into a period of degeneration and pinpointed this commencing when the German, Mathias Rust, managed to land his small plane undetected in Red Square (176). Del Pino's support for Gorbachev and his reforms was not surprising since he had just defected to the US. This showed his unhappiness at events taking place in Cuba, since otherwise, he would never have taken this drastic course of action. Since events in Cuba were very different from those taking place in the Soviet Union his support for them is not surprising. Did other Cubans repeat this?

One area where a re-thinking has not taken place is over the question of the Soviet Union's diminishing power in the world arena at this time. It was felt that the international communist movement was losing its leadership and that had the effect of increasing the power of the US - a very worrying trend for Cuba. This idea was conveyed to me by both Dr R. Fonte, an ideologue to the central committee of the PCC, and Dr H. Marquetti, a researcher at CIEC in Havana, during interviews (177). As Fidel himself had alluded to this sentiment at the actual time, so a re-thinking has not taken place on this subject. Fonte said that during 1989/90 it was possible to see problems arising in the Soviet Union due to perestroika and its consequences (178). Again Fidel had spoken of this during 1989, but Fonte did say that they had been surprised at the turn of events in Eastern Europe at the end of the year. Marquetti stated that criticism of Gorbachev had not been apparent before 1989, but after this, it had become much

more common (179). Again this is not different from what was taking place in Cuba at the actual time.

Although Cuba may not have expected the break-up of the socialist community, they did appear to realise that their relationship with these countries was going to change and they had to be prepared for this change. Marquetti, Dr Julio Diaz Vazquez and Luis Marron, from the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples of the World (ICAP), all stated that decisions were taken at this time to try and earn more hard currency. Cuba hoped to do this by trying to sell more of its pharmaceutical goods on the world market and by encouraging an increase in tourism on the island. By doing this Cuba was not only beginning to open itself up to the outside world but also hoped to thus reduce its dependency on the Soviet Union. As has been stated this had been one of the goals of Cuban foreign policy since the early 1960s and this merely continued the trend. The Cuban government also introduced a food programme in an attempt to make the island become more self-sufficient (180).

An area where a re-thinking has definitely taken place was with Vazquez's statement that the rectification of errors campaign was by this point not achieving the desired results. He said that Gorbachev and the Soviet Union provided Fidel with an excuse as to why the country was doing badly (181). As can be seen, a re-thinking of certain aspects of this time has taken place and this is unquestionably the case regarding the idea that the campaign of rectification of errors had not achieved the desired goals.

The relationship between Moscow and Havana started to undergo changes during 1989 and 1990: illustrated by the new trade agreement for 1991 being for only a one-year period and not the five as had previously been the case. Moscow did not want

an end to the relationship but instead for it to evolve and become more cost efficient. The signing of the Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation while Gorbachev was in Cuba in April 1989 confused things as it was to last for 25 years. Moscow wanted the relationship with Cuba to continue but to undergo radical change. The unofficial Soviet line became more and more radical in these years, with some in the Soviet Union questioning, not only the cost of relations with Cuba, but even their continuation. Cuba, meanwhile, despite the great change in the Soviet Union stated that it was not going to deviate from its own course of action regardless of the events in the Soviet Union. Havana may not have been happy at the course of events in the Soviet Union, but it also could do little to influence them. It simply had to hope the situation did not deteriorate further and could, perhaps, even improve. As the two countries entered 1991, the future of their relationship was much more uncertain than it had been only two years previously.

Endnotes

(1) Pravda 5 April 1989, p.3.

(2) Problems in Nagorny-Karabakh in Pravda 5 July 1989, p.6.

Violence erupting in Fergana Province in Pravda 14 October 1989, p.3.

(3) Pravda 3 December 1989, p.1. Pravda 3 June 1990, pp.5-6.

(4) Izvestia 21 December 1990, p.10. Izvestia 27 November 1989, p.5.

(5) The actual elections took place on 26 February 1990 although they had been announced in 1989. Izvestia 27 February 1990, p.4.

Pravda 21 December 1989, p.5.

- (6) Granma International Review 16 July 1989, p.1.
- (7) General del Pino defected to the US during December 1990.
- (8) Pravda 3 July 1990, pp.2-4.
- (9) Pravda 5 July 1990, p.2.
- (10) Granma 26 July 1989, p.6.
- (11) Sovetskaya Rossiya 27 October 1989, p.5 (FBIS-SOV 2 November 1989, pp.23-24, PM3110141990)
- (12) Moscow in Spanish to Cuba 0130 GMT 24 January 1990 (FBIS-SOV 6 February 1990, pp.41-42, PY2701180490)
- (13) International Affairs January 1990, p.75.
- (14) The Soviet Union received 30% of its sugar from Cuba while Cuba received over 700 articles from the Soviet Union. Granma 8 May 1990, p.4.
- (15) "Enormes potencialidades de la cooperacion" America Latina no8 1990, p.60.
Pravda 20 April 1990, p.6.
- (16) America Latina No8 1990, p.61.
- (17) Pravda 4 November 1990, p.5.
- (18) Moscow in Spanish to Cuba 0100 GMT 29 April 1989 (FBIS-SOV 3 May 1989, pp. 37-38, PA0205130089)
- (19) Pravda 16 February 1990, p.6.
- (20) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), United Nations, Santiago, Chile, 1990, p.321.
- (21) Rodriguez, J.L. "30 Years of Economic Relations" in Cuba Business, Vol 3, No 6, December 1989, p.6.
- (22) Mesa-Lago, C. "The Economic Effects on Cuba of the Downfall of Socialism in

the USSR and Eastern Europe" in Mesa-Lago, C. Cuba After the Cold War, 1993, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, pp.143-147.

For the role that the Soviet Union played in the Cuban sugar industry at this time see:

Pollitt, B.H. & Hagelberg, G.B. The Cuban Sugar Economy in the Soviet Era and After, 1993, CDS Occasional Paper No 11, pp.16-23.

Izvestia 29 March, p.5.

(23) Izvestia 29 March 1990, p.5.

(24) Paris Liberation 4-5 August 1990, p.10 (FBIS-SOV 8 August 1990 pp.34-35, PM0808102490)

(25) Granma 25 January 1989, p.5.

(26) Granma 27 March 1989, p.1.

(27) Granma 28 November 1989, p.3.

(28) Moscow TASS International Service 2126 GMT 17 April 1990 (FBIS-SOV 18 April 1990, p34, LD1804103790)

(29) Moscow TASS 0516 GMT 24 May 1990 (FBIS-SOV 25 May 1990, p36, LD2505084190)

Granma 31 December 1990, p.1.

(30) In this treaty there were 14 articles with 8 of these concentrating on the international situation. Granma 5 April 1989, p.3.

(31) Pravda 11 January 1990, p.6.

(32) Ibid.

(33) Granma 5 January 1989, p.5.

(34) Moscow TASS International Service 0443 GMT 6 October 1989 (FBIS-SOV 6

October 1989, pp.34-35, LD0610085789)

(35) Granma 20 November 1990, p.1.

(36) Granma 14 December 1989, p.1.

(37) Granma 12 May 1990, p.1.

(38) Granma 10 October 1990, p.1.

(39) Granma 17 October 1990, p.6.

(40) Pravda 6 April 1989, p.1.

(41) Pravda 6 April 1989, p.3.

(42) International Affairs January 1990 p.74.

(43) Pravda 6 April 1989, p.1.

(44) Pravda 11 December 1990, p.5.

(45) Granma 29 March 1990, p.6.

"The Jose Marti TV channel is a new form of intervention in the internal affairs and is clearly intended to destabilize its government

Moscow in Spanish to Latin America 0000 GMT 17 September 1989 (FBIS-SOV 19 September 1989, PY1809144489)

Pravda also attacked Jose Marti TV in Pravda 8 April 1990, p.7.

Moscow in Spanish to Latin America 2300 GMT 1 March 1990 (FBIS-SOV 19 March 1990, p.42, PY0603024090)

(46) TASS in English 1143 GMT 4 December 1990 (FBIS-SOV 5 December 1990 pp.32-33, LD0412131190)

(47) General Arnaldo Ochoa was one of Cuba's leading generals. He had served his country in both Nicaragua and been in charge of the Cuban troops in Angola. He was one of only five men to be made Hero of the Republic.

- (48) Izvestia 13 July 1989, p.4.
Pravda 1 July 1989, p.4.
- (49) Izvestia 19 January 1990, p.7.
- (50) Sujostat, A. "Panoramo cubano" in America Latina no1 1990, p.30, p.31 & p.34.
- (51) Kalinin, A. "USSR-Cuba: The Cooperation Is Being Strengthened" in Argumenty i Fakty no13, 1-7 April 1989, pp.4-5.
- (52) Sujostat, A. "Panoramo cubano" in America Latina no1 1989, pp37-38 & p.41.
- (53) Moscow Komsomolskaya Pravda 26 October 1989, p.3 (FBIS-SOV 31 October 1989 p.3, PM2710140189)
- (54) Ibid
- (55) "Relaciones culturales sovietico-cubano. como seran?" in America Latina no2 1990 pp. 53-68.
- (56) Moscow Selskaya Zhizn 1 January 1990, p.3 (FBIS-SOV 12 January 1990, pp.42 –43 90G10256A)
- (57) TASS in English 1039 GMT 29 March 1989 (FBIS-SOV 30 March 1989 p33, LD2903111989)
- (58) Izvestia 6 April 1989, p.5.
- (59) Kalinin, A. "USSR – Cuba: The Co-operation is Being Strengthened" in Argumenty i Fakty, No 13 1-7 April, 1989, p.5.
- (60) Sujostat, A. "Esta es tu casa, Gorbachov" in America Latina no8 1989, pp.4-12.
- (61) Borodayov, V. "Cuba: difficult Path to Socialism" in Argumenty i Fakty No11, 17-23 March 1990, p.4.

- (62) Kortunov, A. "Generosity or Wastefulness?" in Moskovskiye Novosti No49, 3 December 1989.
- (63) Kortunov A. "Azucar que sabe a amargo" in America Latina no4 1990, pp31-32.
- (64) Literaturnaya Gazeta 11 July 1990, p.14.
- (65) Moscow News in English no19, 20-27 May 1990, p.12 (FBIS-SOV 6 June 1990 pp.53-54, PM2305180090)
- (66) Izvestia 14 July 1990, p.5.
- (67) Moscow Rabochaya Tribuna 10 November 1990, p.3.
- (68) Mikoyan, S. "Fidelidad a los ideales" in America Latina no6 1989, pp4-6.
- (69) Sujostat, A. America Latina no8 1989, p.6.
- (70) Sojostat, A. America Latina no1 1990, p.37.
- (71) Pravda 30 July 1990, p.4.
- (72) Sovetskaya Rossiya 27 October 1990, p.5 (FBIS-SOV 2 November 1990 pp.23 –24, PM3110141990)
- (73) Moscow Komsomolskaya Pravda 28 August 1990, p.2 (FBIS-SOV 4 September 1990 pp.44-45, PM3108115990)
- (74) Sujostat, A. America Latina no8 1989, p.11.
- (75) Yakovlev, P. "La perestroika en el centro de la atencion general" in America Latina no9 1989, pp66-68.
- (76) Izvestia 31 July 1989, p.2.
- (77) Moscow Rabochaya Tribuna 10 November 1990 p.3 (FBIS-SOV 21 November 1990 p.30, 91UF0153A)
- (78) Izvestia 24 July 1990, p.1.

- (79) Pravda 9 April 1990, p.5.
- (80) Ibid.
- (81) Moscow Komsomolskaya Pravda 19 September 1990, p.3 (FBIS-SOV 25 September 1990, pp.21-23)
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Chapter 6

Increased Tension and the Soviet Union Implodes

(1991)

During the course of 1991, important events occurred in both the Soviet Union and Cuba that would have permanent repercussions on the relationship between the two countries. The events which took place in the Soviet Union were some of the most dramatic to occur since the Bolsheviks had seized power in November 1917: unrest continued to occur throughout the republics, resulting in more of them declaring independence from Moscow (this included the Ukraine), Boris Yeltsin became the first elected President of Russia in June and in August hard-liners in the Kremlin staged a coup as they were unhappy at the way events in the Soviet Union had unfolded (1). Events continued to unfold at a dramatic rate after this with the CPSU itself being suspended, Gorbachev resigning as the General Secretary of the CPSU and in December the Commonwealth of Independent States was created thus signaling the end of the Soviet Union itself (2).

Important events also occurred in Cuba. These were the staging of the Pan American games in August, that gave the island the opportunity to showcase itself to the continent and, in October, the 4th Congress on the PCC was held in Cuba's second city, Santiago de Cuba (3). These events, but in particular those occurring in the Soviet Union, would obviously have a massive impact on the relationship between Moscow and Havana. Events unfolded at such an alarming rate that by the end of the year not only did Soviet/Cuban relations no longer exist but also neither did the Soviet Union itself.

