

No Ten Million for Cuba

Liberation News Service

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HAVANA (LNS) In two speeches May 19 and 20, Cuban leader Fidel Castro announced that the projected mark of ten million tons of sugar would not be reached this year.

With a frank and detailed explanation of the specific technical reasons for the failure to obtain the goal, Fidel blamed the revolutionary leadership for errors in planning, declaring that the efforts of the sugar workers have been magnificent:

“The people have not lost the battle-objectively we must indicate the adversities and the victories...We (the leadership) are the ones who have lost the battle.”

Fidel declared that the announcing of the impossibility of reaching ten million by the harvest's end in July was “maybe harder than any other experience in the revolutionary struggle” but that “turning defeat into victory must be the firm and dignified watchword of our people.”

Fidel also touched on the possibility of revolution in the United States. Cuba has closely followed the recent heavy events in the U.S., including the mass protests against the Kent State, Augusta, and Jackson murders throughout the nation.

“If they threaten other people with atomic bombs, what are they going to do (within the U.S.)?” he asked. Fidel stated that “no matter how great the resemblance between Mr. Nixon and Hitler and between his police and the S.S., it should not be forgotten that repression against the American people is no easy matter.”

Shortly after the Kent State massacre, 200,000 Cubans had rallied in Havana in solidarity with the growing movement of American progressives denouncing the Indo-China invasion.

The sugar harvest has already surpassed the record 7.2 million tons of Cuba's capitalist era and is now projected a possible final figure of 9 million. Such a harvest would represent a 63% increase over the yearly average of the last ten harvests of capitalism—1950–1959.

The basic technical problems that rendered impossible the ten million were in cane-yield and delaying improvements in machinery at the sugar mills.

“Yield” is the term used to give the percentage by weight of sugar cane that is output in the form of raw sugar. A national average yield of 12.3% was projected, but only 10.8% has been obtained. Yield is determined by several factors including soil, timing of the rains, timing of milling, type of cane, etc.

In this harvest, the greatest difficulties have been in Oriente province, Cuba's easternmost region. It is in Oriente as well as Camaguey Province that the problems and delays in the installation and adjustment of new sugar-milling machinery were greatest.

While the sugar harvest is still of unprecedented size, rice production seven times and fish production eight times that of 1958, Fidel stated that the difficulties this year had to be taken as a moral defeat.

Nevertheless in this historic effort “Cuba awakened the solidarity of the people of the world” by the direct participation of cane-cutting brigades from numerous socialist and capitalist countries, including two Venceremos Brigades of 800 people from the United States.

Discussing future harvests, Fidel stated that the ten million tons would indeed be reached and surpassed, but that the complexity of the current situation prevented any specific projects for the next year.

He repeatedly praised the vanguard efforts made by the cane-cutters and mill-workers throughout the year and concluded that “we must learn more from this defeat than we would have learned from victory. *¡Patria o muerte, venceremos!*”

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