

Van Gosse, *Where the Boys Are: Cuba, Cold War America and the Making of the New Left* (Verso: London and New York, 1993)

Introduction: Confronting a Revolutionary World: Cuba as End and Beginning

Fulgencio Batista fell on January 1, 1959

Van Gosse explores the forgotten foundation of the New Left: *fidelismo* was destabilizing and a radicalizing force
the grounding of *fidelismo* was hipsterism; this space was opened to Fidel's 26th of July Movement in 1957 and 1958 by liberal journalists, activists, and anti-Communists like Henry Luce who thought they could appropriate revolution for consumption.

Nonconformism for men was not oppositional or subversive; it was the collapse of traditional boyhood and manhood.

Van Gosse exploring Cold War cultural politics

Context: unraveling of US hegemony

Cuban revolution presaged the war in Vietnam

Predating Port Huron in August 1962, news coverage of Castro's revolution in 1956-57 was enthusiastic and appealing to boys. Castro's triumphal tour in April 1959.

(3) Yet as Castro's revolution seemed to turn into betrayal in the later part of 1959, the Fair Play for Cuba Committee was organized across the country in 1960. This was spontaneous and it was encouraged by C. Wright Mills, Listen, Yankee.

Fair Play encompassed new left theorists W.A. Williams, I.F. Stone, Paul Sweezy, Leo Huberman; and it included the beats: Alan Ginsberg, Norman Mailer, Lawrence Ferlinghetti; and black radicals: Leroi Jones, Harold Cruse, Malcolm X; and radical wing of pacifism: Dorothy Day and Dave Dellinger; and student activists. FPCC existed 1960-1962

FPCC is usually only mentioned in context of Lee Harvey Oswald's membership and wide spread anxiety on the left of an impending witch hunt for anyone who had supported Castro.

Support for Cuba predated the new left. FPCC did not retreat when mainstream liberalism retreated in 1959.

By November 1962, FPCC, tolerant treatment of Castro only existed in extreme left-wing circles.

FPCC peaked in spring of 1961 with thousands--not millions--of members.

JFK: a Great Power can make and break law, no more fictions of self preservation of the US, realpolitick; there was as yet no Soviet presence in Cuba; Bay of Pigs showed how anticommunism laid the basis for commitment to empire

C Wright Mills telegram to FPCC rally April 24, 1961

FPCC: shows antiimperialism embedded in US radicalism.

New Left rests on solidarity with Third World peasants fighting against oppression.

Chapter 1: The New Empire and the Old Anti-Imperialism

(13) There were no direct political origins of FPCC but there were some old traditions and some personal ties

US Latin American relations: Mexico and Nicaragua

In Nicaragua in the 1920s: Carleton Beals, journalist-activist, search for Sandino; Beals: The Crime of Cuba (1933): opposition to oppression and empire in the form of greedy North Americans supporting the terrible Gerardo Machado. Beals became the honorary co-chairman of the FPCC along with Waldo Frank.

From 1930 on the Communist Party dominated left wing politics; by 1940 it had a membership of about 100,000

(Skip 1930s)

Post WWII: anticommunist apparatus rose to take the place of antifascism; CIA's coup in Guatemala in 1954 was almost unanimously supported; shows unity and change in climate from 1920s and 1930s

AntiCommunist liberalism overshadowed communism

(24) InterAmerican Association for Democracy and Freedom (IADF) May 12-15, 1950 academics and legislators from 15 countries gathered in Havana; included anticommunists and labor union people and politicians ACLU writers, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., ADA, NAACP: American democratic solidarity against totalitarianism; Frances Grant was secretary-general and moving spirit of IADF over 30 years. Agitating against US support for despotism; liberal antiinterventionism.

The Siege of Guatemala

United Fruit Company attacks Arbenz's mild land reform starting in 1950. United Fruit's publicist was Edward Bernays

Chapter 2: Have Gun, Will Travel: The Mystiques of (Counter) Insurgency

Three years after Guatemala: the Movimiento Revolucionario 26 de Julio (26th of July Movement)

named for a date in 1953 when a small force of ex-student militants had tried to seize an army base in eastern Cuba and set off a popular uprising. This movement started to gain a cultish following in the US.