This chapter will study the relationship between the two countries in the lead up to the disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991. This examination will be conducted in three different stages. The first will scrutinize the official Soviet line towards Cuba at this time. Analyzing Soviet government statements, and official press

releases on Cuba will do this, plus those released due to official visits, by the Soviet elite, to the island or any speeches that this elite might have given. The second section will explore less official aspects of the Soviet line towards Cuba at this time. This will entail examining both Soviet academia's perception of the relationship and also how social/political commentators in the Soviet Union viewed the state of Soviet/Cuban relations in 1991. The second section will finish with an examination of memoirs written by Soviet officials who took part in the relationship between Moscow and Havana in 1991. With the benefit of hindsight, an examination of the events of 1991 will take place to see if there has been a rethinking in the intervening decade.

The last part of this chapter will consist of the Cuban perception of events occurring in the Soviet Union. How did the Cuban government view the disintegration of the Soviet Union? Had the Cuban government made any statements on ideology in the face of the events unfolding in the Soviet Union? Trade between the two countries in this year will also be analysed. These questions will be answered by examining the Cuban press, academic publications, speeches made by the Cuban governing elite and the events that took place at the 4th Congress of the PCC in October 1991.

The Official Soviet Line Towards Cuba

During 1991, I believe, there were six different areas which constituted the official Soviet line towards Cuba. These were (a) joint collaboration between the two countries; (b) trade and economic links between them; (c) the CMEA; (d) the de-ideologization of the relationship between Moscow and Havana which started to take place in 1991; (e) visits by the Soviet elite to Cuba and (f) the Soviet perception of the 4th Congress of the

PCC which was held in Santiago de Cuba in October 1991. Each of these areas will be examined in turn to conclude the official Soviet line towards Cuba in 1991. As was noted in Chapter 5, a trade agreement between the Soviet Union and Cuba for 1991 was signed on 29 December 1990, which was different from any of the earlier. The agreement for 1991 was to last for a period of only one year and not five years as had previously been the case (4). It was still a very important agreement and led to a flurry of articles in the Soviet press in the first few days of 1991. In one of these, an interview was conducted with N. Shishkov, Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, during which he stated

The USSR will also continue to extend technical co-operation for the construction and modernization of various economic structures in Cuba, like the (Juragua) nuclear centre, the Cienfuegos oil refineries, the expansion of the Jose Marti iron and steel factory, the construction of nickel factories and other objectives (5).

As late as the end of October, the Rossia Network on Moscow Radio broadcast the news that Cuban nuclear experts were to receive four months of training at the Kola Atomic Power Station in preparation for the opening of the nuclear power station at Juragua in two years time (6). The signing of the agreement, Shishkov's interview and the training which Cuban experts were going to receive in the Soviet Union all suggest that Moscow was still planning, at least for the short term, the continuation of its relationship with Cuba. If Moscow had not wanted the relationship with Cuba to continue

it could have been expected that Moscow would have avoided signing such an agreement.

Moscow, however, in 1991 appeared to envisage its trade relations with Havana being modernized so that they would more closely resemble those which it had with other countries. The chief of the Cuban Section of the Foreign Ministry, A. Yermokov, said of these relations

New forms of co-operation are envisaged in economic relations, including joint Soviet-Cuban commercial and industrial enterprises (7).

One area in which Moscow was interested in increasing links was in the field of biotechnology. Moscow hoped to use Cuba's experience in this field to obtain large quantities of medical equipment. At the start of 1991, N. Shishkov admitted this change in an interview when he said

Medical industrial products will be a new feature in Cuban exports to the USSR this year. A great variety of medical equipment will be exported (8).

This image of Soviet/Cuban relations is repeated in an interview conducted with the Deputy Foreign Minister, V. Komplektov. He stated that, although he still supported the continuation of relations, a transition period would be required, before changes to the Cuban economy could be completed (9).

The idea that not all was well in this relationship was a recurring theme throughout 1991. The biggest problems that existed were transportation, but even more importantly was payment for these goods. In April Yu. Askasia, a Soviet Cuban expert, stated frankly

...that Cuban-Soviet trade relations are facing some problems. One of the problems is tied to the matter of payment since Soviet enterprises are not interested in exporting their products to Cuba. It is more advantageous for them to obtain foreign currency by exporting their products to other countries (10).

In May, Pravda published an article entitled "Where's The Tobacco" in reference to a letter from a reader, A. Yerokhin, complaining that supplies of Cuban cigarettes were drying up. Pravda said of this

The main problem, on which Soviet and Cuban tobacco producers can in no way reach agreement, is that of price (11).

A. Kachanov, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, also stated in an interview, that problems existed in Soviet/Cuban trade relations, but that Cuba was still an important trade partner for the Soviet Union (12). Yu. Petruliy, First Deputy Director of Soyuznefteksport of the Minister of Foreign Economic Relations, repeated this idea when he said that oil exports to Cuba in 1991 had fallen. He partly qualified this fact, when he said a reduction in Soviet oil exports to Cuba had been planned for

1991 anyway. He then stated that the Soviet Union was continuing to buy products from Cuba including sugar, citrus fruit and nickel (13). N. Poltyshev, a deputy in the Soviet Supreme Soviet, repeated this sentiment when he said of his visit to Cuba

During our stay in the country, we got the impression that Cuba has problems it can solve and that there are problems of Soviet-Cuban cooperation our two countries should address together (14).

Moscow seemed to realise that change to its trading relationship with Havana was required, while at the same time not wanting to end the relationship completely. In June, a senior staff member of the Soviet Foreign Ministry of the Latin American department stated

The full end of Soviet assistance to Cuba is out of the question (15).

He continued that there were legal, economic and humanitarian reasons preventing a complete break in relations with Cuba. This picture was muddled even more by V. Churkin, Minister of Foreign Economic Cooperation, in an interview in August when he stated that the Soviet Union was "doomed" to trade with Cuba due to the close ties that existed between the two countries (16). Moscow seemed to realise that its economic relationship with Cuba could not continue as before and that it must be modernized. This did not mean that Moscow wanted the relationship to end as it believed that trade with Cuba could be modernised and improved, which would benefit both parties.

If Moscow envisaged changes taking place with Cuba, what of the remnants of the Council for Mutual Assistance (CMEA)? Changes to this organization were bound to take place due to the momentous events of 1989 in Eastern Europe. In March, a meeting was held in Moscow to discuss what was going to happen to this organization. It was reported that

The Soviet side is convinced that a new organization for multilateral co-operation -a legal successor to the CMEA - could help reconstruct the fabric of such co-operation. This view is also held by Bulgaria, Vietnam, Cuba, Mongolia and Romania (17).

Moscow foresaw some sort of arrangement with other former CMEA partners being created and it was hoped that the Organization for International Economic Cooperation would be created from the remnants of the CMEA. This was excellent news for Havana, due, not only to the fact that over 80% of its trade had been conducted with the CMEA countries, but also showed that, although Moscow wanted change, it did not want to turn its back on its former trading allies. This would be a very reassuring fact for Havana.

Since coming to power in March 1985, one of Gorbachev's stated goals had been to try and conduct Soviet foreign policy through a much less ideological prism. By doing this, it was hoped that much of the tension, that had been apparent in various Cold War hot spots, could be reduced. Moscow wanted to carry this idea into its relationship with Havana. At the start of September, Izvestia published an interview with

the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, B. Pankin. In this interview, Pankin had been asked about the Soviet Union's relationship with Cuba, Ethiopia and Albania. Pankin replied

We will formulate our policy with respect to these countries from the standpoint of deideologization (18).

On the same day, Gorbachev gave a speech to the Soviet population that was broadcast on Soviet television. During this address Gorbachev touched on Soviet/Cuban relations and the changes that he hoped would take place in them. He said of the relationship

...they are being put on the same footing as those with other countries and are becoming increasingly mutually beneficial (19).

During the following month, V.D. Nikolayenko visited Cuba. This was the first visit by the Soviet elite since Gorbachev had made this statement on Soviet/Cuban relations. During his stay Nikolayenko was interviewed about Gorbachev's statement

In Mr Nikolayenko's words, a peaceful explanation was made, which was strengthened by the USSR's readiness to maintain relations with Cuba, and to continue to build them on a friendly but deideologized basis (20).

Later in the same month, A. Yermakov, chief of the Cuban section of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, was interviewed about the Soviet-Cuban relationship. During this interview he stated

A steady course has been taken to free Soviet-Cuban relations from any ideological influence...In the future we plan to base our relations with Cuba on generally accepted principles among states, maintaining of course the positive aspects of more than 30 years co-operation (21).

These illustrate Moscow's desire to attempt to modernize and deideologize its relationship with Havana and put them on the same sort of footing as Moscow enjoyed with other countries around the world. It also suggested, however, that the continuation of the relationship with Havana was still important to Moscow.

Gorbachev's statement of 11 September 1991, illustrates the way that Moscow wanted its relationship with Havana to precede. During a press conference with US Secretary of State James Baker, Gorbachev announced the withdrawal of the remaining troops from Cuba (22). By doing this, he infuriated the Cuban government, since he had done this without giving prior notice or even consulting them. This statement ended a 30-year period in the relationship between Moscow and Havana, as since the early 1960s there had always been some Soviet troops stationed on the island (23). This seemed to mark the end of Havana's privileged position within the Soviet governing elite in Moscow. Two days after Gorbachev's announcement, Izvestia published an article on this in which it stated

This announcement has been interpreted as evidence of a qualitative change in relations between Moscow and Havana (24).

As has been stated, Havana was very unhappy about this turn of events. On 12 September Izvestia published an article by Ya. Bay that noted Cuba's reaction.

Such events could not help but elicit an instantaneous reaction from Havana. The Reuters' correspondent in Havana reports that Cuba's Communist government has vigorously condemned the Soviet President's statement. This public condemnation, which was released by the Cuban Foreign Minister, reflected a qualitatively new and significant cooler tone in relations between Moscow and Havana (25).

Nikolayenko's already mentioned visit was made in the aftermath of Gorbachev's statement. Although he said that Moscow wanted relations to continue, Izvestia said of this visit

It is hard to remember when a visit to Cuba by a high-ranking delegation has been reported as sketchily and dryly as the consultations held here with the Cuban side by the USSR Deputy Foreign Minister V.D. Nikolayenko (26).

Nikolayenko, himself, said of this visit

The talks were not easy (27).

Gorbachev's statement on this troop withdrawal did, indeed, seem to mark a new stage in Soviet/Cuban relations, but the question that must be asked is, what had prompted Gorbachev to make this statement? Had this been done due to the desire by the Soviet government to continue the trend of deideologizing its foreign policy? This may be the reason (Moscow had stated it wanted to deideologize its relations with Cuba) but Moscow may also have hoped that the announcement would help improve its relationship with the US. A TASS statement on 12 September gives credence to this idea when it stated

The fact is that the presence of a Soviet military contingent on the island acts as a serious obstacle to further developing relations between the Soviet Union and the US, something in which all countries have an objective interest (28).

Earlier in the year Nikolayenko had said of Cuban relations with the US

The Soviet diplomat characterised the mistrust between Washington and Havana as a remnant of the Cold War (29).

In an interview with the Mexican paper Excelsior, Gorbachev himself commented on the state of relations between Washington and Havana. He said the present state of relations was

anachronistic and dates back to the times of the cold war (30).

As has been stated, Washington had put pressure on Moscow in the past to end its military presence in Cuba. This coupled with the fact that Moscow desired improved relations with the US and that a thaw in the Cold War was taking place had resulted in the geographic position of Cuba being less important. All these reasons may well have led to Gorbachev's statement of, 11 September, but there were even more reasons for it. Gorbachev had already stated that he wanted the relationship with Havana to be less based upon ideology than had previously been the case, this, coupled with the fact that, after the attempted August coup, Cuba's status within the Soviet elite fell dramatically.

Gorbachev's statement of 11 September 1991 did not mean that Moscow was going to cut Havana loose. This idea, that Moscow wanted the relationship to change, but not disintegrate, is further added to by the statements it had made about the US naval base in Cuba at Guantanamo Bay. In the aftermath of Gorbachev's announcement, Cuba had demanded that the US too should end their presence on Cuban soil by withdrawing from this base. While Nikoyenko was in Cuba it was reported

The Soviet deputy Foreign Minister called the Cuban demand for the liquidation of the American military base at Guantanamo just. In the present situation, however, it would be unrealistic to co-ordinate the removal of Soviet training brigade with the liquidation of the American military base (31).

If Moscow had wanted the troop removal to signal the end of its relations with Havana it would be expected that such a statement would not have been made, since the US naval base at Guantanamo Bay would have no longer been a concern or of interest to Moscow.

