

Castro Intensifies Campaign To 'Capture' Cuban Youth

By CARLOS MARTINEZ

MIAMI (CDN) — Cuba's Fidel Castro is well aware of the old Marxist-Leninist dogma, "to win the youth for communism is to win the future."

And the dictator has been trying to do just that. Gaining control of the young peoples' minds was one of his revolution's earliest goals.

Following the Soviet pattern, Castro has been slowly building up a Young Communists Union (UJC) — a carbon copy of Russia's Young Communists League.

According to an article appearing in a current Cuban government magazine, membership in the group will reach 100,000 in the "near future."

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UJC includes the cream of the island's 15- to 27-year-old population, the magazine, Cuba Socialista, says.

Key requirement for membership, the article says, is a hatred of "Yankee imperialism and religion."

The group's program is prepared by Cuba's Communist party, the United Party of the Socialist Revolution (PURS). It includes everything from Communist indoctrination and military exercises to "voluntary" work of every sort.

Since future members of the PURS will come from

the UJC ranks, potential leaders are carefully scrutinized. Only the best militants will ever reach party membership.

Formerly the Union of Rebel Youths, UJC adopted its present name in April, 1962, after Castro suggested in a speech that the term "Communist" ought to be included in it.

Even before that date, however, the youthful organization was sponsored by the PURS.

In describing the objectives of the group, Cuba Socialista listed these:

► "To make every young man, whether a peasant or a worker, develop a Communist attitude toward life"

► "To strengthen their hate toward Yankee imperialism and capitalism."

► "To fight against the growing influence of the clergy and the religious beliefs of the youth."

The article was especially critical of religion in Cuba. Religion, it said, is "one of the vehicles used by imperialism to send agents into our country."

It added that "many religious sects try to undermine the confidence of the youth. They exercise their influence against voluntary work in an effort to damage production."

UJC members, the publication stated, are educated in the spirit of dialectic and historical materialism.

Membership fees for UJC are 25 cents a month if the militant is a student. If a worker, the fee is 1 per cent of his wages.

Most prized possession of UJC members is the "carnet" or membership card. It shows he is among the hard core, the most dependable, the elite of the indoctrinated youth.

Normally a young person remains a UJC member until he is 27. But not all young Communists by any means become members of the PURS. Only the best are taken by the party.

"Many of the best UJC cadres will join the party," said Cuba Socialista. "Others will be called on to hold important jobs in the state apparatus."

UJC members, in turn, are taught to indoctrinate younger children. Indoctrinating boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 14 is considered "a very important job" of UJC.

-By Interlandi