

# Latin America: Some Problems of Revolutionary Strategy\*

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"Dark days await Latin America. . . . Once the anti-imperialist struggle has begun, it must be continuous, and it must hit hard, where it hurts, constantly, and never take one step back; always forward, always striking back, always answering every aggressive act with stronger pressure from the popular masses. It is the way to triumph."

ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

*Cuba: Historical Exception or the First Anti-colonialist Advance?* (1961)

The duty of a revolutionary is to make the revolution.  
*Second Declaration of Havana* (1962)

THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS are an attempt to answer the question, How has the Cuban Revolution modified the bitter class struggle in Latin America, which pits the popular masses against national oligarchies in power and imperialism? How does one explain the slowness and the obvious difficulties encountered by the revolutionary process in that crucial link in the imperialist chain? To the extent that the Cuban Revolution, from its earliest days, has been an important element in the vanguard of Latin American revolution—to the extent that the

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Cuban people and their leaders, after six years of struggle, have abandoned none of their proletarian internationalism—the question is one of the most vital in the continuing, sometimes agitated debate.

We lack a historical study of the complex phenomena of reaction which follow the victory of the socialist revolution. There have been three socialist revolutions of the greatest importance in the space of fifty years, Russia, China, and Cuba; these make such a work long overdue. A concrete study of tactical and strategic guises assumed by revolutionary parties in bordering countries and the imperialist blockade that stems from it would, given the evident historical differences, permit the forging of the tools necessary to answer our question. Fascism in Europe, the imperialist wars of intervention in Southeast Asia, and the growing militarization of political regimes in Latin America, cannot evidently be considered as cyclical, mechanical returns to former states of class domination. This, least of all, when they are not analyzable by means of a unilateral category such as "the negation of a negation." The concrete differences in space and time do not prevent our making some analogy between today's Cuba and the young Soviet Union. How can we fail to be reminded, after reading the statements of 1959 and 1960, in which the Cuban leaders evoke the imminence of new revolutions on the American continent, of Lenin's speeches of 1919 and 1920, in which he expressed his certainty of the imminent uprising of the European proletariat? Lenin, unlike Trotsky, soon abandoned this illusion, just as the Cuban leaders, so it would appear, have abandoned it today. Are we not reminded, on seeing the spontaneous outburst of guerrilla activity patterned on the Cuban model (except in Venezuela and Colombia), of the imitation of the Bolshevik model by the Spartacists and by Béla Kun's Hungarian Commune, both suppressed at the beginning of 1919?

Has not imperialism in its relations with the Soviet Union and Cuba passed through the same stages? First come wars of intervention; in Cuba, the Bay of Pigs. Next, economic aggression: general blockade, the breaking of the blockade by signing limited economic agreements—with England taking the lead in both cases. Then comes incoherent and hasty reformism in the countries bordering on the "subversive focus" (the agrarian measures taken in Danubian Europe after the Hungarian Revolution had the same justification as the agrarian reform pro-

posed by the Alliance for Progress—and the same fate). This analogy is not a comparison, but it is a specific evaluation of the present situation, which puts into focus what is radically new in Cuba's relations with imperialism.

A notable synchronization has characterized continental revolutionary attempts and failures: 1959, 1960, 1961—years of sparkling heroism, of guerrilla foci appearing spontaneously in Santo Domingo, Paraguay, Colombia, Central America. In Brazil, Julião agitates in the Northeast and Brizola repels a military coup d'état in Rio Grande do Sul. In Peru the first occupations of the land take place and the first revolutionary peasant unions are organized in Cuzco. The years 1962 and 1963 reveal defeat and division within the movement. In Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Paraguay, attempts at armed struggle fail. In Brazil, Julião's Peasant Leagues are split by internal divisions and the *Tiradentes* movement failed to organize politically as Julião desired. In Argentina the military frustrate the popular electoral victory of March 18, 1962, when the Peronista, Frumini, is elected by an overwhelming majority as governor of Buenos Aires. In Venezuela, Betancourt comes to power, and the revolution is made more difficult. In Chile, Frei is victorious, due to the women's vote; and in Brazil we have the installation of an openly fascist dictatorship. Reaction sweeps the continent.

Today we know that none of these defeats was final. Rather, they have forced the revolutionary movement to move on to a higher level of organization. In 1964 armed struggle has taken root and been consolidated in Venezuela and Colombia on a popular base that today is unbreakable. The immense explosives factory that imperialist exploitation has unwittingly installed in Latin America can finally dispense with imported revolutionary models and can find its way in accord with its own history, character, and social formation.

Latin America is turning toward its historical roots, putting an end to the ideological colonialism it has had to suffer for so long. In our language, retarded by metaphor, we can say that South America has gone through, immediately after Cuba, its "1905," which it has left behind. Today we can reflect upon that experience. This effort encounters a serious obstacle: there exists among the Latin American nations, as this historical synchronization indicates, a latent unity of destiny. The show of solidarity with Cuba demonstrates it very well; this unity is

spontaneously experienced from Mexico to Uruguay. There is a lot of talk today, always uttered in expert tones, of the "twenty Latin Americas." Any traveler going from Bolivia to Argentina, or even from Salta, in the north of Argentina, to Buenos Aires, or from Lima to Cuzco, must feel that he has journeyed through different worlds and several centuries. But this is a superficial impression.