In early September, further evidence of dramatic changes to Soviet/Cuban relations were shown by the visit of Jorge Mas Canosa, head of the Cuban-American Fund, to Moscow. US Congressman Larry Smith accompanied him (32). This was the first time that a Cuban-American or Cuban opposition leader had ever been in the Soviet Union. Mas Canosa had hoped to meet Gorbachev, but he did meet both Yeltsin and Pankin while in Moscow (33). If this was not a remarkable enough event in its own right, it seemed to be crass timing on the behalf of the Soviet Union, since it took place so close to Gorbachev's statement on the troop withdrawal from Cuba. This visit appeared strange, since Moscow had always attacked Radio Marti broadcasts to Cuba from the US but they were funded by Mas Canosa's organization. Earlier in 1991 Moscow had also attacked the very people whom Mas Canosa represented in the US (34).

In May 1991 a report on Moscow All-Union Mayak Network stated that the TASS office in Cuba was to close the following week, Komsomolskaya Pravda had already closed and that Latinskaya Amerika was preparing to close. Reporting on Cuba now seemed to be of less importance than had previously been the case as if it had not these closures would not have taken place. Other problems were evident when it was reported that Cuban authorities were making things as difficult as possible for Soviet journalists. They now needed to gain permission from the Interior Ministry before

conducting interviews, but this had never had to be sought before. The situation was so bad that the report stated

After all, 30 years ago, when the revolution was accomplished, Cuba was named the island of freedom, and that is what journalists accredited in Havana do not have enough of (35).

Although strains and problems started to appear in the relationship between Moscow and Havana during 1991, in many areas very little appeared to change. Throughout 1991, top echelons of the Soviet ruling elite kept visiting the island, just as they had done during the previous 30 years of the relationship (36). Protocol appeared to be honoured with these visits, especially in the first few months, but this began to change towards the end of the year. As has been stated, Nikolayenko visited Cuba in the aftermath of Gorbachev's statement, of 11 September, on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Cuba. Nikolayenko, himself, admitted that this visit had been difficult (37). V. Ustinov, Moscow's roving ambassador, described his visit in November as

...normal negotiating process, although it was not without its problems (38).

His stay proved unsuccessful, since no agreement had been reached on the timing for the withdrawal of the Soviet troops from Cuba. This is not surprising, since the Cuban side were so against the idea of the Soviet troop withdrawal.

Throughout 1991 other areas of the relationship appeared to be carrying on as normal. Children, from areas that had been affected by the Chernobyl disaster, kept arriving in Cuba for a period of convalescence during this year. Granma had many reports on these children's visits and the efforts that the Cubans were making to help them (39). The complaints that had started to appear in the Soviet Union, on this matter, now completely disappeared. Krasnaya Zvezda published an article entitled "What We Saw In Cuba", which praised the Cuban efforts in helping these children and, in June, Pravda published a message of thanks from O.S. Shenin, a member of the politburo of the CPSU, to Cuba for all their help with these children (40).

In October, the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) was held in Santiago de Cuba. This was obviously a very important event in Cuba but what was the official line from Moscow on this event? The most noticeable thing about this event was the very limited coverage it received in the Soviet press. This was not helped by the unusual fact that there was no Soviet official at this congress. The Soviet Union had been represented at the three previous congresses (41). This was, perhaps, not as surprising as it would at first appear since the Fourth Congress of the PCC was a closed congress and there was no foreign representatives present at it. What was unusual about this congress, and did show tensions in the relationship between Moscow and Havana, was that the Soviet Union did not even send greetings to the congress.

From examining this official Soviet line towards Cuba in 1991, it can be concluded that changes were taking place in this relationship. Moscow appeared to want relations to change and become less ideological. It seemed that Moscow wanted the relationship with Cuba to resemble its relations with other countries more closely. During 1991, Havana also lost its privileged position amongst the governing elite in

Moscow. Although this was the case, Moscow did not want the relationship to be terminated, but to undergo dramatic change instead. Before this could take place, events in the Soviet Union simply ran out of control, which resulted in its collapse and thus the end the 30-year relationship.

The Unofficial Soviet Line Towards Cuba

During 1991, Soviet academics and social/political commentators wrote about five different aspects of the Soviet Union's relationship with Cuba. These were: (a) their perception of Washington's increased pressure on Moscow in regards to its relations with Havana and the general treatment of Cuba by the US; (b) Cuba's reaction to the August coup in the Soviet Union; (c) Moscow's policy towards Havana at this time; (d) Cuban foreign policy; (e) the reporting on Cuban matters within the Soviet Union but in particular the 4th Congress of the PCC held in October 1991 in Cuba's second city, Santiago de Cuba. Each of these areas will be analysed in turn to assess, the unofficial Soviet line towards Cuba in 1991. Once this has been done, an examination of the memoirs of Soviet participants in the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba will be conducted to see if a re-thinking, with the benefit of hindsight, of these events has taken place in the years since they took place.

In June, Izvestia published an article entitled "When Three's A Crowd" written by its correspondent A. Kamorin. In this article he was scathing of Washington's involvement in Soviet/Cuban relations. He claimed that, at the meeting between Bush and Gorbachev held in Malta, Bush said that Soviet aid to Cuba was "the final obstacle to a radical improvement of American-Soviet relations". Kamorin also stated that, the

Soviet Union would never have become so involved in Cuba in the previous 30 years if it were not for the US blockade of Cuba (42). He wrote of Washington's pressure on Moscow over Cuba

But when someone tries to decide for us just whom we should and shouldn't trade with, that's going too far. The 30-year economic relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba does not threaten Washington's interests in any way (43).

In International Affairs K. Khachaturov, a history professor who was Chairman of the Russian Commission on Cooperation with Latin America wrote an article called " Latin America and Us" (44). In this article he firmly attacked Moscow over its policy towards Havana, due to the presence of Washington in this triangle. He suggested that Moscow's recent policies towards Havana had been affected by Moscow's desire to improve its relations with Washington. On the question of American accusations of human rights abuses in Cuba, he defended the Caribbean island and stated that much worse violations had occurred in the former Soviet republics (45).

A further topic was general US policy towards Havana since January 1959. In November, Pravda printed "Depriving of Oxygen" by P. Bogomolov, its political correspondent. In this he stated that the US was trying to increase pressure on Cuba, as it was trying to make changes and open up to the outside world.

Unquestionably, the real conditions of life for ordinary Cubans and observation of their civil rights is far from ideal, like much

else in Cuba. But all this in no way justifies Washington's fervent effort, hardly compatible with the status of a great power, to "squeeze" its opponents at all costs, condemning it to hunger, suffering, and social upheavals (46).

In May, Izvestia published articles on consecutive days by A. Kamorin. The nature of these articles was the continuing tension between Washington and Havana in what he perceived as a problem from another time. He criticised the US for its actions against Cuba and its aims when he stated

The years have gone by, and today everything in the world has changed. The leaders of the USSR and the US have solemnly buried the cold war. Regional conflicts that just yesterday seemed all but perpetual are steadily moving towards resolution, albeit not bloodlessly but for Cuba and the US, the cold war continues. Moreover, the sides implacability is perceptibly increasing. Washington, obviously expecting events like those in Eastern Europe to occur on the islands, prefers to exert all-round pressure on Cuba and refuses to have any contacts whatsoever with Fidel Castro (47).

He stated that the Soviet Union was trying to help solve this problem by trying to act as a mediator between the two sides, but also stated, in both articles, that Cuba was not blameless in this situation either. He wrote

But for Cuba and the US the cold war goes on, and moreover the sides are getting perceptibly more intransigent...Soviet diplomacy is attempting to have some sort of influence on the development of events by fulfilling the role of 'shuttle diplomacy' between the conflicting sides (48).

Soviet academics and social/political commentators in 1991 were very orthodox in their writings about these two subjects, the increase of US pressure US on the Soviet Union to alter its relations with Cuba and also about its general behaviour towards the Caribbean island. Both of these were vehemently criticised.

Izvestia, on 2 September, published Kamorin's article "How to Live Without Ideological Brothers' Support" in which he dealt with Cuba's reaction to the August coup in Moscow. In this he wrote that Cuba had declared it was not going to deviate from its socialist path, regardless of what happened in the Soviet Union. This Cuban sentiment was nothing new, since this had been the official line from Havana for some time, but what was different was how Kamorin described the immediate Cuban reaction to the coup:

Let us remind readers that at the beginning of last week the republic's government published a statement that took up a strictly neutral position in relation to the activities of the State Committee for the State of Emergency, calling on Cubans and the world community to allow Soviet people to resolve

for themselves the profound crisis in which they find themselves (49).

Kamorin was critical of Havana's slow reaction to events in Moscow in August 1991 but in October, at the opening of the Fourth Congress of the PCC, V. Kulikov, its correspondent, was even more forthright in his criticism of Havana over the August coup. He suggested that the real reason for the delay at the start of this event was, not due to preparations for the Pan American games, as Havana had stated, but the Cuban government wanted to see how events would turn out in Moscow. He even suggested that events at the congress might have been different if the coup had been successful, and he believed that Cuba almost got what it wanted in the Soviet Union, with the attempted coup (50).

At the beginning of September, Kamorin wrote a scathing article on Cuba that was published by Komsomolskaya Pravda. On the August coup he wrote

After all, in the junta were the most influential pro-Havana lobbyists of the recent Soviet leadership (51).

This was an understandable sentiment since the junta had consisted of, among others, Baklanov, who had been in Cuba in 1990, Kryuchkov, who had made an unofficial visit in 1991, Katushev, who was a former Soviet ambassador to Cuba, and Moiseyev and Yazov, who had links with Cuba dating back to the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis. In September, Izvestia carried an interview with Francisco Hernandez, the President of the Cuban-American Foundation. This appeared strange as Hernandez was in opposition to

the Cuban regime but he had sided with some of the political/social commentators in the Soviet Union. He said that Cuba would be happy with the putsch that had taken place in the Soviet Union (52).

Cuba's reaction to the August coup was not the only reason why Soviet academia or political/social commentators attacked Cuba. In March Argumenty i Fakty published an article "Cuba, Si, Aid, No" by Ye. Gorovaya, which was particularly abrasive on Moscow's continued relationship with Havana. Gorovaya stated that Cuba's strategic importance for the Soviet Union had fallen significantly due to the decrease in tension between Moscow and Washington. She believed that due to the Soviet Union's need for its continued relationship with Cuba, had also fallen. She also said that by 1991 Moscow could be owed the colossal sum of \$30b by Cuba (53). In October, in International Affairs A. Kiva, a historian who was the head of a section of USSR Institute of Oriental Studies, repeated this sentiment: Cuba's strategic importance had fallen in "The Third World's Illusions and Realities". He stated that he believed Moscow had wasted much money on "socialist-orientated development" in the Third World and on Cuba, in particular, he wrote

Why did we rob our own people and shower it on Cuba
while that nation was investing tremendous resources into
fuming social conflicts in almost every continent (54)?

In the preceding years, a common topic in this unofficial Soviet line towards Cuba had been that Moscow's treatment of Havana had been conducted in an incorrect manner. This phenomenon had been apparent from early in the Gorbachev era. This did

continue but on a much smaller scale than in previous years. In the aforementioned article "Latin America and Us" by Khachaturov, the author was very scathing about the way that Gorbachev dealt with the decision to remove Soviet troops from Cuba.

One can understand why in the days of the Caribbean crisis - days that might have sealed the fate of the world - we unilaterally announced the removal of our missiles from Cuba. But why did Gorbachev have to announce the withdrawal of our training brigade, whose strength he had increased several times over, without advance consultations with Cuba ? (55)

In April, Komsomolskaya Pravda printed an article by S. Sereda, a TASS correspondent, under the title "No Oil - Get Pedalling. Following Fidel's Appeal, Cubans Tighten Their Belts and Switch to Bicycles". This article stated the measures that Cubans were having to implement in an effort to deal with the worsening situation in their country (a great increase in the use of bicycles and Havana residents working in the countryside). The reasons for these measures were because

(the Soviet Union) cannot cope with its traditional international aid to Cuba (56).

In September, Latinskaya Amerika published "Cuba: How Distant" by M.A. Belya, one of its contributors. In this she wrote that, as a result of the situation in the Soviet Union and

the collapse of Eastern Europe, Cuba was undergoing its worst economic situation in 30 years through no fault of its own (57).

Various areas of Cuban life were also attacked, with its foreign policy coming in for particular attention, as it had not embraced the ideas of "new thinking" that had become prevalent in Soviet foreign policy. In the aforementioned article by Kulikov in Komsomolskaya Pravda (3 September 1991, p. 5) he did not limit his attack merely to Cuba's reaction to the August coup, but also attacked Cuba's African adventure when he wrote of the

...withdrawal of its troops from three African countries following 15 years of fruitless wars (58).

Kulikov also attacked Cuba's political stance as a whole.

Politically Cuba is drawing increasingly close to the most odious regimes of the Iraqi and Libyan type (59).

