



VENCEREMOS

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FIDEL SPEAKS TO THE PEOPLE ON U.S. TELEVISION

It was one of U.S. television's rarest, and as it unfolded, finest hours. "Castro, Cuba and the U.S.A.: A Special Report" presented by CBS October 22, commanded the attention of millions of TV viewers in what was a major network's first serious treatment of Cuban politics in 10 years—since the U.S. imposed the now infamous economic sanctions against the island. And in households from Bangor, Maine to Seattle, Washington, it was Fidel Castro who stole the show.

In one of the most candid interviews granted in the U.S. media—Dan Rather noted that none of the questions were even submitted beforehand—Prime Minister Castro spoke frankly on subjects ranging from President Ford's pardon of Nixon, Soviet aid to Cuba, and Cuba-U.S. relations, to the future of Latin America. Here are some of his comments:

On President Ford

It seems to me that during the first days he acted with great caution, with much discretion. It seems to me that he found almost unanimous support in the United States. However, as you know, some things have happened afterwards. I have read a good deal of criticism because of the pardon of Nixon. I also think that this posed a moral problem, because it is difficult to understand that Nixon be pardoned and all the rest of the people be left to be punished. This does not seem to be very just...

From the point of view of foreign policy, from ours, according to our criteria, there are two statements that concern us. One was his justifying statement on the intervention of the CIA in Chile. And the other was his speeches in the United Nations and in Detroit on the energy issue in which he used what seems to us very strong pressuring language and in a certain form threatening to the oil producing countries. This reflected a certain political style from positions of strength.



These two international events are to us, to the Cubans, to the Latin Americans, to the countries of the Third World something that worries us. Of course, he has on the other hand, made other statements favoring the continuation of the policy of international detente which we regard as positive pronouncements.

Now, since we are speaking of Ford, I will indicate a positive fact. He is not involved with the Cuban counterrevolutionary elements. Nixon was personally very much involved with them, and we have seen in Ford a man who is above these relations of friendship. And of course, because we think that the policy of a large and powerful nation such as the United States cannot be determined by reason of personal bonds with certain people, in our opinion, from a Cuban point of view, we see Ford with a certain hope, in the sense that he may after all adopt a different policy towards Cuba and that at least he does not have the personal involvement that Nixon had in this regard...

Henry Kissinger

I do not believe that Kissinger has a personal position that is hostile towards Cuba, while Nixon undoubtedly had a

personal hostility towards Cuba....Kissinger has shown himself to be a realistic politician who undoubtedly has fought for international detente, and I must say that the positive facts that Nixon has shown in international policies are to a large extent also to be attributed to Kissinger...

(Kissinger) was the president of the Council of Advisors, or a Committee of 40, and according to this information, he has a responsibility for CIA participation in Chile... this is a blow to his prestige... because international public opinion certainly always regarded Kissinger as a man of peace and this episode in Chile is considered as an act in contradiction with the opinion held of him internationally. ...but it could also have happened that... the enemies of international detente might try to take advantage of this episode to weaken Kissinger's position and to combat Kissinger's policy. In spite of all and in spite of it's being very lamentable that he might have had any part in the events in Chile, I believe that he is no doubt the most realistic politician and (the one) who has made the greatest effort to find a solution to the Cold War problems in recent years in the United States.

Watergate: The Irony of History

...my impression is that it was very serious from a legal point of view and from the moral point of view. It seems to me that after all you found a correct formula to liquidate the matter. It seems to me that the spectacle of a trial would have been something rather hard for the United States, and I think that in spite of Nixon's resistance, the pressures exerted on him to convince him to resign brought about, it seems, results. I believe you resolved it in a correct manner.

(Speaking of the Cuban exiles involved in the Watergate breakin.) ...Well, they are in prison or indicted. Yes, it is certain that Nixon had very good relations with

all these people, and it is the irony of history that these people who were prepared to conspire against the Cuban Revolution were unable to destroy the Cuban Revolution but they were able to destroy Nixon...

