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Cuba: A revolution without achievements

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COMMENTS

Cuba

A Revolution Without Achievements

What sort of achievements a "glorious" revolution yields can be studied by the revolutionaries of every shade in the adoptive fatherland of the great "Che" Guevara, which is at the same time the native land of the hardly less admired Fidel Castro. To carry out the economic programmes that had been introduced with so much fanfare, Cuba would have needed, in the first instance, lots of money. But the insistence of the Red Ruler of the Caribbean on his wrongheaded economic fantasies has caused even the Soviets who had initially been willing to help Cuba to cut down on their assistance. The funds that are available to Dr Castro's government for financing large-scale irrigation investments, indispensable for attaining the objectives of the "great food battle" through modernising the growing of sugar cane, transforming farming round the capital of the island, Havana, into a capital-intensive industry, and extending cattle raising, are no more than a tiny drop upon a parched soil. Castro therefore frantically tries to mobilise more and more intensive manual labour for unpaid "self-aid", to the limits of the population's working capacity. Among the foremost measures of this programme are the formation of a voluntary labour service, and the re-grouping of all civil servants and public employees in military units that may be ordered to work as "labour armies" on the farms and plantations. In addition, a veritable flood of new laws and decrees is being poured out over Cuba, all for the purpose of recruiting ever growing numbers of the population for an increased direction of labour. Neither pupils nor the workers who, through their trade unions, have already "volunteered" to work overtime without payment, are exempt from them. The voluntary character of all this extra work may not even be doubted as long as the Cuban people believes in its "führer" and in the efficacy of the measures decreed by him. But what will happen in Cuba once the Cuban people learns that all the glitter of the revolution ends in having to work more for a standard of living that is hardly higher than before? ke.

Indonesia

A Silver Lining on the Horizon

It is not easy to be a communist in Indonesia. Military Intelligence has estimated the number of communists who could still be described as militants among those who have not yet landed in internment camps at less than 5,000, all of them in semi-starved conditions and panic-stricken, perpetually fleeing

from one hideout to the next. They have lost all support from the Indonesian people, and even the amount of aid given them by China is hardly worth mentioning. Though there is hardly an Indonesian who would consider these remaining communists a danger to the present regime, the Indonesian press publishes daily stories about the big anti-communist hunt that is still going on. Yet, what will people not do in order to justify the existence of a huge military establishment which keeps under arms about 500,000 soldiers, and to prevent the flow of western aid from drying up?

Big Brother in the West has reacted promptly. When he visited Indonesia during last June, Mr McNamara first promised a World Bank credit of \$ 4 mn, and also hinted at the possibility of further loans at cheap rates of interest. True, this is mere chickenfeed compared with an estimated requirement—for the next five years—of \$ 2,500 mn in foreign investments and loans. Unless the Indonesian government succeeds in obtaining consolidation of the present enormous Indonesian debt, the total wanted will even rise to about \$ 3,500 mn. But in the context of other important economic developments, the new loan promised reflects a first easing-up of the Indonesian situation, since it is symptomatic for the revived interest the World Bank takes in Indonesia. General Suharto, at any rate, did everything in his power to improve the conditions for further outside help. Early in June, 1968, he set up a "Development Cabinet" and, to the great relief of the business community, the post of Minister of Commerce was filled with one of the most able economists, Professor Sumitro. hg.

EEC Farming

A Poor Show

As in 1967, the agricultural regulations of the EEC regarding the destruction of surplus crops of fruit and vegetables were again applied during the current year. What allegedly could not be sold of a harvest overflow was burned, fed to livestock, or ploughed under. Further large-scale destruction campaigns are impending. This rigid stabilisation of prices for farm produce in the Common Market costs the EEC taxpayers the tidy sum of DM 240 mn. At the same time, thousands are dying every day of famine in Biafra, and the miseries in Asia and Latin America are abundantly known. Of course, pretexts are plentiful for making excuses for this horrible coincidence of horrible facts. We are told that produce of this type could not stand being transported over the vast distances involved; or these carriage costs would be