Is not underdevelopment, that colonial deformation, inequality in social and economic development within the same country, between the countryside and the capital? Or to put it another way, is not that inequality the superimposition of two levels of development, an intrusion of capitalist penetration into the interior of a country with feudal monoproduction? Does not this misery perhaps condition this wealth, and vice versa? If underdevelopment is not a natural phenomenon, but rather the result of history, South America then possesses historical unity. If to free itself from the Spanish yoke it had to militarily "exist as a group," then it must act in this way to free itself of the *Yanquis*. If Bolívar refused to consider Colombia free as long as Upper and Lower Peru were not also freed, it is equally or more realistic for Fidel Castro to believe Cuba's liberation will not be complete while Venezuela and Colombia are enslaved. If one can rightly speak of the Latin American revolution, it is not on Latin America's account, but rather, dialectically speaking, on account of the common enemy, the United States. And it is for this reason that the ideas of Bolívar acquire power again in the strategy of the revolutionary vanguards following the Cuban Revolution.

In contrast to these internal, national, and international divisions, North American imperialism considers South America as a unit of production first, then as a coherent field for political maneuvers. Imperialism carries on its exploitation through the Alliance for Progress, the Inter-American Bank for Development (IBD), and other specialized organizations. The Inter-American Defense Council, the OAS, etc. assure "political-military protection."

Let us now discuss the form of economic relations that binds South America to North America. At bottom, the "colonial pact" survives intact: raw materials against manufactured goods, petroleum against gasoline, cocoa against chocolate, iron against automobiles, etc. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), an agency of the UN, the

deterioration of conditions of commercial exchange led to an indirect loss of \$2,660 million in 1961 for South America as a whole. This, together with the income from foreign investments sent home (\$1,735 million) and with the funds exported through amortization of debts (\$1,450 million), totals more than three times the theoretical amount of aid funds and annual investments promised to the continent through the Alliance for Progress—\$2,000 million.

Behind the marvelous promises, what strategic plan motivated imperialism when it launched the Alliance for Progress in Punta del Este in 1961? It tried to hide the traditional colonial pact, and the military dictatorships that this entailed, behind a revolutionary front (the prototype of the latter is still Pérez Jiménez of Venezuela, decorated in his time by Eisenhower). This was done through a mere show of national industrialization, inflated overnight artificially by a massive export of predominantly private North American capital. This capital was readily attracted by cheap labor; the enormous supply of available reserves; the free trade that allows profits to be sent home; the absence of fiscal control; and finally, a very high profit rate for the United States. In this way the origin of that capital channeled investments into the branches most profitable for the monopolies—chiefly the extractive industries, whose development was further subordinated to the world-wide strategic plan for the exploitation of raw materials by the United States. For example, the very important Bolivian tungsten and antimony mines have been left in reserve, since the United States does not need them at the moment and their development would depress the world market.

This economic impulse might have offered a "national appearance" if mixed pseudo-companies of administrative councils—with Spanish initials and "national bourgeois" representatives—were established. A new class of national co-administrators would have been developed to serve as a screen for foreign exploitation. In the countryside they could have liquidated the feudal relationships of production—payment in kind for real estate rental, servitude or peonage, landed estates, fallow lands, very low productivity per acre—which are the cause of the explosive political situation among the greater part of the peasantry. They could have begun a timid capitalist development. But those advanced forms of capitalist penetration threatened to end the colonial pact by allowing processing industries

to work raw materials on the spot. Then these "national bourgeoisies" could have traded with the whole world, thus ending commercial monopoly.

Aware of these dangers, the Alliance for Progress reserved the greater part of its aid funds for *unproductive* investments—roads, hospitals, schools, etc.—to avoid creating competing industries. They were confident they could cure the dangerous symptoms of "underdevelopment" by hiding its causes. It was a political maneuver under an economic guise. As its own promoters confess, that plan has been a total failure, because in order to wipe out agrarian feudalism, it would have been necessary to transform the relationships of production *as a whole*. Agrarian feudalism, as in Colombia and Brazil, is an integral part of the development of the farming-exporting, commercial, and even industrial bourgeoisie. If contradictions really exist between those two sections of the ruling class, they must be *secondary* contradictions, which would be surmountable in the face of the main danger, which is revolution. The process of inflation has provoked growing unemployment, salary reduction, and sharp economic contraction; and that inflation, instead of being compensated for by an increase in production, could be corrected only through new loans from the outside. (An increase in production might have induced overproduction, because of the absence of an internal market accessible to the peasant masses. This market could be created only through a radical transformation of the semifeudal relationships of production). These loans would necessarily be short term, thus closing the vicious circle of "underdevelopment"—going into debt to pay one's debts—because the aid funds have never reached half the sum originally promised.

Let us now outline the nature of those famous aid funds of the Alliance for Progress. Such funds are presented, without any disguise, as a specific form of exportation of capital. Fowler Hamilton, director of foreign aid, declared to a group of North American businessmen: "Every dollar that leaves our pocket must reenter the U.S. after having bought for us goods for the amount of one dollar."

(1) The Alliance for Progress, in effect, allows the conquest of new markets or the consolidation of old ones. In the majority of cases, the borrowed funds must be employed in importing manufactured goods from the United States, at prices 50 to 200 percent higher than those on the world market. In Colombia

and in the Andes, the gifts in kind (powdered milk, packaged butter) that are distributed by members of the Peace Corps (young *Yanquis*, voluntarily recruited to serve simultaneously as spies and Boy Scouts in South America) serve as a tool of blackmail and political penetration among the peasants.

(2) The export of agricultural surpluses (Decree 480) satisfies two demands:

(a) It eases the crisis of national overproduction in the United States.

(b) Although payable in local currency, transportation, distribution, and packaging are at the expense of the "aided country." This is for the greater profit of the North American freight enterprises, who can charge super-elevated fees.