Relations with the U.S.: Minimum Conditions

I would say that number one is the lifting of the economic blockade. Because the economic blockade is an act of force, an act of coercion which the United States exerts against us. Because it employs all its international influence, all its political strength and all its economic power trying to asphyxiate the Cuban economy. And this policy has affected us for many years, and we regard this as an extremely hostile act against us. Therefore, we have established our position that we are not disposed to negotiate under conditions of economic blockade. And in order to start discussing all the differences and all the problems as one would like, it is necessary to meet one condition: that the economic blockade is stopped. When the economic blockade is ended, we shall be in a condition to speak under conditions of equality: the United States and ourselves.

The United States not only refuses to trade with us, but it takes punitive measures against the ships that come to Cuba, against the countries that trade with Cuba. Now, here you have a recent example: Bangladesh. A small country with 50 million inhabitants that has suffered a great natural catastrophe, enormous floodings, which is in need of food. Then the United States in order to grant Bangladesh certain shipments of foodstuffs—I believe 100,000 tons of wheat and some other foodstuffs—it set as a condition to Bangladesh that it break its commercial relations with Cuba. Actually, it is a great shame that in order to be able to extend a certain assistance to a country very much in need of it, you impose on it a harsh condition, a humiliating condition.

Once the blockade stops, then we can start discussing all the other problems as may be desired, because there are problems that are of interest to us. There is the Guantanamo Base... Guantanamo is a piece of the national territory of Cuba. It is occupied by the United States...

Cuba and the Soviet Union

I know that the Soviet politicians are consistent in their ideas of the necessity of international detente and about peaceful coexistence, and we on the other hand, have unlimited trust in them. We have complete confidence in the loyalty of the Soviet leadership towards the Cuban Revolution and we have never had any concern whatsoever to this effect... This is the truth.

Of course, to us the solidarity of the Soviet Union has been of very great importance. We have received from the Soviet Union largescale aid in every respect, which has been decisive for us in the struggle against the blockade. You have to look, for example, to the problem of fuel supplies, which has been a very serious problem for many countries. We had no energy crisis. We had no blockade of fuel supplies, and during these fifteen years, our country continued to receive from the Soviet Union all the fuel it consumes, year in, year out...

While we were subjected to aggression from the United States during these fifteen years, from it we received aid. How can our relations with the Soviet Union be compared with the relations that existed with the United States? The Soviet Union has extended to us payment facilities. It has granted us large credits. And whenever the circumstances of a financial order required it, it has always displayed the best attitude toward us.

The United States owned our mines. The United States was the owner of our electric power plants, of our telephone companies, of the main transportation companies, of the principal industries, of the best lands, of the largest sugar mills. They owned our banks. They owned our foreign trade. In a few words, they owned the Cuban economy.

The Soviets do not own a single mine in Cuba. Not a single factory. Not a single sugar mill, not one acre of land, not a single bank, not a single business, nor a single utility. So then all the natural resources, all the industries and all the means of production belong to our country. And before the revolution they were under the ownership of another country. But it was really fortunate for us that a country with resources such as the Soviet Union would have the inclination and the will to help us. Otherwise we could not have made it through those so very difficult years.

Latin America: A New Community

...in the future only the large communities will be in a position to face the great problems humanity has before it, and we, the Latin American peoples, have a community of language, of culture, of tradition, and we are peoples who must unite in the same way as the states of North America united, and we shall form a large community. If the United States had not been a large community, it would not have been able to achieve the industrial successes, the scientific successes, the economic successes it has attained. So we believe we must work to create a community.

The Future

I do not know when the United States will change its present regime of free enterprise for a different one, a socialist regime. I am certain of one thing, that it will take decades... but one day the economic and social system of the United States will change. And I am also sure that the economic and social system of Cuba will never turn back...

Family Code

(continued from p. 4.)

Parent/children relationships: It eliminates all the differences which had been established between the legitimate and illegitimate children and proclaims that all children are the same and enjoy equal rights. In respect to parental jurisdiction and its exercise, it places emphasis on those duties whose fulfillment is indispensable for the healthy and normal development, be it physical, intellectual, or moral. In the event of divorce, the Code resolves that both parents keep their parental authority, independently of who has the guardianship and care of the child...

