

## **Abstract**

A Group of revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro has been struggling to overthrow the Cuban President Fulgencio Batista since the half of 1950s. After they succeeded on New Year's Eve 1959 the Revolutionary Cuban Government changed strategy in all aspects of the state administration. One of the most visible change happened in the sector of foreign policy. Cuba began to act not only as a sovereign country in relation to the neighbouring states which led to the conflict with the United States, but also began to actively export her model of revolution. The main initiators in this turn were Ernesto "Che" Guevara and Fidel Castro. The first region where Havana attempted to export the revolution was Latin America. Nevertheless, all attempts failed during 1960s.

At the same time, the process of decolonisation in Africa visited by Guevara in the middle of 1959 was in progress. In Egypt, he established his first contacts with revolutionary leaders and subsequently informed Havana about the situation. The socialist character of a number of revolutionary movements was close to Cubans, so they started to widen relationship with them. First aid to Africa was sent by Cuban government at the end of 1961 to Algeria which fought for independence on France since 1954. Strengthening of relations between Havana and Algeria contributed to the special role of Cubans in Africa. Another Cuban missions followed in a number of other African countries, to mention the most important, in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Leopoldville or Angola. Cuban missions in Africa lasted until the early 1990s.

The Ph.D. thesis deals with the Cuban missions in Africa in 1960s focusing mainly on period between years 1959–1967. There were two countries of special Castro interest. Cubans began to be strongly active in Algeria since autumn 1963, when Ahmed Ben Bella asked for help in the imminent conflict with Morocco, the so-called Sand War. The imminent conflict was settled peacefully at the end but Cubans remained in Algeria until 1965 when Ben Bella was overthrown. Since 1964, however, Cuban attention has been drawn to Congo-Leopoldville where a unit of approximately 130 Cubans under the leadership of Ernesto Guevara left with aim to train indigenous units of Simbas and fight a guerrilla warfare with them against government. On the western shores of Lake Tanganyika the partisans faced both government units, and anti-Castro Cubans fighting together with hostile forces against them. After a few months, it was obvious the guerrillas had no chance to succeed and Guevara was enforced to withdraw.

There is no such a small and poor country to be involved in so many foreign adventures. The Cuban Missions in Africa are analysed in this theses within the prism of the Cold War. In this context the Missions were largely unsuccessful but still could boast of several valuable victories.