(3) Every country "aided" within the Alliance for Progress must assure on its part:

(a) The maintenance of an enormous apparatus of North American civil servants and technicians, with a scandalously high life style (imported food, private golf and sports clubs, servants, etc.).

(b) The infrastructural projects (highway construction, forest removal, water and electricity services) are in zones where North American companies operate and where their future capital will be invested. Those projects are evidently handed over to North American concerns, who follow their own plans and estimates and use their own technicians, equipment, etc.—an ingenious way of lowering the expenses of exploitation by letting them fall back onto the exploited.

The Alliance for Progress arranges, covers, and reinforces the process by which the decapitalized countries of South America increase and feed the accumulation of capital in the United States.

Balkanization, actually the heritage of the intracontinental wars of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, coincides with the needs of North American strategy. It operates to tie up or control commercial exchanges among the countries of South America, to reserve for itself a monopoly on buying and selling, and politically, to organize Holy Alliances at a low cost. Two months before the Chilean presidential elections of September, 1964, Bolivian anti-Chilean nationalism underwent a mysteriously spirited upsurge. It was a throwback to the Pacific war of 1879, which deprived Bolivia of access to the sea. Simultaneously (a startling coincidence), Argentina laid claim against

Chile for its territories in Patagonia (between Chiloé and Chulut). Both countries began to mobilize their military reserves until the election of the Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei brought a halt to the agitation.

Ecuador against Peru; Peru against Bolivia and Chile; Bolivia against Paraguay; Chile against Argentina. Balkanization facilitates the colonialization of the small countries in a most cynical manner. An example: Bolivia. On August 22, 1963, the government of Paz Estenssoro signed a commercial treaty with the United States which obliged it to break off all trade with Europe and neighboring countries and to import only from the United States. In exchange Bolivia would receive funds in aid from the Alliance for Progress.

The existence of separate American nations, sometimes even hostile toward one another, is an irreversible fact. The revolutionary struggle can only be a fight for *national* liberation. To assign to national revolutionary movements the prior condition of continental unity is equivalent to sending them to the Greek calends. On the occasion of the last disturbances in Panama, provoked by *Yanqui* Zonists in January, 1964, some Trotskyists tried to launch the slogan "Return Panama to Colombia." These same elements brandish old man Trotsky's slogan "the socialist U.S.A." But neither returning to the letter of past history, nor evoking a mythical future (as the U.S.A. does today) can do away with the *present*, with the fact of Balkanization, unless one is trying to betray the present struggle of every nation by imposing a nonexistent unity. The Caribbean revolutionaries who have not forgotten their old project of creating a Federation of the Antilles know very well that their beautiful dream has been lost in daily, fragmented, and insular tasks.

In this sense one can see much more clearly how difficult the theoretical and practical work of national liberation is for Latin Americans. Southeast Asia has available to it the immense base of influence and theoretical planning from People's China, the Democratic Republic of Viet-Nam, and North Korea. Africa gets the support of Algeria, Congo-Brazzaville, Ghana, and Zanzibar. Among the vanguards of those two continents there is solid friendship and common forms of action, of which the Afro-Asian conferences serve as proof. Latin America, however, remains cut off and isolated from the world-wide movement.

Cuba aside, a great part of the American revolutionary organizations are still under the ideological influence of the European workers' movements whose ideology is often alien to Latin America's real problems.

Delay and division on the part of the revolutionary parties in Latin America have dramatic results. Whether or not the parties want it, they are joined by force, *from outside*. The Cuban Revolution, in spite of itself and in spite of them, has sealed that unity. History would not be truly dialectical if the formidable lesson that a revolution is for the people who have made it were not also a lesson for the continental counterrevolution. And from the Rio Grande to the Falkland Islands, the Cuban Revolution has, to a large extent, *transformed the conditions of transformation*. Therefore, from its inception, from the very fact that the revolution exists in the imperialists' eyes, Cuba has condemned to failure every attempt at a merely mechanical repetition of Sierra Maestra. The door that Cuba has opened by surprise, under the very nose of imperialism—the socialist revolution—has been solidly barred from within by the national oligarchies, and from without by imperialism. How can its brothers manage to force the door open again? By exercising a stronger and more lasting pressure, or by each opening a new door in the least defended spot in the wall.

What is this transformation brought about by Cuba? Cuba has made the class struggle in Latin America pass quickly to a level for which neither the exploited classes nor their vanguards were prepared.

In the practical realm we all know that Cuba has liquidated geographical fatalism. That, together with Browderism, had a great influence on the Communist parties of Latin America immediately after the Second World War. Today it is possible to take power and keep it. Strictly considered, this concept, which upsets habits, provokes a shudder. Even in the most intense moments of the Colombian Civil War (1949–1957), this idea was as foreign to the Colombian Communist Party as it was to the worn-out left-wing liberals, when they had a real peasant army. Only the Brazilian Communist Party, in the same situation after the failure of the insurrection of 1936, had fixed for itself the goal of seizing power. On the occasion of the Manifesto of 1950 (which was more a sectarian and "leftist" outbreak than a strategy), the Brazilian CP tried to create two bases

for a revolutionary army among the peasants, in northern Paraná and Goiás, of which there are still traces today in Formosa in northern Argentina.

