

# Rising Against Cuba Dictator Aborts

By Lillian Kiezel

The general revolutionary strike against Cuban dictator Batista, which was called April 9 by Fidel Castro, leader of the rebel forces, proved abortive. The strike was successful in Santiago de Cuba in Oriente Province where the rebels have been strongest. But it failed in Havana. The general strike was supposed to climax the "all-out war" that Castro declared on April 5 to oust Batista.

In the last several months, the 26th of July Movement, organized by Castro in 1953, has grown and developed. Senator Castro has built a small army of about 2,000. He has gained the support of the student youth movement, which has been on strike for several months, and of sections of the Cuban middle class.

Why did the call for a revolutionary general strike fail? On April 15, the New York Times reported that unrealistic planning, poor coordination and shockingly inadequate communications were mainly responsible. Undoubtedly these factors are very important but they reflect the Castro movement's more serious weaknesses.

## WORKERS DOUBTFUL

The key to the success of a general strike is with the working class. Whether or not the Cuban workers would support Castro remained a big question to the very day of the strike. On April 7, Homer Bigart reported to the N.Y. Times that "A drive through the poorer districts along the waterfront was uneventful. It is in these districts, largely Negro, that Senator Castro has needed much missionary work to convince the laborers that his revolt is not solely a middle-class affair.



Fidel Castro, center, and some of his supporters are shown above in rebel-held territory in the Sierra Maestra mountains of Cuba. In his early thirties, Castro has won the majority of Cuban youth for the struggle against Batista's bloody dictatorship. His program, however, is limited to democratic reforms.

Whether he has the support of these people is by no means certain."

The Cuban workers have certainly everything to gain by a struggle for democratic rights. But Castro's opportunism on the question of program has made the workers suspicious as to whether these rights can be won under his banner.

A couple of years ago Castro's program called for substantial social reforms. As recorded in the Nov. 30 Nation, some of the demands were as follows: nationalization of the electric and telephone trusts, coupled with a return to the public treasury of all taxes owed by

the companies now operating these services, as well as of all illegally excessive income they have garnered through their rates; ownership of their land to be granted to all tenant farmers who occupy less than 170 acres; laborers and employees to be granted 30% of the profits of all industrial enterprises, mercantile and mining enterprises, sugar refineries, etc.

## DROPS PROGRAM

Recently, Castro discarded this social program in an attempt to reassure the U.S. State Department. For it would be impossible to carry through a struggle for these demands

without infringing upon U.S. investments in Cuba.

In a Look magazine interview on Feb. 4, Castro in effect repudiated his former program by declaring, "Our 26th of July movement has never called for nationalizing of foreign investments." "Nationalization," he held, "can never be as rewarding as the right kind of private investment, domestic and foreign, aimed at diversifying our economy."

In addition, Castro's rejection of the manifesto of the outlawed Partido Socialista Popular (Communist Party) on March 13 which proposed a coalition government might have been taken by many workers to mean that he was not seeking to broaden the basis of the anti-Batista fight. The Communist Party represents approximately 20,000 members out of a population of close to six million.

It is thus easy to understand why the workers who have been sold out in the past by figures as unprincipled as Castro should hesitate to support the 26th of July Movement until they find out exactly what it is fighting for.

## U.S. STAKE

On the other hand, American Big Business and its international representative, the U.S. State Department, know what they want. They seek to protect the \$800 million that American capitalism has invested in Cuba. Involved are Cuban Electric Co., an American & Foreign Power subsidiary; Cuban Telephone Co., a subsidiary of International Telephone and Telegraph; the Texas Co.; the Sinclair Oil Corporation at Santiago de Cuba; the tourist business (hotels, resorts, gambling casinos, etc.) and the sugar trusts which are the two largest industries in Cuba.

The New York Times and

several other Big-Business papers believed this could be achieved with Castro. They stressed the damage to U. S. reputation internationally that support for the cruel dictator, Batista, has earned. But the Wall Street Journal, another spokesman for Big Business feared that in the course of revolution, Castro might not be able to honor his promises that no U.S. interests would be harmed.

In fact, the April 4 Journal reports present damage to U.S. investments as a result of rebel activities. This includes heavy withdrawals from the Chase-Manhattan Bank and the First National Bank of Boston by nervous depositors who were afraid that the government might freeze private bank ac-

counts as a civil-war measure.

In conclusion, the Wall Street Journal reports: "There is little doubt that many American businessmen here are pro-Batista. One puts it very succinctly: 'You can do business with Batista.' Although many admit he may not be the soul of honesty, they ask: 'What Cuban regime ever has been accused of honesty?'"

It would be a mistake to think that revolutionary prospects are dead. The Cuban workers will certainly even the score with the hated Batista, the puppet of American Big Business.

Every day they confront economic misery. They have no political rights. They feel the iron heel, and they will not rest.

# Roberts Assails Anti-Labor Bias In the Schools

SAN FRANCISCO — The anti-labor bias generated in the public schools has been sharply assailed by Holland Roberts, independent socialist candidate for State Superintendent of Public Instruction in California.

"How often does an unscrupulous employer say 'I could give you a job if it weren't for the unions'? And how many people who are the products of our schools believe this, and fall for so-called 'right-to-work' legislation?" he asked.

The only unionist contesting for this office in the June 3 primary, Roberts is a past President of the California Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.

"Such plainly punitive legislation as 'right-to-work' would not even get off the ground if our educational system paid proper attention to the role of