Soviet academia and social/political commentators were not purely critical of Cuba and the Soviet Union's relationship with the island. Other commentators continued to defend the "socialist paradise" and the changes that were starting to be implemented there. Pravda printed "Switching Spigots" by P. Bogomolov in October about Fidel's attendance at a meeting with the Mexican, Venezuelan and Colombian Presidents at Cozumel in Mexico. He wrote

After ending its military presence in Angola, Ethiopia and Nicaragua, Havana is now changing its foreign-economic priorities in a dynamic and largely successful manner. So isn't it a little early to write off the Cuban regime ? (60)

Cuba's increasing interaction with the rest of Latin America was further analysed by other social/political commentators during 1991. V. Mironov, a political commentator, in Sovetskaya Rossiya commented that Cuba had gained great respect amongst the countries of the rest of the hemisphere due to the achievements that it had made since the time of the revolution (61). In the aforementioned article in Latinskaya Amerika in September, Belaya said that, as a result of this increase in interaction with the rest of the hemisphere and its attempts to earn hard currency through its pharmaceutical industry and tourism, Cuba was moving towards a more Chinese model of socialism (62).

In this article, Belaya made one further very interesting point, when she suggested that Cubans believed that their system had fewer problems, since it was not "bad" European socialism but "good" Latin American socialism. This "good" socialism even pre-dated the European model, as it dated from the time of Jose Marti. This is a very unusual point, since although differences between the two did exist, it said more, about what the author thought of the state of socialism in Europe, than it did about Cuba (63).

In the years since Gorbachev came to power, great changes had occurred in the way the Soviet press reported on the relationship between Moscow and Havana. Some of it was still positive, but an increasing proportion of it was of a negative nature. With

this more negative reporting, articles also appeared in the Soviet Union that attacked this more negative approach. The more open atmosphere in the Soviet Union was reaching Soviet/Cuban relations as the debate on this increased. In March, Radio Peace and Progress broadcast a programme that said that much of the Soviet press was becoming more anti-Cuban as time passed, but what must be remembered was that Cuba had made all the progress that it had made, in the face of US hostility (64). Sovetskaya Rossiya, in October, carried an article by V. Mironov that was very critical of the way Soviet journalists reported on events in Cuba. As he put it

The same journalists who were previously quick to describe the fruits of Soviet-Cuban co-operation seem to have begun to compete, even giving their Western colleagues a run for their money, in discrediting a country friendly to us (65).

As has been stated, one of the most important events to occur in Cuba in 1991 was the staging of the Fourth Congress of the PCC in October in Santiago de Cuba. A great deal of interest and suspicion arose when the congress was postponed from the first half of the year. The Cuban reason for this was the staging of the PanAmerican games in Cuba in August, but Soviet social/political commentators suggested other possible reasons for this postponement. V. Kulikov suggested, however, that the Cuban elite had wanted to see how the events in Moscow in that month would unfold. A. Kamorin wrote that rumours had abounded in Cuba, that an internal split in the PCC was the reason for the postponement (66). Kamorin wrote of these tensions

Rumours had long been going around Havana that the congress might be closed or, as people here say, 'internal' nature. It turns out that it will be. Unlike the three previous ones, it will not be attended by foreign delegations. Nor will foreign journalists travel to Santiago de Cuba. What is more, special correspondents who might come to the island to cover the forum's work will not be accredited to the congress (67).

In 1991, Soviet academia and social/political commentators showed the trends, which had been apparent for some time in the Soviet Union: some people were highly critical of the Cuban regime and the amount of money and time Moscow had squandered in its dealings with Cuba while others still supported Cuba and were critical of the way Moscow was starting to make changes to its relationship with Havana. The debate in the Soviet Union on Cuba was continuing with some quarters attacking others over what it felt was its harsh treatment of Cuba. One area, that had not changed, was in the criticism of US policy towards Cuba. This, by 1991, was countered by criticism of Cuba also, due to the fact that it was not trying to help its own relationship with the US.

In the last ten years has a re-thinking, with the benefit of hindsight, of these events of 1991 taken place? Examining memoirs of Soviet participants in these events will do this. What is immediately apparent is the lack of memoirs that exist for this time. This is surprising, since great changes were occurring in the relationship with Cuba in this period and the only suggested reason for this shortfall can be because of the events taking place in the Soviet Union superceding the importance of the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba.

Surprisingly, Gorbachev makes no comment in his memoirs on events in 1991 with regard to Cuba, when it could have been expected to find a reference, to the decision, to withdraw the last remaining Soviet troops from Cuba. Pavlov, who had been the head of the Latin American Directorate of the USSR Foreign Ministry, does make various comments on events, however. He states that as a result of the Soviet Union no longer portraying the US as its enemy, the strategic importance of Cuba to the Soviet Union fell. The result of this was that, when relations deteriorated, after Gorbachev's September statement, it was no longer of such importance for Moscow to try and seek reconciliation with Havana (68). Another interesting point that he makes is, that he believes, that the Cuban government hoped the August coup would be a success and, therefore, explains Granma's slow reaction to events in the Soviet Union (69). Leonov and Borodaev, a professor at MGIMO and a postgraduate student at the Latin American Institute in Moscow respectively, comment that relations, after the August coup, were never the same as they had been before (70).

Pavlov paints a very dark picture of the history of relations between the two countries when he wrote that cultural relations between the two countries were never close throughout the 30-year history of their relationship. This he believes was because the differences between the two peoples were simply too great (71). Pavlov, however, does state that Moscow wanted only to change the form of relations and not their substance. He also believes that Gorbachev remained loyal to Cuba until the end of the Soviet Union (72).

By examining these memoirs, very little re-thinking of this time has taken place in the decade since 1991. This is partly due to the lack of memoir sources for 1991 but also, because more is now known about the general events in the Soviet Union of this

year due to the release of documents in the last decade. Although this is the case, very little re-thinking, with the benefit of hindsight, has taken place on the relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba, within the former Soviet governing elite.

The View From Havana

The relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba was to undergo great pressures and change in 1991 due to the tumultuous events that took place in the Soviet Union that year. The Cuban government reaction to these events would be vital for the future of the relationship between the two countries. There were 12 different events for the Cuban government to react to. These were: (a) official visits by the Cuban elite to the Soviet Union; (b) trade between the two countries; (c) joint enterprises; (d) military links; (e) the problems which faced the various Soviet republics at this time; (f) Yeltsin's rise to power in Moscow; (g) the events of the August coup; (h) the internal situation within the CPSU; (i) the CMEA; (j) the visit by leading Cuban-Americans to Moscow; (k) the Cuban elite's overall perception of events in the Soviet Union, their reaction to them and (l) the events of the 4th Congress of the PCC in October 1991. Each of these areas will be examined in turn to ascertain Cuba's perception of its relationship with the Soviet Union by the end of 1991. Once this has been done, a further analysis will take place to decide whether a re-thinking, with the benefit of hindsight, of this year, has taken place in Cuba, in the decade since these events took place.

In many ways the relationship continued as it had been in the years before 1991. Sporting events or contests between the two countries continued up until the end

of the year (73). 1991 was also no different from previous years when visits by Cuban officials to the Soviet Union are examined. These visits took place throughout the year starting as early as the seventh day of 1991, when Ernesto Melendez, Minister-President of the Special Committee for Economic Collaboration, was in the Soviet Union for the 46th meeting of the CMEA (74). During the following month, Juan Escalona, President of the National Assembly of People's Power, visited the Soviet Union for a number of days. While there, he had meetings with A. Iukinov, A. Dzasokhov, G. Yanaev and V. Falin. In the last meeting the friendship between the two countries was reaffirmed (75). In June, the head of Political Direction for the Cuban Army (FAR), Colonel Rolando Alfonso Borges, visited the Soviet Union to learn about the political-education processes that were taking place in the Soviet army (76). While Borges was in the Soviet Union, Carlos Aldana, secretary of the PCC, was also on an official visit there. Aldana's visit lasted a week, and during this time, he met members of the top echelons of the Soviet governing elite: V. Nikolaienko, I. Burioi, G. Mornedov, F. Tabeev, I. Melnikov, A. Bessmertnykh (the Foreign Minister) and Gorbachev himself (77).

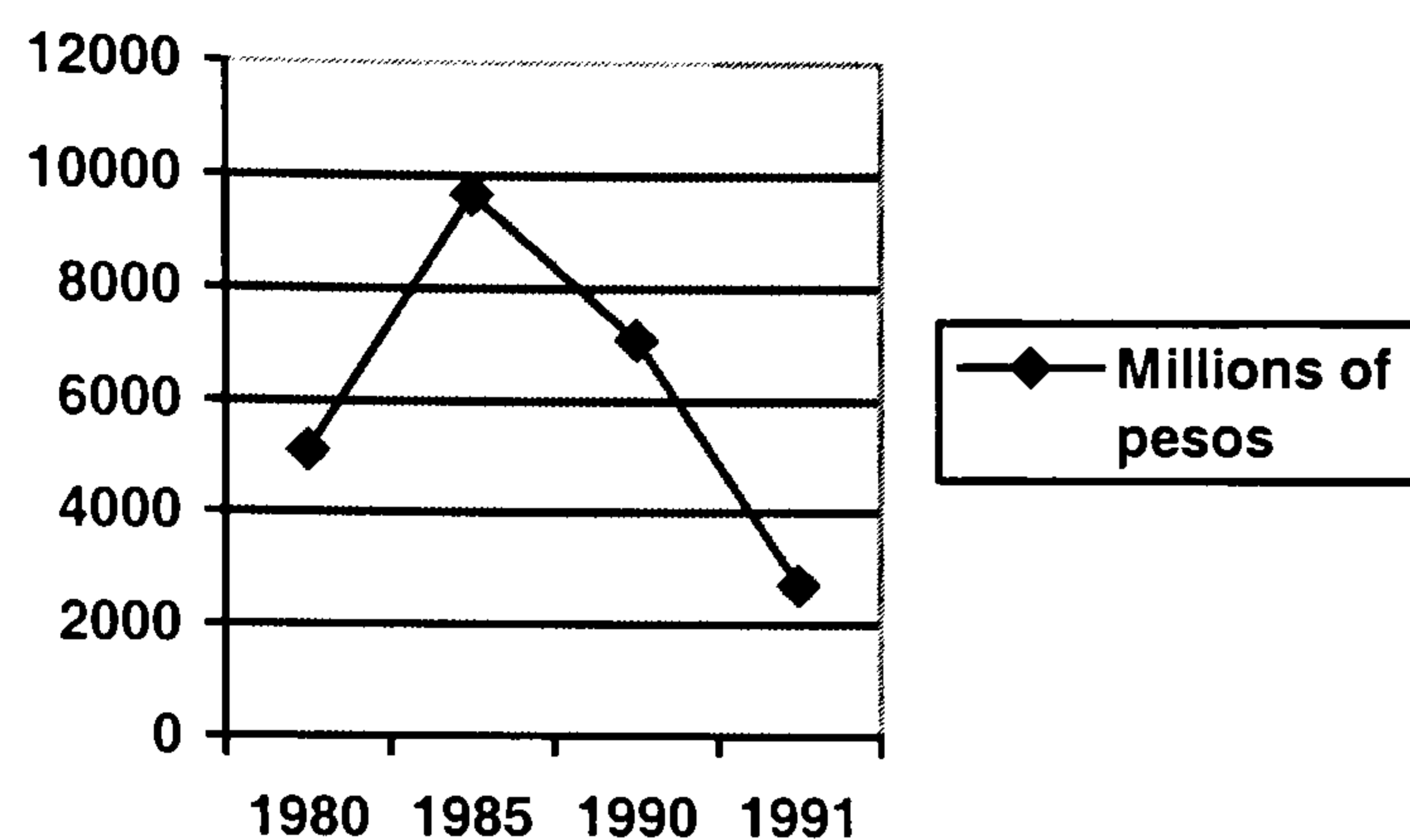
As events in the Soviet Union unfolded at high speed, how did they affect the relationship between Moscow and Havana? How did Cuba react and perceive these events? Trade between the two countries had started to change, especially in 1990, but did this continue in 1991? The 1990 agreement had stated that trade was going to be carried out at world market prices. The result was that Soviet companies no longer wanted to trade with their traditional Cuban partners but instead with other companies and countries as they could gain higher prices with these new customers compared to their former Cuban ones. This, obviously, had adversely affected Cuba (78).

At the 4th Congress of the PCC, in October 1991, a large section of Fidel's speech was devoted to the problems that had occurred in trade with the Soviet Union. He started by thanking the Soviet Union for its 30-year friendship, but since 1989 problems had started to appear. On these he said

It isn't that the economic ties between the Soviet Union and Cuba have been destroyed, it is simply that, right now, nobody can guarantee that the Soviet Union will continue to exist as a great multinational country, for its components may fall apart (79).

Shipments of grain and wheat that were supposed to start arriving at beginning of the year had only started to arrive in Cuba at the end of May. In some cases deliveries of a great many foodstuffs had not materialised at all by 31 May (80). These shortfalls were not concentrated merely on foodstuffs with many other goods also being affected but, peculiarly, fuel deliveries had not been affected with the Soviet Union meeting its fuel commitments in full (81). By 1991 the Soviet Union was having great difficulty in acquiring enough ships to meet the required number of deliveries to Cuba (82).