Since the Cuban Revolution the Chilean CP has fixed as a goal the conquest of power by the ballot box (Twelfth Congress, March, 1962); the Argentine CP has taken up as a standard the slogan launched by its secretary Codovilla at their Twelfth Congress (March, 1963): "Towards the seizure of power through mass action." At their Third Congress (1961), the Venezuelan CP had been the first to consider seriously the establishment of a democratic and popular power, leaving to the course of revolutionary practice itself the responsibility of deciding what road to take. As a result of the oppression unleashed by Betancourt, the only way was armed struggle. The same evolution, three years later, takes place in Colombia where the Colombian CP, after the beginning of the guerrilla war in Marquetalia, abandons its peaceful line to create a front against repression. Thus, as the Colombian comrades predicted a long time before, the self-defense of the masses is transformed into a tactical guerrilla offensive. But at the very moment in which the example of Cuba showed that the conquest of power was not a priori unrealistic, the unilateral repercussions of the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet CP and the general orientation taken then by the international workers' movement, led the Communist parties to adopt a "national democratic" line, a "united front with the bourgeoisie." This was the peaceful road that had been defended not long before by the Colombian CP (Ninth Congress, 1963); the Mexican CP (Thirteenth Congress); the Bolivian CP before the schism (Second Congress, 1964, in which the peaceful road is considered "the most probable"); the Chilean CP (Thirteenth Congress); the Argentine and the Brazilian Communist parties.

The example of the Brazilian CP is revealing. Under the direct influence of de-Stalinization, in 1958, it makes an about-face, very much part of its tradition. The declaration of March, 1958, calls upon Communists to form a "united democratic and nationalist front," whose leadership would logically fall into the hands of the national bourgeoisie. One year later, Cuba. Since then the militants of the Brazilian CP (headed by pro-Soviet Carlos Prestes) have turned into "docile lambs," a supplementary force of the "advanced" bourgeoisie and the electoral support of Marshall Lott (who ran against Quadros in 1960).

The bourgeoisie considers them more ferocious the more sheep-like they become. Then the CP of Brazil (pro-Chinese) is founded, taking away valuable cadres, above all in the south, from Prestes' party. A good part of the middle classes, frightened by the Cuban Revolution, leans toward Lacerda and the military. The illustrious national bourgeoisie abandons Goulart in midstream, and gives rise to the coup d'état of April 1, 1964. The Brazilian CP is left disorganized, smashed by repression and internal dissension, unable to lead the violent and popular discontent. This is but one example of the historical contretemps provoked by international centralism, which turns out to be a transposition of slogans and tactics which were elaborated for a different historical situation. In the face of this incapacity, Cuba serves as an unwitting model for fifty Latin American revolutionary organizations, all on the fringes of the Communist parties, and all resolved on direct action. All these years of revolutionary action force us to recognize that heroism is not enough. There is a lack of ideological maturity, and above all, political sense, as well as a lack of sectarianism and firmness in the preparation of the armed struggle. They are too young, and too unthinkingly modeled after Cuba. They are prisoners of that model. Those so-called Castroite organizations are in jeopardy, at least in their present form: MOEC (Peasant Student Worker Movement) in Colombia; URJE (Revolutionary Union of Ecuadorian Youth) in Ecuador; MIR (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) and FIR (Revolutionary Leftist Front) in Peru; "Vanguard Socialism" in Argentina (with its myriad subdivisions); MAC (Movement of Peasant Support) and the left wing of the Socialist Party, in Uruguay (Sendic, organizers of the union of sugar-cane cutters). Until now the revolutionary front has not been able to respond to the heightened level of the revolutionary struggle—and Cuba has stood alone.

In the theoretical field, as a consequence of its practical triumph, Cuba rehabilitates Marxism. It has been trapped in Latin America since 1930 between the two poles of APRA, and the mechanical Marxism that had no contact with national reality. Let us not forget the Popular American Revolutionary League, the Latin American Kuomintang. It was born in 1924 as a united front (at the continental level of anti-imperialist parties and groups) and transformed into a party in 1929, with sections in every country. APRA was the seedbed of a whole generation of anti-imperialist, petit-bourgeois movements: of

Betancourt and ADD, of Perón's *justicialismo* in a certain sense, and of Bolivia's Revolutionary National Movement (the last two with fascist influence).

The "Indo-Americanism" of the founder and chief of APRA, Haya de la Torre, has perpetrated under the name of Marxism the greatest historical betrayal that Latin America has seen in thirty years. For at least twenty years Haya de la Torre was the anti-imperialist guide for an entire generation of enlightened bourgeoisie, even of the proletariat itself (in any case, in Peru). "Hegel, plus Marx, plus Einstein, equals Haya de la Torre," a follower of the Master could say. "The Aprista Doctrine," wrote Haya in 1936 in *Anti-Imperialism and APRA*, "means within Marxism a new and methodical confrontation of Indo-American reality with the thesis that Marx had postulated for Europe." This confrontation led to his famous notion of historical time-space. From it he concluded that since in Europe socialism springs from the internal contradictions of capitalism, and since capitalism takes the form of imperialism in Latin America, it was necessary to encourage imperialist domination. To accelerate national liberation, this sophism sought theoretical justification in a hypocritically mechanistic materialism and in a pretended law of succession of social formations. Since it would appear one cannot skip levels (or stages), North American imperialism has a possible use. This idea led Haya, beginning in 1945, to become one of the leading and most prestigious agents for North American imperialism. In proving that Marxism as a universal theory of history has its point of entry in Latin America, Cuba wipes out, in one stroke, all the falsifications of Marxism, and with it, all its spokesmen—Haya, Betancourt, Paz Estenssoro, and others.