Upon surrendering this Code, we hope that it, enriched... by the suggestions and initiative that will come out of its discussions among the people, and turned into law of our socialist State, will contribute to eliminate from our land even the memory of the anachronistic remains of the bourgeois laws that... consecrate the inequality of women, the laws on marriage and divorce, the inequality of the "legitimate" children and those born out of wedlock, laws through which privileges are given to the men and through the women are insulted and humiliated."

NATIONAL HEALTH FORUM HELD IN HAVANA

"A revolution is fought for the good of man, and his health is its most valuable asset." This remark, made at the 2nd National Forum on Hygiene and Epidemiology in Havana on September 24-27, 1974, characterized the importance of this forum for the Cuban people. Attended by 667 delegates from public health programs throughout the country, the Forum was conducted to review the work in the field of hygiene and epidemiology and "to analyze critically and objectively the deficiencies that still exist." 83 papers were presented and discussed on such diverse topics as vaccination programs, labor medicine, public health work in the schools, research on infectious diseases and the effects of pollution on health.

Dr. Jose Gutierrez Muniz, Minister of Public Health (who was recently elected first Vice-President of the 19th Pan-American Health Conference to be held in Washington, D.C.) opened the Forum with a review of the great advances which have been achieved in the treatment and prevention of illness in Cuba. "Despite the fact that, after the revolution, one half of Cuba's doctors (3,000) left the country, more than 8,000 new physicians and 34,000 middle-level technicians have been trained (with women comprising 50% of those now studying medicine). The low infant mortality rate (27.1 for every 1,000) puts Cuba on an equal footing with highly developed capitalist countries, and deaths caused by contagious disease have dropped 2/3's in 10 years, from 15.5% in 1964 to 4.7% in 1974. Polio, diphtheria and tubercular meningitis have been eradicated, and while in 1962 there were more than 2,000 cases of malaria, in 1973, the World Health Organization declared Cuba "malaria free territory." All health services are provided free of charge, as a basic right of the people.

Preventive Medicine

Dr. Muniz stressed the guiding concept in the development of public health services in Cuba: prevention. "We should not wait for an illness to happen," he said. "We should rather take the offensive and prevent it. . . It is not a matter of providing a service for the sick, but one of avoiding sickness, considering a person's normal state of health and defending it."

Pedro Minet, member of the Secretariat

of the Communist Party of Cuba, elaborated on this idea. "Whereas in the capitalist system, medicine basically is . . . healing-oriented, individualistic and commercial. . . in socialism the state has the obligation of maintaining the health of man. . . preventing his getting sick. And if this is a basic premise of our ideology, we must structure suitable systems of organization for implementing these ideas with growing efficiency."

Mass Participation

Preventive medicine; it was argued, must therefore involve and coordinate the work of various political and mass organizations as well as numerous state agencies. Millions of people are incorporated into the tasks of public health through such organizations as the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR) and the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), which, in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP) work to mobilize the people in such mass health campaigns as polio vaccinations, blood donations and pap smears for women. In addition, the Cuba trade unions (CTC), along with the Ministry of Labor, actively participate in developing and administering health programs for all workers, including treatment for the prevention of communicable diseases, pre-employment medical examinations, and periodic check-ups.

Because their participation in preventive health programs is essential, these and other mass and political organizations were fully represented at the Forum.

Preliminary provisions for a new Health Code were discussed at length by the delegates. The original preliminary proposals for the Code were drawn up by the Ministry of Public Health. These were sent to all agencies and organizations involved in health services for discussion and recommendations, which were used in drafting the final preliminary plan presented at the Forum. Among the additional recommendations made at the Forum were for the passing of a law establishing the new Health Code, and a subsequent massive informational campaign to acquaint all the people with its provisions.

Pedro Minet paid tribute to the many contributions Cuban health workers have been able to make to other countries, even under the difficult conditions im-

posed by underdevelopment and the U.S. blockade. "Cuban delegates have been working in Algeria since its liberation. We have gone to the aid of sister peoples in moments of natural catastrophes, as in Peru, Nicaragua and Honduras. Vietnam and Syria have come to know our doctors and technicians in moments of imperialist aggression and other countries of Africa and Asia have received our modest but fraternal contribution to the development of their public health systems."