Figure 6.1 Soviet Trade with Cuba



Data analysed from Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) 1991, p.135.

The problems in trade are perfectly illustrated by the above graph with its dramatic fall from its peak in 1985. Again, if trade in 1991 is compared to the first five-year plan in 1965 this becomes even more apparent. If 1965 is given the base figure of 100 then 1991 has a figure of 343. Trade in 1991 compared to 1965 had grown but only by three times. This illustrates how trade in 1991 fell since the figure for 1990 was 1125 and over 1200 for the years 1985 to 1989. Mesa-Lago wrote that trade in 1991 was only 71% of the 1990 level and in Cuba Business, in February 1992, Zimbalist wrote that trade in 1991 was just 30% of the 1988 level. Trade levels in 1991 between the countries fell drastically, not just because of delivery problems but also due to the situation within the Soviet Union (83).

In July, it was reported that Cuban science involved in registering and evaluating the study of active electricity was going to be part of the forthcoming space voyage to the Soviet space station, Mir (84). This continued the links that Cuban and Soviet science had had with each other, since the 1960s, but, in 1991, problems began to appear in joint enterprises. Cuba commented on this, but to a much lesser extent than

the Soviet press. In June, Granma published an article on the construction of the nuclear plant at Juragua that it admitted that the project was well behind schedule. The reasons Granma gave for these delays were the influence of cyclones, tornadoes and the tropical climate: these were very different from the reasons given by the Soviet side (85).

Change continued to occur in trade and joint enterprises between the two countries during 1991, but another area where it was even more noticeable was in the military links between Moscow and Havana. As has been stated, Gorbachev on 11 September 1991, announced the withdrawal of the final Soviet troops from Cuba. Cuba was obviously very unhappy at this announcement. The Soviet press hinted at this, when they had reported that visits by Soviet officials to Cuba, in the aftermath of the announcement had been difficult. Fidel made several comments to foreign journalists on this matter in which he made his position abundantly clear. He told the Mexican paper El Sol that this announcement was made

...without any consultations with Cuba, and neither more nor less than together with the US secretary of state (86).

The manner in which this announcement was made did seem to be very insensitive to Cuba. On the actual decision to remove the troops Fidel said to Spanish journalists

I disagree with the pullout of friendly troops at a time when a Yankee armed force remains at Guatanamo Naval Base against the will of the Cuban people (87).

Fidel may have made his feelings on this clear, but Cuban academia was even more forceful with their opinions about it. Santiago Perez, a researcher at the Centro de Estudios sobre America (CEA) in Havana, believed that Washington was exerting great pressure on Moscow when he wrote

...when Baker was in Moscow (May 1989) he made it clear to the Soviet Union that it must accept - amongst other things - the famous thesis linking its involvement in the Third World and its relations with the US (88).

Perez believed that this merely illustrated Cuba's falling political and geostrategic importance to the Soviet Union, as the Cold War began to thaw from 1989 onwards. He thought that Moscow now perceived Cuba as merely a trading partner. Due to long-standing trade agreements, Cuba was still the most economically viable source of many raw materials for the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union could also benefit from the fact that Cuba had been expanding its biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries since 1989. He also believed that the Soviet Union's superpower status was beginning to wane (89).

As the year 1991 unfolded, the Cuban reaction to the tumultuous events in the Soviet Union would be vital in effecting the relationship between the two countries. Throughout the year, Granma carried a great number of articles on the unrest that was continuing to occur in all parts of the Soviet Union, but with no analysis for the reasons for these events (90). This had been Granma's style for some time. The internal

situation in the Soviet Union continued to deteriorate throughout 1991 with more and more republics declaring independence from Moscow. Fidel had stated, two years previously, that this was a possibility and although this would be a very worrying trend for Cuba, Granma still made no comment on these events. Even, in December 1991, when the Soviet Union was imploding. Havana still made no comment (91).

Granma left the analysis of this problem to Cuban academia. Barabara Sarabia, a researcher at Centro Estudios Europeos in Havana, wrote that these ethnic problems had been building up in the Soviet Union since the 1930s, when Stalin had deported thousands of people to completely different parts of the country. In a later article, she wrote that Moscow's "chauvinism" and "spirit of exclusivism" had also caused ill-feeling in the republics towards the centre (92).

During 1991 Boris Yeltsin's profile in Soviet political life continued to increase. Granma's reporting of this was different from the norm as comments on Yeltsin were made. In February, Granma reported an attack by General Akromeev on Yeltsin, whom he blamed for causing the possible break-up of the Soviet Union. Later in the month, an attack by Gorbachev on Yeltsin was also reported (93). At the end of the following month during the Congress of the Russian Federation, Granma reported on the plan that Yeltsin had unveiled during this congress. Yeltsin stated that he wanted an end to the power of the CPSU, acceleration in the privatization of companies and land and also the creation of a market economy. Granma commented on this:

The principal political opponent of Gorbachev said that the direction of the country should not return to the ways before reconstruction, but to check that this stage is checked, that

the reforms continue which have started in 1985 (94).

After Yeltsin's victory in the elections for President of the Russian Federation in June, Granma published the Pravda headline "What winds now?" (95). Granma's reporting on the lead-up to and immediate aftermath of Yeltsin's victory in the Russian presidential elections is interesting, since it is, on the whole. This was not done not just through its own reports, but also by publishing some of the negative reporting which Yeltsin had been receiving in the Soviet press. Although no official Cuban government statement was made on Yeltsin, the reporting by Granma would suggest that they were unsure of him. The conclusion can therefore be drawn that Cuba would rather Yeltsin had not been victorious in the June presidential elections, since he wanted the reforms which were already taking place there to accelerate.

The attempted coup in August 1991 was one of the most dramatic events to take place in the Soviet Union during that year. On the day the coup took place, 19 August, Granma carried a very short and precise article stating that Yanaev had assumed the position of Acting President of the Soviet Union. Granma merely stated

The declaration stated that due to the ill-health of M. Gorbachev to perform the functions of the President of the Soviet Union all functions of the President of the USSR have been transferred (96).

Two days later, Granma published a Declaration, from the Cuban Government, on the situation unfolding in the Soviet Union. This declaration stated that the Cuban

population had been preoccupied with these events, but on the whole was noncommittal in nature

Although Cuba maintains the line of absolute independence, we have declared our respect for the methods and changes which the Soviet government have adopted (97).

The rest of this declaration merely stated that Cuba had been grateful for the Soviet Union's assistance over the previous 30 years, in the face of US aggression, and that it was the population of the Soviet Union who should decide what would happen in their own country (98). When the coup quickly failed, with the members of the Emergency Committee being arrested, still no analysis for the reasons for the coup's failure was given in Cuba (99).

The Cuban government's reaction to the recent events in the Soviet Union came ten days after its start, with a Granma editorial on 29 August (100). The statement began by praising the Soviet Union for what its achievements. However, it then stated that policies implemented in the Soviet Union at the 27th Congress of the CPSU, in February 1986, started the process of change, which had resulted in the problems that the country was facing at this time. It then repeated the sentiments of Fidel's speech at Camaguey, on 26 July 1989: civil war and even the disintegration of the Soviet Union was possible due to the set of conditions which had appeared there (101). Granma states

In the Soviet Union, politicians favour the process of

privatisation and the acceleration to the market economy, these positions have resulted in the development of these events. A call for good sense, an appeal for pathos for the preservation of the Union and the battle against the 'hunt for the witches' promoted against the sectors most reactionary and primitive against the enemies of socialism. These voices are missing (102).

Later the same editorial partly qualified this attack when it also stated

...the Cuban revolutionaries are much in favour of stability, social progress, the well-being, the Union and peace for all the peoples of the Soviet Union (103).

The Cuban government's reaction to the August coup may have been very measured in its approach, but Cuban academia was much more critical of the events which had taken place in the Soviet Union. Sofia Hernandez, a researcher at Centro de Estudios Europeos in Havana, wrote in December 1991

The intentions of the coup of 19 August 1991 was without doubt the ultimate intention to maintain, at all costs, the integrity of the USSR. But paradoxically, they accelerated the changes which led to the disintegration of the USSR (104).

Sarabia echoed these sentiments, and even stated that the real victor had been Yeltsin. Perez wrote that the result of the August coup had been to end Cuba's special position in the Soviet Union, since it marked the end of the Cuban "lobby" in Moscow (105).

The Cuban government's reaction, at the time of the coup, had been very measured in its approach but this is very understandable since it had to back the correct side. The island had been enduring economic difficulties, since the collapse of its former Eastern European partners in 1989, so it could not afford to make a mistake in its decision. If the Cuban government got this wrong, what would be the outcome for the island? These practical reasons would explain the Cuban government's reaction to these events. However, Cuban academics although under government censorship were freer to write what they thought. Their caustic response gave an insight that showed that the Cuban government was concerned by the result of its "friends" being defeated in August 1991.

In the aftermath of the August coup, the CPSU itself was suspended (106). The Cuban government, again, made no official statement about this. Granma did print an article about Gennadi Ziuganov's reaction, however. By this time he was the leader of the Communist Party of Russia

The suspension of the activities of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) were considered here arbitrary and illegal by Gennady Ziuganov (107).

Problems had been occurring within the CPSU for some time. Ten days before the outbreak of the August coup, Granma commented on the new programme for the

CPSU, which had been implemented. The Cuban government seemed content with this when Granma commented

The new programme consisted of the unique way of socialism with the renewal of the original principles of Marxism-Leninism and included the forms for universal democracy (108).

Havana appeared quite happy with the new programme that the CPSU implemented at the beginning of August but by the end of the month Havana was obviously unhappy and alarmed at the turn of events that had led to the suspension of the CPSU. Sofia Hernandez wrote on this

The CPSU suspended the constitution in favour of a parliament born in the traditions of a bourgeoisie parliament that arrive from the natural peculiarities of a country where the triumph of the revolution and to take part in an absolute system with strong remnants of the style of pre capitalists (109).

These events would only increase the uncertainty in Havana about its future relations with Moscow.

In regards to the CMEA Moscow had stated for some time that it hoped some sort of organization would emerge from its remnants. This would only please and

reassure Havana. In January, Ernesto Melendez was in Moscow for a CMEA meeting and Granma reported that, the particular situations of Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam would have to be taken into account, before any decisions could be made on the new structure of this organization. Great changes may have occurred in Eastern Europe, which would obviously affect the CMEA, but Havana's concerns must have been partly soothed by this meeting. Moscow still wanted some sort of organization to survive from the CMEA, and that would obviously have delighted Havana, but this situation quickly changed, with the CMEA being disbanded in June 1991. This was a catastrophic event for Cuba, but no Cuban government statement was made about this (110).

As has been stated, Cuban exile leaders visited the Soviet Union for the first time in September 1991. It could be assumed that the Cuban government would stage a scathing attack on this, but its comments were deafening by their silence. Again, it was left to Cuban academia to pass comment on the Cuban exiles. Perez stated that it was not just Washington, that was putting pressure on Moscow to terminate its relationship with Havana, but the Cuban-American Foundation was also applying its own pressure on Moscow (111). Granma had not commented on this, since it would not want to offend Moscow at an uncertain time by attacking its visitors, which explains why it was left to Cuban academics to show what Havana really thought. This sentiment was, however, repeated by a Cuban official when Latinskaya Amerika, on 10 October 1991, published an interview with Ramon Sanchez Parod, Deputy Foreign Minister. He also stated that Cuba was concerned with the increased US power after the events in Panama and the Persian Gulf (112).

Did the Cuban government start to make statements on what it perceived as the reasons for the unfolding events in the Soviet Union? As stated during the August coup,

Granma had stated that the changes which had been implemented by the 27th CPSU Congress had been the catalyst for the problems which had started to appear in the Soviet Union since then but did this trend continue? As had been happening for some time, direct attacks on the Soviet Union or its new ideology were not taking place but indirect ones were. Examples of this were when Fidel said, on various occasions that the Cuban Revolution was not going to give up on its Marxist-Leninist heritage. Even one of the resolutions at the 4th Congress of the PCC stated that the party was not going to change its ideology (113). This, in reality, was attacking the changes that were taking place in the Soviet Union, since the authority of Marxism-Leninism was being diminished there. On the 74th anniversary of the Russian Revolution Granma printed an article which praised the achievements of the revolution. It even stated that 66% of the world's population now lived under communism (114). This was, again, an indirect attack on the changes in the Soviet Union since so much praise had been given to its achievements under Marxism-Leninism.

Cuban academia was, again, much more critical of the events in the Soviet Union and the reasons for them. In December, Eloy Ortega Gonzalez, a researcher at the Cuban government funded Centro de Estudios Europeos, wrote

The idea that exists that Gorbachev is a visionary, a man with a political strategy and...is debatable...In his strategy of perestroika, Gorbachev attempted the impossible: combine the vanguard of the Communist Party with multipartyism, the planned economy with the mechanisms of the market (115).