In creating a vacuum, Cuba has also created a new demand for an authentic Marxism, able to conceive of the national experiences of South America. Not only Cuba's independence in the Chinese-Soviet split, but the entire daily practice of its leaders, both in the Sierra Maestra and in power, indicates that Latin America be transformed into a new center of revolutionary planning that accords with its own conditions. At the same time, Cuba unwittingly reveals that in many parts of the continent this planning still remains for the future. Since the death of José Carlos Mariátegui, founder of the Peruvian CP and author of *Seven Essays of Interpretation of Peruvian Reality*, the greatest Marxist work to come out of America

before the Cuban Revolution, the majority of Marxist theoreticians and leaders have imported from Europe prefabricated strategies and concepts. Never, until Fidel Castro and the Venezuelan and Colombian revolutions, had Marxism found a point of articulation with a Latin American social reality, so atypical from a European viewpoint.

The real weight of the Cuban Revolution is perhaps most strongly felt within the revolution itself. It serves to put an end to Soviet, Chinese, and even *Cuban* revolutionary models; to the sterile comfort of schemes and formulas; to the separation of the masses; to the cult of organization for the sake of organization. In this sense Cuba has demonstrated that Marxism "no longer served" and that it was necessary to recover the revolutionary inspiration of Marxism-Leninism: that it was necessary once again to sink Marxism into the reality of a class action. That need is everywhere felt, but not yet everywhere satisfied. Thus, Latin America is trying to find its own revolutionary path, and in light of Cuba, knows that it must create a path based on its own experience. The *Second Declaration of Havana* did not spring from the heads of the Cuban leaders one exultant night; nor was it shoved abusively on the Latin American masses as some kind of mysticism. It is the point at which all the experiences and latent aspirations of the continent's exploited masses converge.

Cuba has also raised the level of material and ideological imperialist reaction more quickly than it has the level of the revolutionary leadership. If imperialism has drawn more advantages from the Cuban Revolution than the revolutionary forces have, this is not due to imperialism's higher intelligence. Imperialism is in a better position to carry out what it learned from the Cuban Revolution, because it controls all the material means of organized violence, plus a nervous impulse its survival instinct adds.

On the material level, we cannot emphasize enough the incredible reinforcement of apparatus for repression which was begun in 1960. The other side of the gilded medal that is the Alliance for Progress is a new and intensive military aid to Latin American governments. At Punta del Este Mr. [Douglas] Dillon launched optimistic plans designed to transform Latin America into that "paradise of gilded latrines," whose failure was immediately analyzed by Che Guevara. In July, 1961, Kennedy submitted to Congress "a special military program, des-



tinged to guarantee the internal security of Latin America against subversion." According to the *New York Times* of July 4: "The program represents a radical change in the military programs for the Western Hemisphere. Until now the principal aim had always been to equip air and naval units for a common defense of the hemisphere against an attack from the outside. Today, greater importance is conceded to the internal defense against subversion." During 1961, \$21 million were earmarked for "anti-subversive equipment."

Every year the antiguerrilla school in Panama graduates an unknown number (due to military secrecy, but in the thousands) of young officials and Latin American policemen. Among the graduates are battalions of Colombian antiguerrillas, Ecuadorian parachutists, Peruvian commandos, Bolivian rangers, Argentine police (now equipped with heavy weapons), and many other military groups, formed and organized by North American military missions, which had existed in an embryonic state before the Cuban Revolution. Today all those groups are engaged in liquidating insurrection within their countries. It is chiefly in the area of information and infiltration that North American aid has intensified its efforts. The FBI and the CIA directly control the local police. In Brazil, no one except Brizola, who had the police archives burned in Rio Grande do Sul when he was governor there, thought it reprehensible that the FBI and the CIA seized the secret files of the political police in full view of the "national bourgeois regime." Argentina, with twenty million inhabitants, relies on seven political police agencies, independent and mutual rivals. In Venezuela, Sotopol, Digepol, SIFA, PTJ, etc. do the job, not to mention the agents the CIA recruits on the spot. "Twenty years ago," an Ecuadorian military information officer said proudly, "we were still relatively innocent. When students went out in the streets we shot at them, which had bad results. Today we know that of the hundred weapons for stifling revolution, firearms are the last."

Judge for yourself: the six or seven important guerrilla centers that have appeared in Latin America since 1959 have been wiped out or were destroyed at birth as a result of being denounced, frequently by infiltrators.

On the political level the triumph of the Cuban Revolution tends to radicalize, organize, and unify the various elements of the bourgeoisie into a single counterrevolutionary front faster than revolutionary organizations become radicalized and uni-

fied. Cuba's rapid transformation into a socialist country has been used to frighten the so-called national bourgeoisie and the educated sectors of the middle classes. The paradoxical result of a revolution that was at first bourgeois-democratic, like the Cuban Revolution, is that it has revealed and consolidated the wavering class consciousness of the neighboring national bourgeoisie, above all, where they exist as a social class—in Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Colombia.

This consolidation to the right leaves in many places a central vacuum for a revolutionary vanguard. It is an emptiness all the more surprising because Latin America is a mine of solid and committed revolutionary groups, all ready to sacrifice themselves, but not yet able to coalesce into an organized vanguard. This vanguard is waiting to be built, and many young militants recognize it as an exhausting task. "Ah, if only we had a man or a party to follow"—is the phrase repeated among thousands of young militants, from Panama to Patagonia. Among all the spectacles of misery and abandonment that America offers, perhaps none is as absurd, as maddening, as this one.

Overnight Cuba stamped the language, style, and content of revolutionary action with a resounding youthfulness. Because of the demographic situation, this youthful tone has reverberated throughout the continent. These young people, who have short memories, have no intention of following anyone except those who fight beside them. In America, especially in its political behavior, there is a dramatic separation between generations. It is enough to observe the age structure in the semicolonial countries of South America to realize that this separation reflects a real division, which will deepen.