Minet then noted gravely, "Comrades, the contrast is highly significant that while here, in Cuba, doctors and technicians have met together to evaluate the years of work carried out in an important field of public health. . . in the southernmost part of South America, a doctor president, who shared our preoccupations and also struggled hard for the wellbeing of his people. . . , was assassinated a year ago by the fascist hordes, who were only concerned with maintaining the privileges of the exploiting minorities, both allies of and dependent on their imperialist master. The contrast is significant, I repeat, that while our doctors meet and work for the future, hundreds of Chilean doctors, together with tens of thousands of their brothers, are imprisoned. . . On this occasion we send our message of encouragement to those Chilean doctors. . . and all those fallen sons and daughters of the Chilean people."

FMC To Discuss News Family Code

November 25-27, the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) will hold its Second Congress in Havana, the first to take place since October, 1962. At that Congress, the women approved statutes to increase the quality of work, to elevate the ideological, political and cultural level of Cuban, and to broaden relations with other women's organizations throughout the world, and to carry out activities in solidarity with the peoples who struggle against imperialism and colonialism. The "federadas" (FMC members) pledged to heighten the consciousness of Cuban society regarding the necessity to "forge the new woman, the woman of socialist society, who has her rights, is incorporated into work, and is free of domestic slavery and the weight of the prejudices of the past."

Before the Congress convenes, its working document, or thesis, "Deepening the Revolutionary Action of Women," will have been discussed by the 1,800,000 FMC members throughout the country. Included with the thesis is the proposal for the new Family Code. If the draft becomes law, without modification, men will be required by law to take responsibility for 50% of the housework and childcare when women work (the draft is presently under discussion throughout Cuba).

Below is an explanation of the principles and considerations which were kept in mind in preparing the draft of the Family Code:

... "A socialist legislation on the family is very necessary in order to substitute the worn out and void laws still in effect.

The judicial regulations relating to the family that are still in existence in the country are written within the Civil Code.

... Such laws are not in accordance with the reality of the social changes brought about by the Revolution, and less than that with socialist principles.

The Civil Code, made into law in Spain May 11, 1888, was extended to Cuba July 31, 1889 and is still in effect. . . The Civil Code of 1889 made the family an institution based on the humiliation and degradation of women, in theirs and their children's submission to the absolute rule of the father of the family. . . The modifications that were introduced in the course of the years, including those of the 1940 Constitution—many of them won by the mobilization and fight of the women and other popular forces—weakens the archaic and regressive concepts about the family. . .

But even with the changes to which we have briefly referred, and notwithstanding the new realities and practices introduced by the Revolution—massive incorporation of women into work in production and in the other services, the multiplication of the day care centers, the extraordinary increase of the number of women who study—there still exist the discriminating and obsolete laws in legislation regarding the family. . .

"Considering this, the Family Code starts from the fundamental consideration that the family is an entity in which there is always present and intimately intertwined the social and personal interest. As the basic nucleus of society the family contributes to its development and carries through important functions in the formation of the new generations; it is the center of day-to-day relationships between men, women and their children; it satisfies the deeply human, emotional and social interests of the person.

The following are some of the areas regulated by the Family Code: marriage, divorce, support and parent/children relationships.

Regarding marriage: the new law will eliminate the concept that it is a civil contract and will define it as the free and voluntarily arranged union of a man and woman in order to share a common life. . . All of the regulations relative to marriage rest on the principle of the absolute judicial equality of the man and woman, of the reciprocal duties between them, and their joint obligations towards the children and their contribution to the support of the home and the carrying of the domestic tasks. . .

Regarding divorce: It abolishes the so-called "Civil Code divorce", which limits its effects to simply the "separation of bodies and properties, still keeping in force the marriage ties. It eliminates the enumeration of reasons and leaves it to the court to judge on whether the alleged reasons prove that the marriage has lost its meanings for the partners. . . This frees the judicial procedure of the divorce from all which may tend to force the partners into a situation of defaming each other, which evidently and directly injures the children when it creates in them a negative image of their parents. . .

Support: Another innovation is that either the man or the woman can, in determined circumstances, claim and obtain a pension from the ex-partner for the time, not longer than a year, that it will take them to overcome the economic difficulties that they may be faced with. . .

cont. on page 2

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