As the year progressed, statements by the Cuban elite started to become more forthright and closer to those of the country's academics. In July, Carlos Aldana was in the Soviet Union and in an interview with Pravda said

We are attentively watching the developing events in the USSR, and frankly we do not always understand their underlying causes, trends, or the motives for the decisions adopted (116).

Towards the end of the year, with the situation in the Soviet Union running out of control, Fidel gave an interview to the Mexican paper El Sol. During this, he described the situation in the Soviet Union as undergoing "chaos and disorganisation" while Cuba still enjoyed "order and discipline". Later Fidel said

I don't deny that they wanted to improve their system, but managed only to destroy it (117).

As has been stated, the 4th Congress of the PCC took place in Santiago de Cuba in October 1991. Rumours had been rife in the Soviet press for the reasons for the delayed opening and what might occur at this congress. Much has already been written on Fidel's opening and closing speeches and the fact that this congress had stated that Cuba was not going to change its ideology. What was also apparent was that, although Cuba did not like what was happening in the Soviet Union, they did not want relations to end. The Resolution on Foreign Policy stated

To the peoples of the Soviet Union, with which we have maintained fraternal relations during three decades, we restate our disposition to continue - in the present circumstances and on the basis of the mutual respect that has always prevailed - relations in all areas and by all possible means (118).

The Cuban government may not have liked the way events had unfolded in the Soviet Union or want relations to end but as in the past their response was very practical. In June, Fidel met a delegation led by A. Krivenko, chairman of the "Prodintorg" association. The purpose of this visit was the subject of trade. What makes this visit interesting was the fact that the delegation came from the Russian Federation, Ukraine, Belorussia and Kazakstan. Individual republics not only sent their own representatives, but they were all awarded the honour of meeting Fidel himself (119). This showed the importance that Cuba attached to this visit. At the end of November, the Cuban trade minister, Riccardo Cabrisas, went to the Soviet Union and visited not just the Russian Federation but also the Baltic states and Kazakstan. INTERFAX said of this visit

The mission is probably a 'free hunt' in which the minister relies on the results of the latest talks to decide where his next stopover will be...Heading the realities, Cuba is now attempting to concentrate on reaching agreements with the former Soviet republics, first of all, on access to energy (120).

In the decade since these events took place, has a re-thinking of them taken place in Cuba? Dr Julio Diaz Vazquez, professor at the Centro de Investigaciones de la Economia Internacional (CIEI) in Havana, stated that people in Cuba were unhappy at the events that took place in Moscow in August 1991. He said that many had hoped that the coup would be successful since this would help preserve the status quo within the Soviet Union and thus benefit Cuba (121). This is an area where a re-thinking has taken place since the events actually taking place, Havana had been extremely careful not to upset either side – thus making sure they backed the victorious one.

In his speech to mark the 26 July anniversary in 1989, Fidel had said that the disintegration of the Soviet Union was a possibility. Although this was the case many in Cuba did not expect this to actually happen. Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, Vice-President of Cuba, stated in an interview in 1992 that he knew the Soviet Union had problems, but he had not expected its collapse (112). Vasquez, Dr H. Marquetti, a researcher at CIEI and Dr R. Fonte, former ideologue to the Central Committee of the PCC all repeated this very sentiment (122). Fidel's 26 July 1989 speech was one of the few times that he had mentioned the possible disintegration of the Soviet Union, but in his speech to the 5th Congress of the PCC in Havana in October 1997 he said

When we met in Santiago de Cuba for the 4th Congress, the socialist bloc had already disappeared; just the Soviet Union was left. While two years earlier we had insinuated that the socialist bloc could disappear and also that the Soviet Union could disappear, on that October 10 I was

convinced that the Soviet Union would also disappear (123).

Although not strictly a re-thinking, this is nonetheless important since it proved that Fidel had foreseen the disintegration of the Soviet Union. This could be partly hindsight, but the fact that he had made the speech at Camaguey over two years before these events and before the collapse of Eastern Europe, would suggest that Fidel had, indeed, been correct about the possible disintegration of the Soviet Union. In 1992, Rodriguez stated that Fidel was the only person to do this but, that, although Fidel had admired the Soviet Union he had been aware of the problems within it, since his university days (124).

This gives rise to the question of why Fidel had mentioned that the disintegration of the Soviet Union was possible, on so few occasions. In 1991, in an interview Fidel openly admitted that he did not like the processes that were being implemented in the Soviet Union, and that the Cuban government had not been more open in its criticism out of a matter of respect for the Soviet government (125). Rodriguez repeated this very fact in 1992 and said that the Cuban government had not wanted to upset the excellent relations that it had enjoyed with Moscow in 1991, by criticising some of their internal policies (126).

Even after 1991, Fidel kept defending Gorbachev and said that he had tried his best to preserve socialism in the Soviet Union and had always done his best to keep relations with Cuba in a healthy state (127). What Fidel did say, however, was

Often, I felt that he was doing things too quickly, that he wanted to solve many problems all at once (128).

Vazquez reiterated this sentiment, when he said that the Soviet Union had tried to introduce the market economy in a shock "500" day period whereas China was still attempting to do this after 20 years: therefore Gorbachev had little chance of achieving this goal? He even suggested that although some of the ideas were good it had been childish to think that they would work (129). A re-thinking has definitely taken place in Cuba in the decade since the collapse of the Soviet Union. With its collapse, the Cuban government was no longer tied by diplomatic constraints. They could be much more open about the events that had taken place in the Soviet Union as they no longer had to worry about it affecting the relationship.

It can be concluded that Cuba did not want relations with the Soviet Union to end, but the relationship underwent massive changes due to the events that took place in the Soviet Union in 1991. During that year the Cuban government was very careful and calculating in its response to these events. For the most part Granma simply published factual articles that did not contain either government comment or analysis for the reasons behind these events. The August coup illustrated this perfectly with no government comment coming until 29 August, when the plotters had all been arrested and Gorbachev was relatively securely back in power.

Although this is the case, it can be concluded that Havana was not happy with the way events were unfolding in the Soviet Union. This can be done since indirect attacks increased as the year progressed and Cuban academics were much more forthright with their views on these events and the personalities involved. The Cuban government may not have liked what was happening but what could they do in this situation? They did not have the influence to alter the events and they simply had to wait and see where they led them: this explains Granma's careful reporting on events.

They may have feared the worst with the reforms that had been implemented, but what other option was open to them? Havana may not have liked the reforms in the Soviet Union and may have even correctly guessed where they would lead, but they certainly did not want relations terminated. Moscow also wanted the relationship to continue but after the August coup the situation changed and became graver for Cuba once its "friends" in Moscow had been removed from power. After August, change accelerated and resulted in the relationship becoming much more commercial, until events in the Soviet Union simply ran out of control. With the Soviet Union imploding at the end of the year the relationship with Cuba merely disintegrated ending their 30-year relations.

Endnotes

(1) The Ukraine declared that it wanted independence on 15 July 1991. Izvestia July 1991, p.1.

Yeltsin won the elections to become President of Russia on 13 June 1991. Izvestia 14 June 1991, p.1.

The coup took place on 19 August 1991. Pravda 20 August 1991, p.1.

(2) The CPSU was suspended on 29 August 1991. Izvestia 30 August 1991, p.2.

Gorbachev resigned as the President of the Soviet Union on 25 December 1991.

Rossiskaya gazeta 26 December 1991, pp.1-2.

The CIS was created on 9 December 1991. Komsomolskaya Pravda 10 December 1991, p.1.

(3) The PanAmerican games started in August 1991. Granma 2 August 1991, p.1.

The Fourth Congress of the PCC opened on 9 October 1991. Granma 9 October,

p.1.

(4) Granma 31 December 1990, p.1.

(5) Moscow in Spanish to Latin America 2300 GMT 2 January 1991 (FBIS-SOV 4 January 1991, p.11, PY0301193091)

(6) Moscow Radio Rossia Network 0700 GMT 31 October 1991 (FBIS-SOV 4 November 1991, p.29, LD0111110891)

(7) Moscow Radio in Spanish to Cuba 0230 GMT 24 October 1991 (FBIS-SOV 29 October 1991, p.20, PY2510231391)

(8) Moscow in Spanish to Latin America 2300 GMT 2 January 1991 (FBIS-SOV 4 January 1991, pp.10-11, PY0301193091)

(9) Moscow in Spanish to Latin America 2300 GMT 2 January 1991 (FBIS-SOV 4 January 1991, p.11, PY0301204091)

(10) Moscow in Spanish to Cuba 0130 GMT 27 April 1991 (FBIS-SOV 30 April 1991, p.17, PY2904005491)

(11) Pravda 18 May 1991, p.5.

(12) Moscow Radio in Spanish to Cuba 0130 GMT 15 June 1991 (FBIS-SOV 17 June 1991, p.30, PY1606200091)

(13) Moscow Radio in Spanish to Cuba 0230 GMT 19 November 1991 (FBIS-SOV 21 November 1991, PY2111001491)

(14) Moscow TASS in English 1137 GMT 4 February 1991 (FBIS-SOV 5 February 1991, p.21, LD0402121491)

(15) Moscow INTERFAX in English 1500 GMT 6 June 1991 (FBIS-SOV 13 June 1991, pp. 21-22, OW1206040091)

(16) Moscow INTERFAX in English 1200 GMT 2 August 1991 (FBIS-SOV 5 August

1991, pp.29-30, OW0508045391)

(17) Pravda 18 March 1991, p.5.

(18) Izvestia 6 September 1991, p.7.

(19) Moscow INTERFAX in English 1720 GMT 6 September 1991 (FBIS-SOV 10 September 1991 p.13, OW0609183891)

(20) Moscow INTERFAX in English 1745 GMT 1 October 1991 (FBIS-SOV 2 October 1991, pp. 26-27, OW0110184991)

(21) Moscow Radio in Spanish to Cuba 0230 GMT 24 October 1991 (FBIS-SOV 29 October 1991, p.20, PY2510231391)

(22) Izvestia 12 September 1991, p.1.

(23) Soviet troops had been in Cuba from the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Their numbers had been reduced in the late 1960s to just over 2000 but there had been a military presence continuously until September 1991.

(24) Izvestia 13 September 1991, p.1.

(25) Izvestia 12 September 1991, p.1.

(26) Izvestia 24 September 1991, p.7.

(27) Ibid.

(28) TASS International Service 1604 GMT 12 September 1991 (FBIS-SOV 12 September 1991, pp.19-20, PM1209092291)

(29) Moscow in Spanish to Latin America 2300 GMT 16 April 1991 (FBIS-SOV 16 April 1991, pp.20-21, PY2004030491)

(30) Havana Radio 1403 GMT 3 July 1991 (FBIS-SOV 5 July 1991, p.38, PA0307170991)

(31) Moscow INTERFAX in English 1745 GMT 1 October 1991 (FBIS-SOV 2 October

- 1991, pp.26-27, OW0110184991)
- (32) Moscow INTERFAX in English 1446 GMT 5 September 1991 (FBIS-SOV 6 September 1991, p.15, OW0509170891)
- (33) Moscow Central Television First Programme Network 2055 GMT 6 September 1991 (FBIS-SOV 10 September 1991, p.13, LD0609223691)
- (34) "The Cuban worms who live in Miami never stopped their campaign against Cuba. Furthermore, Washington organized and orchestrated an anti-Cuban campaign."
Moscow Radio Peace and Progress in Spanish 0200 GMT 20 March 1991 (FBIS-SOV 26 March 1991, pp.23-24, PY2303040291)
- (35) Moscow All-Union Mayak Network 0930 GMT 18 May 1991 (FBIS-SOV 23 May 1991, p.30, LD1805143491)
- (36) There were seven official Soviet visits to Cuba in 1991. Own calculations.
- (37) Izvestia 25 September 1991, p.7.
- (38) Moscow INTERFAX in English 1945 GMT 2 December 1991 (FBIS-SOV 3 December 1991, p.29, OW0212212091)
- (39) A letter of thanks from the Ukraine was published in Granma 21 March 1991, p.1.
6818 children affected by Chernobyl had been in Cuba to convalesce by this time.
Granma 13 October 1991, p.1.
- (40) "The Cubans have turned the young pioneer camp into a vitrual sanatorium. The children live in cottages and not barracks, as alleged in Argumenty i Fakty."
Moscow Krannaya Zvezda 9 January 1991, p.5 (FBIS-SOV 10 January 1991, p.15, PM1001091791)
Pravda 17 June 1991, p.5.
- (41) Suslov had been at the First Congress in 1975, Chernenko had been at the

Second in 1981 and Ligachev had been at the Third in 1986.

(42) Izvestia 15 June 1991, p.4.

(43) Ibid.

(44) Khachaturov, K. "Latin America and Us" in International Affairs (10), 1992, pp.32-39.

(45) Ibid p.37.