At end of the 1950s: cold war liberalism: counterinsurgency

Theme of revolution in popular films

Series of dictators falling: Peron in 1955; General Manuel Odria in Peru in 1956; Gustavo Rojas Pinilla in Colombia in 1957; Perez Jimenez in Venezuela in 1958; trend toward liberalism and : cast sympathetic light on Cuba where Batista was so corrupt

Nixon's trip to South America in May 1958 where crowds attacked his car: an antidictatorial stance became quasi official

October and November 1956: Hungarian uprising

(51) Later 1950s: a cultural space was opening up for Cuban revolution

Van Gosse: emergence of a new youth culture; struggle over male authority

Hipsters, rebels without a cause

In Cuba: movement to eliminate North American influences that had been developing in the 1950s: Cuban revolution against America

Chapter 3 Yankee Fidelistas

From 1956 to 1959, the Cuban insurgency was a story: cult of Fidel

(64) In 1955 Fidel came to tour US (he had been here before): the US had 62 branches of the 26th of July Movement

People helping Castro prepare: Donald Soldini, Neill Macaulay, Frank Fiorini (gun running)

Press coverage: Herbert Mathews

(67) a footnote here: Castro is Spanish

Mathews three part interview with Castro February 1957 in the *New York Times*

Robert Taber put Castro on CBS

Henry Luce of Time/Life wrote up Castro

(76) The only people who supported Batista were the same people supporting white supremacy at home: Senator Allen Ellender of Louisiana; White Citizens Councils, Jenner, Eastland, along with

Mafia figures who “shared a cronyish fondness for Batista.” (77)

IADF founder: Romulo Betancourt

Castro named as President Manuel Urrutia; IADF worked with Cuban exile committee

(78) Arnold Johnson: claimed Cuban parentage, introduced Castro’s American spokesman Llerena to Adam Clayton Powell

(79) Eusebio Mujal: the pro Batista boss of the Confederacion de los Trabajadores (CTC)

(81) after 1959 the Cuban revolution invited hostility from the establishment. Robert Taber aired “rebels of the Sierra Maestra” in 1957-58; Taber went on to found FPCC 3 years later

Neill Macaulay, *A Rebel in Cuba*

Don Soldini: oral history

(86) taking a plane to Cuba in 1958 did not require a passport

(87) Macaulay estimated that there were 200 hundred-odd anti-Castro organizations in Miami

(88) also joining in Cuba: US veteran Captain William Morgan of Toledo, Ohio who led the 26th of July’s rival: The Second Front of the Escambray (he was shot in 1961 as an anti-Castro conspirator although he claimed he was innocent)

(92) Soldini met Frank Fiorini (aka) Sturgis in 1958; veteran turned *fidelista*

Glendon Swartout, *Where the Boys Are*(1960)

Chapter 4 : 1959: Whose Revolution is it, Anyway?

(107) “The paradox of solidarity with the Cuban revolution over a generation is that the cast keeps changing.”

Since 1961 the right wing and national security apparatus have been hostile to Castro

(107) supporters of Castro: anti-imperialists and ardent Trotskyites early on; New York intelligentsia; solidarity with blacks in America throughout

in 1959, the Cold War liberal retreated;’ in 1959, blacks supported Castro

(108) State Department liberals moved to remove Castro in October 1959

So why was FPCC not formed before April 1960, one full year after Castro’s visit to the US?