The cabal of social democratic "leaders," the so-called "generation of 1920," who grew up together in exile in the shadow of the revolutionary sacrifices of their people, have happily faded away. The Cuban Revolution, which they have betrayed, has publicly unmasked them. The Haya de la Torres, the Figueras, the Betancourts, the Muñoz Maríns, the Arévalos, the Frondizis, the Paz Estenssoros, came to power immediately after the Second World War, and until the last three years have retained in their hands the entire Latin American anti-imperialist movement. Cuba has pushed them off the revolutionary scene, where they still conjured illusions.

The frustrated feelings of these petty bourgeoisies are openly displayed. In the 1950s it was still possible for Betancourt to



become the leader of the popular anti-imperialist resistance. After Fidel's lightning trip to Venezuela in 1959, Betancourt found his position considerably changed. Betancourt's paranoid imbalance can be seen in the rabid insults he soon hurled against "Castro-Communism" (his term became popular all over the continent). Yet the man who used it is at bottom a petty, despairing politician, condemned to an armored car and solitude, who got carried away and let his mask slip before 500,000 people in Silence Square, Caracas.

The Fidelista movement is the dividing point between two generations. It starts between the two historical moments of the revolution: the bourgeois and the socialist. The Cuban Revolution has never been forgiven for having built a bridge between those two moments. At the culmination of one era and the start of another, Cuba has fixed forever the climactic moment in which a tradition was reversed. The historical fate of the Cuban Revolution is, in effect, to have been able to join the material and moral support of those old liberal politicians (which it had to quickly get rid of) with the spirit of determination and honesty of those young men with no political past, named Fidel and Raúl Castro, Camillo Cienfuegos, Ernesto Che Guevara, Almeida, and so many others.

This represents a singular fusion of contradictions. At the most intense moment of the clandestine struggle the 26th of July movement was able to collect money in the middle of New York City, in the name of the "rights of man"; to accept material assistance from Pepe Figueres, President of Costa Rica, for the defense of democracy; to receive officially financial aid from the Venezuelan people, recently freed from Pérez Jiménez's dictatorship, and to get from Larrazábal, President of the Democratic Junta, an armed airplane. It received a protective world-wide notoriety, thanks to the capitalist publishing chains *Life* and *Paris-Match*. All of this takes nothing away from the extraordinary merits of the 26th of July, but it is necessary to remember these things in order to evaluate the differences in equivalent movements today. "Do you think that a [Herbert] Matthews\* would come out here to interview us, or that Figueres would send us guns?" the man in charge of an independent Colombian republic a few hours from Bogotá said to me with a smile. At this moment the peasants, who needed

\* Of the *New York Times*, who interviewed Fidel in the Sierra Maestra (ed.).

everything, were preparing to meet the offensive that the regular army in collaboration with the *Yanqui* military mission had been preparing for several years. Destined to be far removed from the centers of international support, to lack money and weapons, to be the victims of a systematic campaign to discredit the aims and meanings of the fight carried on by the national and international press, to face solitude and hunger—such is the bitter converse of the courageous slogan that is ineluctably imposed on these revolutionaries: "Don't rely on anything but your own forces."

After the Cuban Revolution the sacrifice in human lives and the length and complexity of the revolutionary war have increased. It is not as easy today as it was five years ago to establish a broad liberation front, when every anti-imperialist stance is accused of Castro-Communism and is outlawed. It is much less easy to forge a popular army when the regular armies have for the past five years been psychologically and militarily trained in "irregular" warfare and the police agencies are trained to infiltrate clandestine networks and are enlarging the scope of their repression. Now is the time to change language and viewpoint, in Europe and elsewhere, when we attempt to understand the difficulties that confront our comrades in that part of the world.

The comments, or their absence, of the "objective" French press on the Venezuelan revolution, show this very well. Whoever does not wish to free himself from the Cuban model is likely not to understand contemporary history. On adopting their new strategy of the "long war," what have the Venezuelan FALN done but take into account the new situation created by Cuba? More than half of the North American investments in Latin America are located in Venezuela. It is the country most infiltrated and therefore the most carefully watched by the United States. After the failure of its urban insurrectional form (which was not its proper form), the Venezuelan revolution has found its second wind, its final balance, in this long-term effort: the passage from a guerrilla army to a regular popular army in the interior of the country. This leaves to the city all its political importance, to take care of the possibilities of mass legal efforts and daring alliances. In the interior, even more than in Caracas, the mass effort is directly connected to the armed struggle. This evolution bears a close resemblance to that of the Chinese revolution, which many thought was on the verge of death after the

bloody failures of Canton and Shanghai in 1927. But it was only in this way that the Communist leaders could discard the Bolshevik model and develop an authentically Chinese form. This was the model victoriously defended by Mao against Li Lisan. Born out of defeat, the retirement to the countryside, with the long march and the installation of revolutionary peasant bases, meant victory. But if an inventory of sacrifices is ever compiled, the blood spilled in Shanghai or Caracas should not be recorded on the debit side of the revolution, as if it were the result of an error in judgment.

In both cases, in order to prove theoretically that an isolated urban insurrection cannot achieve victory in a semicolonial country with a peasant majority, it has been necessary to first realize it *in practice*. If it was sufficient to prove a revolutionary theory theoretically, a few competent theoreticians would be enough to make "good" revolutions, without useless detours, by deductive means. Even if a strategy of the long war, carried out from the countryside and moving to the cities, had been tacitly accepted by the commanders of the guerrilla fronts in 1962, it had to wait for confirmation upon events elsewhere. Two years later it had to be ratified by urban leaders, at which time there appeared to be a divergence of aims between the countryside and the city. Anyone who visited the rural fronts before the elections of December, 1964, could bear witness to the orientation of Douglas in Falcón, or Urbina and Gabaldón in Lara. They called for reestablishing the guerrilla war on political rather than military terms. This meant patiently building peasant cells of support in each town; daily efforts at propaganda and making contacts; plowing new lands in the jungle; campaigns for literacy among combatants and peasants; reinforcement of the contact organization with the urban areas; supply and information networks. All of this political, organizational effort culminated in the establishment of a fixed revolutionary base, with its own school, courts, and broadcasting station (already installed in Falcón).