(46) Pravda 16 November 1991, p.5.

(47) Izvestia 16 May, 1991, p.6.

(48) Izvestia 17 May, 1991, p.6.

(49) Izvestia 2 September 1991, p.4.

(50) Komsomolskaya Pravda 10 October 1991, p.1 (FBIS-SOV 10 October 1991, p.18, PM1010110791)

(51) Komsomolskaya Pravda 3 September 1991, p.5 (FBIS-SOV 6 September 1991, pp.15 –16, 91UF1123A)

(52) Izvestia 13 September 1991, p.5.

(53) Argumenty i Fakty No12, March 1991, pp.2-3.

(54) Kiva, A. in International Affairs (10), 1991, p.31.

(55) Khachaturov, K. in International Affairs (10), 1992.

(56) Moscow Komsomolskaya Pravda 27 April 1991, p.5 (FBIS-SOV 1 May 1991, p.28, PM3004145191)

(57) Belya, M.A. "Cuba: How Distant?" in Latinskaya Amerika no9 1991, p.9.

(58) Komsomolskaya Pravda 3 September 1991, p.5.

(59) Ibid.

(60) Pravda 24 October 1991, p.4.

- (61) Sovetskaya Rossiya 25 October 1991, p.3 (FBIS-SOV 29 October 1991, pp.20-21)
- (62) Belya, M.A. Latinskaya Amerika No 9 1991, p.9.
- (63) Ibid.
- (64) Moscow Radio Peace and Progress in Spanish 0200 GMT 20 March 1991 (FBIS-SOV 26 March 1991, pp.23-24, PY2303040291)
- (65) Sovetskaya Rossiya 25 October 1991, p.3 (FBIS-SOV 29 October 1991, pp.20-21)
- (66) Moscow Komsomolskaya Pravda 10 October 1991, p.1.
Izvestia 19 September 1991, p.4.
- (67) Ibid.
- (68) Pavlov, Y. Soviet-Cuban Alliance 1959-1991, 1991, Transaction Publishers,
New Brunswick & London, p.250.
- (69) Ibid pp.227-228.
- (70) Leonov, N.C. & Borodaev, B.A. Fidel Kastro Politicheskaya Biografiya, 1999,
Trud, Moscow, pp.397-398.
- (71) Pavlov, Y. Soviet-Cuban Alliance 1959-1991, p.249.
- (72) Ibid pp.193, 230.
- (73) Cuba took part in a boxing competition in the Soviet Union. Granma 24 May 1991,
p.4.
Cuba participated in a chess competition held in the Soviet Union. Granma 5 July
1991, p.6.
Soviet weightlifters were in Cuba for a competition. Granma 14 December 1991,
p.5.
- (74) Granma 7 January 1991, p.7.
- (75) Granma 21 February 1991, p.7.

- (76) Granma 20 June 1991, p.7.
- (77) Granma reported on Aldana's visit to Moscow in Granma 27 June 1991, p.7 & Granma 28 June 1991, p.5. Aldana met Gorbachev on 28 June. Granma 29 June 1991, p.1.
- (78) On 20 December 1991 Granma published an article on the shortfalls which had taken place in trade between the Soviet Union and Cuba in 1991. Granma 20 December 1991, p.1.
- (79) Granma 18 October 1991, p.8.
- (80) Other goods quotas which were not met included rice, dried peas, crude vegetable oil, powdered and condensed milk, butter and canned milk. Granma 18 October 1991, p.8.
- (81) Some caustic soda was delivered but the amount did not meet the levels which had been agreed. Granma 18 October 1991, p.8.
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- (83) Ibid p.140.
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- (84) Granma 6 July 1991, p.8.
- (85) Granma 12 June 1991, p.5.
- (86) TASS in English 2252 GMT 4 December 1991 (FBIS-SOV 5 December 1991, p.19, LD0412233191)

- (87) TASS in English 1459 GMT 25 September 1991 (FBIS-SOV 26 September 1991, p.17, LD2509181591)
- (88) Perez, S. "Cuba en la politica norteamerica hacia la URSS" in Cuadernos de Nuestra America, Volume VIII, No 16, Enero-Junio 1991, pp.26-27.
- (89) Perez, S. "El fin de la URSS y Cuba" in Revista Interamericana Otono/Invierno 1992, Volume XXII, Nos 3-4, p.26.
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- (90) Granma 10 January 1991, p.7. Granma 15 January 1991, p.7 & Granma 25 January 1991, p.7. Granma 11 April 1991, p.8.
- (91) Lithuania declared Soviet control illegal 10 February 1991. Granma 11 February 1991, p.7.
- Moldova declared it wanted to leave the Soviet Union 12 March 1991. Granma 13 March 1991, p.5.
- (92) Martinez, B. "Los Problemas Nacionales En la URSS: Las Republics Eslavas, Moldova y El Asia Sovietica" in Revista de Estudios Europeos, No 17, Enero-Marzo 1991, p.31.
- Martinez, B. "De la Federacion Sovietica A la Comunidad De Estados Independientes: El factor Politico y Nacional" in unpublished Investigaciones, 1997, p.38.
- (93) Granma 8 February 1991, p.7 & Granma 27 February 1991, p.5.
- (94) Granma 30 March 1991, p.8.
- (95) Granma 15 June 1991, p.7.
- (96) Granma 19 August 1991, p.1.

- (97) Granma 21 August 1991, p1.
- (98) Ibid.
- (99) Granma 23 August 1991, p.1.
- (100) Granma 29 August 1991, p.1.
- (101) Ibid.
- (102) Ibid.
- (103) Ibid.
- (104) Gonzalez, E. "La Politica Exterior De Gorbachev: De Las Intenciones A La Realidades" in Revista de Estudios Europeos, No 19, Julio-Diciembre 1991, p.59.
- (105) Martinez, B. in Unpublihed Investigaciones, 1997, p.2.
Perez, S. in Revista Interamericana, Otorno/Invierno 1992, p26.
- (106) Granma 18 September 1991, p.5.
- (107) Ibid.
- (108) Granma 9 August 1991, p.3.
- (109) Marmol, S. "De La Reforma A La Crisis Del Sistema Politico Sovietico" in La Perestroika En Tres Dimensiones: Expediente De Un Fracaso, Investigaciones, 1992, pp.20-21.
- (110) Granma 7 January 1991, p.7 & Izvestia 28 June 1991, p.6.
- (111) Perez, S. in Cuadernos de Nuestra America, Enero-Junio 1991, p.33.
- (112) Latinskaya Amerika, no 10, October 1991, p.39.
- (113) Izvestia 3 July 1991, p.1.
Moscow in Spanish to Latin America 2300 GMT 25 January 1991 (FBIS-SOV 29 January 1991, p.26, PY2601234591)

- (114) Granma 7 November 1991, p.1.
- (115) Gonzalez, E. in Cuadernos de Nuestra America, Volume VII, No 19 Julio-Dieciembre 1991, pp.57-59.
- (116) Pravda 15 July 1991, p.7.
- (117) Moscow TASS in English 1206 GMT 3 December 1991 (FBIS-SOV 4 December 1991, p.12, LD0412051391)
- (118) Granma 23 October 1991, p.6.
- (119) Moscow TASS International Service 2136 GMT 6 June 1991 (FBIS-SOV 11 June 1991, pp.38-39, LD0706101891)
- (120) INTERFAX in English 0743 GMT 25 November 1991 (FBIS-SOV 26 November 1991, p.19, OW2511114891)
- (121) Interview with Dr Julio Diaz Vazquez in London 27 January 2001.
- (122) Deutschmann, D. Cuba, Socialism and the "New World Order" An Interview with Cuban Vice-President Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, 1992, Ocean Press, Melbourne, p.11.
- Dr Rodolfo Fonte, Dr Hichiam Marquetti and Dr Julio Diaz Vazquez all reiterated this to me in various interviews between November 2000 and January 2001.
- (123) Granma Weekly International Review 12 October 1997, p.8.
- (124) Deutschmann, D. Cuba, Socialism and the "New World Order", pp.12, 16.
- (125) Beatriz Pages Rebollar, Fidel Castro Presente y Futuro de Cuba, Editorial Diana, Mexico DF, 1991, pp.12.
- (126) Deutschmann, D. Cuba, Socialism and the "New World Order", p.12.
- (127) Face to Face with Fidel Castro. A Conversation with T. Borge, 1993, Ocean Press, Melbourne, p.25.

Beatriz Pages Rebollar, Fidel Castro Presente y Futuro de Cuba, p.77.

El Nuevo Diario, Managua, 3 June 1992, p.4.

(128) Face to Face with Fidel Castro, p.25.

(129) Dr Vazquez made this statement to me on 27 January 2001 during an interview in London.

Chapter 7

Conclusions

In earlier chapters we saw that the period 1985 to 1991 was one of the most important periods in the 30-year relationship between the Soviet Union and Cuba. The processes of perestroika and glasnost commenced in the Soviet Union, while in Cuba the campaign for rectification of errors was introduced and these had a lasting effect on the relationship between the two countries. These processes, with divergently opposite methods for attempting to obtain their goals, also brought new pressures to the relationship.

Soon after coming to power in March 1985, Gorbachev implemented perestroika and glasnost to counter the situation within the Soviet Union. He also introduced “new thinking” in Soviet foreign policy. Gorbachev’s statement to the 27th CPSU Congress in February 1986 clearly outlined these new policies. Official Soviet policy towards Cuba did not appear to alter as a result of this conference, but only from 1987 and 1988 did the statements from the Soviet government begin to criticize parts of the relationship. These included, attacks on Cuban inefficiency, and Cuba's participation within the CMEA. By 1989 and 1990 criticism had increased and the removal of ideology forced concrete changes to take place within the relationship. Moscow wanted its relations with Cuba to become more mutually beneficial and this was perfectly illustrated by the trade agreement that was eventually signed at the end of December 1990.

Trade between the countries was also affected by this new climate. Trade levels continued to be high even until 1991 despite the fact that they had been falling from their highest point of 1985. In 1991, trade levels fell spectacularly due to a combination of Soviet transport difficulties and also the dramatic internal situation in the Soviet Union. Trade in 1991 was only a fraction of what it had been just one year earlier.

Moscow, during this period did appear to emit mixed signals with regards to its relationship with Havana, and in particular the relationship between Cuba and the United States. Despite the growing pressure from the US on the Soviet Union to alter its relationship with the island Moscow continued to defend Cuba while simultaneously offering to mediate between Cuba and the US in an attempt to reduce the tension that continued to exist between the two countries. Gorbachev's visit to Cuba, in April 1989, also illustrated this phenomenon, as on the surface, Gorbachev appeared to be complimentary about the successes of the Cuban Revolution while at the same time giving a very public reminder to Fidel of the benefits of perestroika and glasnost.

Withstanding the eventual disintegration of the Soviet Union, 1991 was a significant year in relations between Moscow and Havana. Change to the official Soviet line towards Cuba continued to accelerate and problems with delivery of Soviet goods to the island increased. On 11 September 1991, Gorbachev also announced the withdrawal of the remaining Soviet troops from the Caribbean island. Cuba had lost its privileged position within the Soviet government.

The unofficial Soviet line towards Cuba, in this seven-year period, is very interesting as it underwent a great deal of change. Again it was not until 1987 that change commenced with an increase in the number of more critical articles on Cuba and its relationship with the Soviet Union being printed. This criticism quickly spread and by 1990 Cuba was even attacked by members of the Soviet People Deputies. The unofficial line was not exclusively negative, as some social/political commentators remained loyal to Cuba until the Soviet Union itself disintegrated. Some authors even attacked those who had become critical of Cuba and its relationship with the Soviet Union.

When Gorbachev became General Secretary of the CPSU, in March 1985, the Cuban government did not appear to expect Soviet policy towards Cuba to change. Instead they concentrated on their own internal situation, which resulted in the introduction of the campaign of rectification of errors, in April 1986. As changes within the Soviet Union and its foreign policy started to accelerate, in the period 1985 to 1991, Havana on the whole kept to the policy of making little comment on them. It also considered perestroika and glasnost as being solutions purely for Soviet problems and the campaign of rectification of errors was to help the Cuban situation. Any dislike of changes in the Soviet Union were kept to "veiled attacks", such as Fidel publicly backing national liberation movements, in his speech to the 27th CPSU Congress, in February 1986.

This may have been Cuba's policy, in dealing with the changing situation both within the Soviet Union and with its foreign policy, but Cuba was by no means a submissive partner in its relationship with the Soviet Union. 1989 was a pivotal year, since it not only marked Gorbachev's visit to the Caribbean island but also great and significant changes took place throughout the world. During 1989, Fidel made two keynote speeches that addressed some of these problems. In both of these he was critical of events and changes within the Soviet Union and in the second of these speeches, at Camaguey on 26 July 1989, Fidel even predicted that the disintegration of the Soviet Union itself was possible. In 1989, Cuba also commenced efforts to try and reduce some of its dependency on its socialist partners by gaining more hard currency on the world market. It hoped to do this by encouraging tourism and by increasing the sale of its biotechnology products on the world market.

