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30Oct88 CUBA: NEWS MEDIA SHOWS MORE CRITICAL CANDOUR.

By Lionel Martin

HAVANA, Oct 30, Reuters - News media in Cuba -- a country without any opposition press -- have been speaking out strongly about government inefficiency and bureaucracy.

"The government wants us to be whistle blowers and not just cheerleaders," said a Cuban journalist for an official newspaper.

"We have been given the green light to condemn negligence, bureaucracy, waste, official insensitivity to the needs of citizens, corruption and the dozens of other shortcomings that every Cuban lives with daily," said the journalist who asked to remain anonymous.

Articles in the government-run mass media have referred to the special privileges some high officials have in this Communist country and have questioned certain decisions by authorities, such as dress code enforcement by the Ministry of Education.

The journalist admitted that the media would not criticise the basic principles of Cuba's socialist system, its foreign policy or its top leadership.

President Fidel Castro said in May 1987 in an interview with a French newspaper: "The press has to be much more critical and has to delve deeply into an analysis of problems."

In a speech later that year he said: "Errors, yes we have made them -- but we have had the courage and the honesty to recognise them."

Exposés of inefficiency and bureaucracy have become relatively more common, and journalists are now expected to take on investigative assignments and to be able to write what is known here as constructive criticism.

"To criticise is simple but to be knowledgeable and constructive is not so simple," said a Cuban official, adding that the Communist Party is dissatisfied with the quality of press criticism.

The party has demanded that editors be bolder, while the government has told officials and state managers to cooperate with reporters.

The journalist said limits of criticism were still guided by Castro's dictum of a quarter of a century ago: "Anything within the revolution, nothing outside the revolution."

A revealing article, which might hint of a new trend, was published in September in *Juventud Rebelde* (Rebel Youth).

The author, Solidad Cruz, quoted a saying often heard in Havana: "There is nobody who can overthrow the revolution but neither is there anybody who can put things straight."

The comment, often muttered even by strong supporters of the Cuban revolution, reflects scepticism about correcting major economic, administrative and other deficiencies among the targets of the so-called "rectification" campaign.

In an unusually frank article, Cruz wrote: "It is almost impossible to hold a conversation in which statements on the incompetence of some officials, unnecessary delays in getting things done and undeserved privileges fail to appear."

"It is the hour to speak with frankness and without fear, there, where they should hear us and where they can collectively find solutions," Cruz wrote.

The journalistic source said that a few years ago it would have been considered heresy for any newspaper, let alone that of the Communist youth, to acknowledge such scepticism among the people.

He suggested the article might reflect a view in government and party circles that it is better to air the people's gripes than to allow them to smoulder under the cover of official silence.

Another revealing article was published in *Verde Olivo* (Olive Green) in September. It was entitled "The Daddies of the Children" an expression widely used here to refer to the spoiled children of high government and party officials.

The article spoke publicly about the fact that the children of some high officials "do not live an austere, simple life free from ostentation."

The journalistic source, however, noted that the story is suggestive but not explicit.

"It does not mention that some ordinary Cubans believe, rightly or wrongly, that few sons of high officials were sent to the front lines in Angola during the fighting there, that these adolescents drive around like playboys in their fathers' government-owned autos, and that they have clothes, shoes and the latest electronic equipment in their homes which is not available to the average Cuban," he said.

In September *Juventud Rebelde* printed a pioneering critique of the Ministry of Education. "It is Very Easy to Prohibit" blasted school officials who sent teenage boys home because their pants were too tight and their hair too long.

In what for the Cuban media was a bold stance, the author urged educators to stop coercing students and instead use their "persuasive resources that come from teaching experience and professional skill to influence the way their pupils act."

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