Out of all this underground activity the press picks out only the military aspects, which are the least essential. While the urban guerrilla war eroded into a war of attrition, in which time acted against the revolutionary forces, the rural guerrilla war silently and calmly took advantage of that same time to establish the political infrastructure for future military actions. In the euphoria of the recent popular victories, a political underesti-

mation of Betancourt's government and of North American imperialism swept the ranks of the urban militants, who for obvious reasons still did not have a full grasp of the new post-Cuban conditions. Hence the underestimation of the repressive capacity of the government and the military power of imperialism. This explains the unexpected dismantling, more rapid than was foreseen, of the legal and illegal political organization in Caracas and the state capitals. Thus, in the country most directly colonized by the United States, the Venezuelans have been the first to experience the "people's war" in post-Cuban conditions. They have paid dearly for their pioneer role. Now that the reformist method, having been put to the test in Peru, Brazil, and Chile, seems to have incontestably failed, we would be happy to see the revolutionaries of brother countries utilize the immense wealth of experience gathered by the Venezuelans—experience which could benefit everyone.

Recently there has been a great deal of discussion about Chile. In fact, that country is now in the reformist vanguard as a result of the Christian Democrat's election victory. Their leading political position reveals the extent to which mass movements have arisen in that country in the last few years. The policy followed by the workers' movement in Chile, after its relegalization of Ibáñez in 1958, could partially explain not a reactionary victory, but the way this policy took the continent's reformists by surprise.

One does not have to read Clausewitz to know that the basis of every tactic, revolutionary or not, consists of choosing one's battleground; and, whenever there is a bourgeois regime, of not engaging in decisive battles when they take place on the enemy's territory. In this case the territory is representative democracy, whose class nature is even more marked in Latin America than in Europe.

In this light Chile presents a special case—parliamentary tradition, minor role for the army, secondary importance of agrarian feudalism, etc. However, we must keep in mind the central importance of the Catholic Church (the women's votes for Frei over Allende were crucial); the control by the ruling class of all the propaganda media; the way the "charitable organization" Caritas could freely buy the votes of the *callampas* (working-class slums of Santiago) through the free distribution of food products offered by the Alliance for Progress. The impressive anti-Cuban campaign carried on by the

United States assured from the outset the superiority of the bourgeoisie in the electoral field. If there really were in Chile before September 4, 1964, some workers' sections skeptical about claims of a popular victory in the election, the FRAP (Popular Action Front) convinced them of the contrary.

(1) All working-class demands were tabled prior to the opening of the electoral campaign, in spite of inflation and growing unemployment, in order not to invite reaction and frighten the middle classes. The democratic parties, fully reconverted into electoral machines, gave assurances of Salvador Allende's victory to their militants, thus diverting the masses from the propositions of real power. Three months before the elections, FRAP was alarmed by the military mobilization of neighboring countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Peru) and rumors of a military coup d'état in the event of a popular victory. These rumors gained credence with the Brazilian coup d'état. FRAP considered itself obliged to secretly take formal and hasty measures to protect its leaders and prepare for an eventual move underground. These measures did not contribute to raising the level of popular consciousness and preparation.

(2) The loss of the election was explained by FRAP in terms of an alliance with "centralist" as well as frankly reactionary parties, and by the fact that concessions were made to refugees from the liberal and even conservative parties. There was even a front-page report in *Vistazo*, the Communist youth magazine, of a banquet given for Allende by the Grand Lodge of Chilean Freemasons, whose membership includes the great names of Chile's commercial bourgeoisie. Very little separated Frei's Christian Democratic program from Allende's program except that Allende was for progressive nationalization of the copper mines, and Frei for their "Chileanization." But Frei found more direct methods for reaching the masses.

(3) All offensive actions on the part of the working class were postponed "for later." This included not answering the opponent's offensives for fear of frightening the electorate. Chile is the only Latin American country where the break in diplomatic relations with Cuba had not been accompanied by mass demonstrations. Since the break was carried out shortly before the elections, FRAP was content to issue a communiqué, and Allende, their presidential candidate, to state that he would, if necessary, submit the case to the International Tribunal in The Hague. Instead of affirming their solidarity with Cuba, FRAP

kept putting distance between itself and the Cuban Revolution and other revolutionary groups, especially by failing to censure the torrents of abuse hurled by reaction against "the bloody dictatorship of Fidel Castro." Many sectors thought there was, in effect, nothing to reply to, and that Cuba was indefensible.

(4) It is one thing to make use of a bourgeois weapon such as an election in a regime of representative democracy, and quite another to use that election in a bourgeois way. It is one thing to defend the honesty of a particular election and respect for the constitution at a given moment against reaction, and another to take up in an absolute way, abstracted from any class position, the fervent defense of bourgeois law and the letter of its constitution. In the development of the Chilean electoral campaign the left and the right vied to see who could go further in their peaceful declarations and humanitarian condemnations of violence. Thus, we read in the program of the Chilean CP, approved by the Twelfth Congress in March, 1962:

The thesis of the peaceful road is not a tactical form, but rather is a proposition tied to the platform of the Communist Party . . . [the peaceful road] completely corresponds to the interests of the march toward socialism and the eminently humanist character of Marxist-Leninist theory. The present correlation of national and international forces has increased the chances for leading the revolution without an armed struggle.