Cuba's silence over the changing situation within the Soviet Union did, however, start to come to an end. This commenced amongst academics in 1990 but accelerated dramatically throughout 1991, especially after the August coup in Moscow that saw the defeat of many of Havana's strongest allies within the Soviet elite. Criticism may have increased, but even by the end of 1991 Fidel, himself, had never openly attacked Gorbachev.

Interestingly, if a study of participants' memoirs in the events from March 1985 to 1991 is conducted a significant re-thinking does not take place. What this study does do, however, is give much more credence to what was said and done at the actual time. Although this is the case with the vast majority of events, we do learn from this study that, the Cuban elite were concerned about the changes which Gorbachev was implementing within the Soviet Union and what effects they might have on the rest of the socialist world. Although this took place early in the period 1985 to 1991, the Cuban government had not voiced these concerns for the simple reason of offending the Soviet Union. Members of the Cuban elite may have been concerned about the changes within the Soviet Union, but it was only Fidel who foresaw that they could actually lead to the disintegration of the Soviet Union itself. We also learn that the problems within the Soviet Union were convenient for Fidel since it helped to mask the disappointing results of the campaign of rectification of errors in Cuba. These two areas are the only ones where a re-thinking has taken place in the decade since the break-up of the Soviet Union and thus the termination of Soviet/Cuban relations.

The Dynamics of the Soviet/Cuban Relationship

As in any relationship various pressures and forces exist that shapes its formation, course and, sometimes, even disintegration. Soviet/Cuban relations were no different in these regards. Importantly the victory of the Cuban Revolution took place at a crucial time in the Cold War. After Stalin's death in March 1953 Soviet foreign policy had undergone dramatic changes that resulted in Moscow taking an increased interest in the Third World and this contributed to the relations between the Soviet Union and the US becoming strained. A combination of these two events and the adventurous and risk taking personality of the Soviet Premier, Nikita Khrushchev, meant therefore it was of little surprise that Moscow quickly showed an interest in events unfolding in Cuba in 1959. The island's geographical proximity and shared history with the US would have further increased its appeal to the Soviet government. In this Cold War setting Cuba would become a prestigious propaganda tool for Moscow if relations between the two countries developed.

In the late 1950s Moscow hoped that increased aid and assistance would result in recipient governments moving politically to the left and thus backing the Soviet Union in the Cold War. During 1959 and 1960 Cuba followed this pattern but in 1961 it started to deviate from this path. In April 1961, the US attempted to overthrow the Cuban government by backing the failed Bay of Pigs invasion and in December 1961 Fidel proclaimed himself, and thus the Cuban Revolution, Marxist-Leninist. These two events increased pressure on Moscow with regard to its relationship with Havana, as it could not afford to "lose" Cuba in this Cold War situation. Fidel realized this and hoped that his

proclamation together with the new common ideology between the two countries would result in increased support from Moscow.

Events in October 1962 only exacerbated this situation for Moscow. The Soviet Union had been prepared to go to the brink of nuclear war over its missiles being placed on the island but the Soviet military had perceived the conclusion of the Cuban Missile Crisis to be an extreme humiliation to the Soviet Union. If Moscow “lost” Cuba would this humiliation have been proved to be worthless? This only increased the internal pressure on the Soviet government to keep close ties with Havana and, as a result, by 1962 levels of aid granted by Moscow to Cuba were already huge. Could Moscow afford to simply write these off? This would not only have cost a large amount of money but also affected Moscow’s standing in the world communist movement as Moscow had already been challenged by Beijing for leadership of this movement and simply could not afford to “lose” Cuba. In the space of four years Moscow had become subjected to these pressures that had not only pushed the two countries together but also made a split between them extremely unlikely.

Cuba tried to take further advantage of this situation as, from its creation, it had supported revolutionary movements firstly in Latin America and then in Africa. It did this to try and assert its independence but also due to its revolutionary desire to support these movements. Havana hoped that an increase in revolutionary activity around the world would help the Cuban Revolution survive as imperialism’s attention would move to these new movements and thus away from Havana. This increased pressure on Moscow with regard to Soviet/Cuban relations particularly in the late 1960s when Cuban foreign policy was particularly radical.

As the 1980s dawned these same pressures and forces were still in existence. Cuba was still an important propaganda tool in the Cold War, that had taken a turn for the worse in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and levels of aid had continued to multiply to such an extent that by the 1980s Cuba was heavily in debt to the Soviet Union. Moscow simply could not admit that its backing of Cuba had been incorrect, as this would mean that these vast levels of aid had been wasted. The two countries still shared a common ideology and Cuba had become an integral part of the world socialist movement. It also had extremely close ties to the Soviet Union and even gained membership of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). By the mid 1980s, the Soviet Union and Cuba also had a shared history of 20 years that further added pressure on Moscow to keep its relations with Havana.

These were the pressures that Gorbachev faced in March 1985, when Gorbachev became General Secretary of the CPSU but he was, however, to become rapidly subjected to new powerful forces. As has been stated, Gorbachev quickly set in motion the processes of perestroika and glasnost and introduced “new thinking” in Soviet foreign policy, which started a battle between reformers and conservatives in the Soviet government. This disquiet spread to many areas of Soviet life and the relationship with Cuba was no different. The powerful “Cuban lobby” that championed Cuba’s position in Moscow resisted change in the relationship, as they wished to see the status quo preserved. This further complicated Gorbachev’s attempts at reform with Cuba.

These changes, but in particular “new thinking” also started to affect relations between Moscow and Washington and this ultimately had great repercussions for Cuba. As ideology was slowly removed from Soviet foreign policy, relations between the two

superpowers became more cordial. Consequently, Cuba's importance to Moscow fell both in terms of propaganda and its geographical position. Thus the Soviet government benefited less from sending aid to Havana and even from the continuation of relations with the island. As the Cold War continued to thaw in the late 1980s and early 1990s Cuba's strategic importance declined.

As the historic benefits of Cuba to the Soviet Union decreased the Soviet government faced increasing internal objection to the continuation of the relationship with Havana. As has been stated the advent of glasnost resulted in criticism within the Soviet Union of Soviet/Cuban relations and in particular the continuing aid to the island. This introduced a new accountability within the Soviet Union and only further increased pressure on Gorbachev and his government to reform relations between the two countries.

The Soviet government also faced growing internal pressures with regard its relationship with Cuba. Most noticeable were the continuing hostility of the US government and the hatred of Fidel's government by the prominent and extremely powerful Cuban/American exile community in Florida. As relations between the US and the Soviet Union improved trade between the two superpowers increased and as the Soviet economy continued to perform poorly in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Although Washington tried to use this situation to force the Soviet Union to sever its links with Havana, Moscow, on the whole, ignored it. Gorbachev, however, had become subjected to further increasing pressure.

Other international pressure also came to bear on Moscow. In 1989 the "velvet revolution" took place in Eastern Europe and this had grave repercussions for the world socialist movement. Cuba also lost its two closest Latin American allies, Nicaragua and

Panama, in the same year while a process of re-democratisation was also sweeping through Latin America at this time. All these processes increased pressure on the relationship between Moscow and Havana as the Cuban government's lack of reform appeared to be contrary to the processes that were unfolding across the world scene. Cuba's unwillingness to follow these processes was highlighted by its refusal to embrace the Soviet reforms. Fidel's two keynote speeches in 1989, Cuba's backing of the Chinese government's actions in Tiananmen Square in June 1989 and the introduction of the "Special Period in Peacetime" in 1990 illustrated this. Thus new pressures were added to the relationship between Moscow and Havana and made Gorbachev's continuing support of the Cuban government increasingly difficult, as the Caribbean island appeared to be going against world opinion. Some even viewed Cuba as an anachronism in the new world arena.

The events that have taken place between Moscow and Havana since 1991 illustrate, to an extent, what Gorbachev hoped to achieve while he was leader of the Soviet Union. In 1992 oil for sugar swap agreements were signed with the newly independent former Soviet republics. The purpose of Putin's trip in December 2000 appeared unclear due to its lack of concrete success. It may, however, have been an attempt to gain preferential access to Cuba's bio-technological industry. If this were the purpose of the trip, it would have mirrored Gorbachev's own desire for the relationship: one in which both sides received material benefits.

Gorbachev faced many pressures to reform the relationship but he never called for them to be terminated. He hoped that they would be modernized and develop so that they would resemble the relations that Moscow had with other countries. This took place for a number of reasons: in 1984 a long term agreement between the two countries had

been signed and Moscow may have felt some sort of duty to Cuba because of it; a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation was signed in April 1989 that may have further increased this feeling of duty; a shared 30 year heritage that, again, may have created a form of loyalty from Moscow towards Cuba but most importantly Gorbachev and Fidel, despite their differences of opinion on how relations should evolve, did share a common ideology, namely Marxism-Leninism. This shared bond explains why Gorbachev never called for an end to the relationship, as it would have been contrary to his beliefs.

On the surface it would appear that the Cuban government did not add greatly to the pressures that Moscow faced over the continuation of Soviet/Cuban relations in the period from 1985 to 1991. Havana did not seem to expect any great change to occur in relations with Moscow by Gorbachev's appointment in March 1985 but once change did become apparent it followed the tactic of saying very little on areas it did not approve of. Havana followed this path for economic reasons and simply hoped that the Soviet Union could find a solution to its problems and resolve them and the relationship could continue, at least in some resemblance of its previous self. Its silence was symbolic of Havana's desire to see a continuation of the relationship as its refusal to follow the reforms that were being implemented in the Soviet Union did in fact lead to some additional pressure on Gorbachev.

While he was General Secretary of the CPSU Gorbachev, faced a great variety of pressures with regards to Soviet/Cuban relations. Many of these were extremely different from those faced by previous Soviet regimes. Some members of the Soviet ruling elite desired the status quo to be maintained but others demanded reform to the relationship. This demand for reform only increased once the reform to relations had commenced but became almost overwhelming once the world stage started to change

so drastically in the late 1980s. In the world arena of the 1990s unreformed Soviet/Cuban relations could have almost belonged to belong to a different era. Although this is the case, relations between the two countries had started to evolve with concrete changes having being made, but at no point did Gorbachev call for an end to the relationship itself, but only for it to be modernized. Soviet/Cuban relations only came to an end when the internal situation of the Soviet Union resulted, as Fidel had said was possible, in it imploding in December 1991. This ended the 30-year relationship between Moscow and Havana.

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Field Work

As a PhD research student in the Department of Politics, I conducted research trips to Havana in November/December 2000 and to London and Oxford on various occasions in the first six months of 2001. To conduct these trips I received grants from the Politics Department postgraduate research fund and a postgraduate research grant from the Society of Latin American Studies (SLAS).

During my trip to Havana I was able to collect a great deal of material from a variety of different sources. The libraries which I used to do this were the ones at the Centro Estudios de Europeos, Centro de Investigaciones de la Economia Internacional (CIEC), Centro de Estudios Sobre America and at the Instituto Superior de Relaciones Internacionales "Raul Roa". I also met various academics, who specialised in my research area, at these institutes who were kind enough to let me conduct interviews with them. Interestingly one of these academics was a Russian who had married a Cuban and had lived on the island for a number of years. This was an excellent opportunity for myself as she had insight into both the Soviet and Cuban sides of my research. Not only was I able to conduct interviews with these academics but they also very kindly furnished me with more material for my thesis. Due to the contacts which I had from Glasgow I was fortunate enough to stay with Dr R. Fonte during my time in Havana. Dr Fonte is a retired ideologue to the Central Committee of the Cuban

Communist Party (PCC) which gave me an excellent opportunity to speak to him about various aspects of my research over the entire period I was in Havana.

As a result of my trip to Cuba I was fortunate enough to be able to interview Dr J.D. Vazquez, head of CIEC, while he was in London for a conference in January 2001. I had been unable to meet him while I was in Cuba as he had been out of the country during my stay. In April 2001 I was also able to meet Luis Marron of the Institute of Friendship with the Peoples of the World (ICAP) while he was in Aberdeen for the Scottish TUC Conference. Again this meeting added to my research.

In the first few months of 2001 I made several important visits to both London and Oxford to obtain material for my research. While in London I utilised the libraries at the Latin American Institute in Tavistock Square, the London School of Economics and the The British Library Newspaper Library at Colindale where I was able to access material which is not held elsewhere in the United Kingdom. In Oxford I conducted an extensive search of relevant material housed in the Bodleian Library. Again, this proved invaluable as I was able to obtain material which is not available elsewhere.

During the time of my studies I have attended various conferences and meetings which have benefited my research. I have attended the SLAS national conference on a number of occasions and also various meetings of the Scottish Cuban Solidarity Campaign which have proved invaluable for my thesis. I have also contributed a number of articles for the ABC-CLIO *Ground Warfare : An International Encyclopedia* published in September 2002.

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