

School Attendance in 1953¹⁹

From 1953 Census

	Total number	In school all of island	Oriente Province	Havana/towns
Primary school ages 6-14	547,000	56%	40%	67%
Secondary school ages 15-19	558,000	17%	7%	30%
Urban residence ages 6-19	600,000			75%
Rural residence ages 6-19	630,000	40%	25%	

ulation (about one million persons) could not read or write in 1958, with men more often illiterate than women. In this same period illiteracy rates in Bolivia and Guatemala were about 70 percent, while one-half the populations of Nicaragua, El Salvador, Brazil, and Venezuela were illiterate. In Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, only one person in ten could read and write.

The masses of people in these countries not only were illiterate but also had standards of living below that of Cubans. Nonetheless, for the mass of the Cuban people, and particularly those living in the countryside, life was not abundant, but difficult and lacking many things that modern life promised. In order to understand why the revolution took the radical course it did, we must recognize that many Cubans not only suffered absolute poverty but also what sociologists call "relative deprivation." Better-off Cubans compared themselves not to the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean but the U.S. Cubans in rural areas

compared themselves to Cubans living in the cities, while others living in the interior of the island compared themselves to those living in Havana. For the vast majority of Cubans, change seemed appropriate, but for some, radical change seemed necessary.

WOMEN IN CUBA

Women's roles in Cuba prior to the triumph of the revolution in 1959 were rooted in the traditional functions of child-bearing and child-rearing, fulfilling domestic responsibilities of cooking, sewing, cleaning, shopping, etc. Despite this, 10.2 percent of Cuban women in 1943 were working outside the home. By 1956-1957 this had increased to 14.2 percent and ten years after the revolution to 17.7 percent of women.

Although traditional roles were predominant, women also were important participants in the revolution. The names Celia Sánchez, Haydée Santamaría, and Vilma Espín are not recognized by many people in the U.S., but they were promi-