One reason is the disillusionment of the press

(109) Eisenhower administration showed restraint in mid 1960 , through mid 1960 in face of provocation from Castro

As Eisenhower and the press and American feeling pulled back from Castro--he seemed too left wing--the FPCC could simply be ignored as it blossomed; there was no institutionalized way to

express criticism for Cold War premises; FPCC began as an alternative media outlet for reporters (110) by 1960 those who supported Castro were baited as fools or communist sympathizers; but an anti-intervention coalition formed; better to ask why FPCC was formed at all, at a time when the risks were so formidable

FPCC came after hiatus: the earlier support for fidelistas faded away by 1960; to start FPCC after this point demands explanation because it did not follow

look at the year following Batista's fall

1959: a year of retreat and passivity and action at the same time

(111) EISENHOWER RECOGNIZED CASTRO GOVERNMENT IN THE BEGINNING 1959; STARTING WITH EXECUTION OF BASTISTA ENFORCERS which had initially been so enthusiastic; by fall 1959 cold water on Cuban revolution

(116) FIDEL VISIT TO IVY LEAGUE IN SPRING 1959; THEN BY JUNE, MORE CONCERN THAT CASTRO WAS RED AND ANTI-AMERICA.

Forced resignation of Manuel Urrutia in July and jailing of Major Huber Matos when he attempted to rally his officers to an anti-communist position

(117) In June 1959, defection of Diaz Lanz, chief of Rebel air Force

in the US these events looked like a purging of the democratic elements; in Cuba they paled beside the great Agrarian Reform begun in June: social upheaval

(120) Adam Clayton Powell went to Cuba in January 1959 and denounced the pro-Batista lobby (an allusion to Deep South congressmen); by March 1959 Powell had washed his hands of Cuban revolution; it was turning communist. Teresa Casuso prevented Powell from telling Castro in person that the revolution was communist. She became the Cuban UN representative, later a highly publicized defector.

(122) reports in the black press positively about Castro. I.E. the *Baltimore Afro-American* in January integration

(122) note that Batista was mixed race and appealed to the poor; Castro was white (Spanish)

(122) Gabino Ulacia was Castro's right hand man

(123) Afro-American press published FPCC material by William Worthy and Julian Mayfield, associated with FPCC

So left wing views continued in the black press unlike the white press which turned against Castro

(124) the left by 1959 was not responding: repression, fatigue

Only McCarthyites and segregationists defended Batista

(126) Old Left did not pay much attention to Cuban revolution

(126) Communist Party USA immediately hailed the revolution

(127) Socialist Workers Party acknowledged "the People's Triumph" January 1959 *The Militant* well into 1960 Castro had the mistrust of the Trotskyites; criterion for Trotskyites: the Fourth International; called the Cuban revolution "petty bourgeois"

The left kept to safe issues like civil rights and disarmament, banning test of nuclear weapons
 (128) Castro and his revolution did not fit the established type of opposition familiar to the Old Left; he seemed vague; Old left had swung to Adlai Stevenson in 1956

(129) The first 26th of July festivities coincided with the ousting of Manuel Urru

In 1959 an Aid to Cuba group was set up through IADF but it went no where

(130) Summer of 1959: cultural attache at Cuba's UN mission Dr Berta Pla collaborated with a group of North Americans and Cuban Americans to form a non political group called Cuba's Friends in America, Inc.

Then the publication of History Will Absolve Me Fidel's defence speech from 1953; Robert Taber translated this from Spanish and a year later he would found FPCC
 this publication was assisted by Ambassador Carlos Lechuga, Cuba's Alternate Delegate to the UN; Luis Baralt, Cuban Consul General in New York; Armando Bascal, head of the Cuban Tourist Commission in NYC; they made a direct appeal to the black community
 December 1959 big gathering of black writers at the Havana Hilton

Chapter 5: Fair Play!

(137) FPCC organized in the spring of 1960

there are 4 major episodes marking its history:

- 1) CASTRO'S PILGRIMAGE TO HARLEM DURING UN VISIT IN SEPTEMBER 1960
- 2) PUBLICATION OF C WRIGHT MILLS, LISTEN, YANKEE
- 3) FPCC CHRISTMAS TOUR OF NORTH AMERICANS WHICH RESULTED IN BAN ON TRAVEL TO CUBA IN January 1961
- 4) NATION WIDE PROTESTS WHEN LONG RUMORED INVASION CAME ASHORE AT THE BAY OF PIGS ON 17 APRIL 1961

FPCC declined because of:

- 1) embargo on most contacts with Cuba by Americans
- 2) governmental assault at JFK's direction
- 3) internal feuding

how FPCC formed and why:

background: recall of ambassador Philip Bonsal; planes from Florida dropping bombs on Cuba; French ship blown up in Havana harbor

beginnings of FPCC in Old Liberalism via *the Nation*

founders were outraged at the distortion of intentions; tell the truth in the face of power; not radical; faith in American common sense

FPCC had two primary founders

1) **Robert Taber** the CBS reporter documentary from 1957, became close to the 26th of July Movement; not a political activist and no real ideological views on subjects other than Cuba; Taber had covered Guatemala and the Algerian revolt

(139) **Saul Landau** was the key student leader; Taber helped publish Castro's defence and he wrote a defense in the Nation

catalyst for FPCC was **Alan Sagner** a wealthy New York contractor and reform Democratic leader active in Rotary Club and Jewish community

Taber's co worker was **Richard Gibson**

Taber and Sagner met with **Charles Santos-Buch**, a Columbia University medical student from a family of prominent middle class *fidelistas*

(140) this group pulled in noncommunist liberal leftists experts on Latin America: **Waldo Frank**, champion of Latin culture in the US, and **Carleton Beals**

Taber wrote to Beals in February 9, 1960 letter

This group was joined by **Richard Gibson** and **Ed Haddad** two of Taber's colleagues on the late night shift in the newsroom of CBS radio news.

See photocopied pages 138-174.

Chapter 6: Going South and Going Public

C. Wright Mills, Listen, Yankee: how it was written, background visit to Cuba, style of writing letters instead of a scholarly third person

skip several pages on Leroi Jones, Harold Cruse

then: p. 189: massive inaugural rally of San Francisco Fair Play in January 1961

Norman Mailer: got at the covert affinity between Castro and JFK (192)

Chapter 7: On the Beach

Van Gosse concludes his book with the defeat at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961

Movement led by FPCC rapidly dissipated

Bay of Pigs augured the defeat in Vietnam

Bay of Pigs altered the domestic landscape: dissent over imperial politics emerges ;first time since the beginning of the Cold War

Who Lost Cuba?

In October 1960 before his final debate with Nixon, JFK said that the US should strengthen the non-Batista democratic anti-Castro forces in exile and in Cuba who offer eventual hope of overthrowing Castro

(205) JFK: Castro betrayed the revolution and the 26th of July movement

(206) JFK called for funding anti-Castro guerillas (October 13 (?) 1960; Eisenhower had just declared an embargo on Cuba; the total break would come in January 1961

(206) Taber hoped for new administration in Jan. 1961 to thaw relations with Cuba; a ray of hope for FPCC

(207) a flowering of Fair Play

FPCC had nowhere to go after the Bay of Pigs

travel ban to Cuba; likely federal indictment had sent Robert Taber and Saul Landau out of the country

In the winter and early spring of 1961 FPCC went from strength to strength on the surface; Christmas tour; new chapters appeared

(207) what did local chapters do other than attract local inquisitions?: speakers slideshows pickets, potlucks, and fundraising parties

How big was FPCC? "In late 1960 and early 1961, FPCC leaders claimed 5,000 , then 6,000, then 7,000 members and up to twenty-seven 'adult' chapters and forty 'Student Councils'.

See photocopied pages 208-264 (to the end of the book)

from 97-74-77: "On 4/17/63, LEE stated that FPCC had about 1500 members." And by Oct. 1963 the financial situation was very poor. LEE called for end of ban on travel to Cuba on Oct. 24, 1963. By Oct. 1963, CP influence threat had ended. John Rossen was an officer of FPCC.. A>S> Baker was going to take over directorship of FPCC in Oct. 1963.. In Nov. 1963, A.S. Baker took over a chief officer of FPCC. Baker seems to sympathize with CP.. There is a distinction between names on mailing list and members. In May 1963, there was a struggle between CP and SWP to exert power, but leadership had diminished this threat.(entered on June 28, 1995)

Sept 19, 1963, Ted Lee was disgusted with things in general, and he had been subjected to criticism from left -wing groups.