Without even taking into account the unreasonable optimism of this last thesis in Latin America five years after the Cuban Revolution, one cannot help being surprised at seeing how the "theoretical humanism" of Marxism can serve to justify abandoning all political and theoretical precision. It would clearly be unjust to explain the reactionary victory in the Chilean presidential elections, and in the last legislative elections in March, 1965, solely on the basis of the mistakes made by the revolutionary forces. In fact, it could be explained in terms of the general situation in South America after the Cuban Revolution. What does say something about those errors of direction is how this electoral result has been transformed into a *revolutionary defeat*—in Chile as well as in the rest of Latin America. Taking for granted the temporary superiority of the imperialist forces and the extreme fragility of the electoral terrain for popular contests even in a country like Chile, this particular election is

unparalleled by any other "democratic movement in South America." Reaction, reducing itself to limited forms of socializing demagoguery to keep power, received an equal number of votes from men, who are less susceptible than women to conservative and clerical pressure. If reformism had not spread those illusions among the masses, if it had not tried to turn the Chilean election into a crucial "test" before the eyes of all the Latin American militants, then it would doubtlessly today be in the position of retaking the offensive on a new base.

The Chilean experience gives rise to two conclusions:

- 1) It is impossible for a "developed" country in America that belongs to the "Southern cone" (Chile, Argentina, Uruguay) or to Central America (Costa Rica) to escape being determined by the structure of the continent as a whole and pressed between the meshes of the imperialist network. Now Chile's workers' movement (motivated by a real superiority complex which tends to overestimate its specific nature as an "evolved" democracy) has tried to make an abstraction of the Latin American national liberation movements and of the historical moment, already described, created by the Cuban Revolution throughout the entire continent.
- 2) Opportunism shares a common feature with adventurism: the underestimation of North American imperialism, which does not stop short of making military coups d'état.

It is well known in Cuba and elsewhere that given the lack of preparation of the Chilean democratic organizations, Allende's electoral victory would not have brought about any fundamental change in the structure of the state apparatus, and that the Chilean ruling class and imperialism would not have been cast into oblivion by popular action. This radical underestimation of imperialism appeared with much greater clarity in the case of reformism in one part of the Brazilian revolutionary movement. Because if there ever was a historical example of the vanity of reformist efforts, it is in Brazil. As the limits of this article keep us from analyzing a matter that really calls for a separate study, we shall only point out that the Brazilian Communist Party, as its present self-criticism testifies, abandoned all class independence to take advantage of an alliance with the

"national bourgeoisie," represented by Goulart. This opportunistic line automatically provoked its opposite among a great part of the Brazilian revolutionary forces; that is, a petit-bourgeois radicalism that sneered at the patient efforts of the masses, in certain sectors influenced by Francisco Julião, and to some extent by Brizola. And if the fascist coup d'état encountered no resistance, it is also because it took the CP, which was in the middle of a legalistic euphoria, completely by surprise, and also because the only sectors prepared for the struggle preferred to postpone things, *not yet* wishing to take the defensive against a corrupt and impotent regime, and *not yet* wanting to unite the most conscious masses into a revolutionary base.

We only want to raise the question why, a short time after the Cuban Revolution and in spite of all that it taught, at the responsible leadership level in several countries, there have been illusions about a peaceful step toward socialism. Perhaps the secret (not really much of a secret) should be sought in the general framework of present reformist tendencies within Latin America. Permit us to reproduce the statement that a "highly qualified" representative of those tendencies was kind enough to give us, in an Andean nation where a popular insurrection survived at that moment in a latent state:

Our aim in Latin America is to consolidate the national democratic states, such as Bolivia, Chile, Mexico, Brazil [this was at the time of Goulart], so that these can one day serve as poles of attraction for the less advanced neighboring states. Those national states can only be effectively strengthened, to the detriment of North American imperialism, which tends to dominate the competing national economies so that they are able to escape their commercial monopoly. North American imperialism is the natural enemy of the national bourgeoisie. Now, the only chance for these national bourgeoisie to develop economies free from foreign influence, is to resort to the disinterested aid, free from political strings, of the socialist camp. It is for that reason that the primary task of the socialist camp is to tirelessly reinforce their economic strength. There are two reasons for this. First, it must be able to send long-term loans and technicians to those countries, that is, to weaken or check North American spheres of influence. Second, the revelation of the material and cultural progress of the socialist countries will add to the prestige of socialism and will increasingly attract to it the national democratic states.

At this moment, then, it is necessary to wait for the national

bourgeoisie to mature, since they clearly cannot appear overnight. The growth of a national bourgeoisie means the simultaneous growth of *two* contradictions: the first with imperialism, which no longer exercises its exploitation as it once did, and the second with the nascent proletariat, which it is beginning to exploit. With a strong bourgeoisie, there is a strong proletariat. It is necessary for us to count on this double contradiction. Since national industries are still too weak, there are not the necessary conditions for a revolution. The weakness of the working class and of its parties should not, however, lead us to a sectarian policy of isolation, to which, on the other hand, we would be inclined by a lack of experience or leaders. It would be necessary for us to be able to arrange the broadest alliances, without fearing that the middle class takes the lead in these. Numerous petty or middle bourgeoisie have excellent political attitudes. Today, they are the only realists. On the other hand, international conditions play an increasingly crucial role in revolutionary victories. It would be better not to be hasty, but to turn those international conditions to the advantage of socialism: the Cuban economy grows stronger; that of the socialist camp also; new socialist countries appear in other parts of the world.

Today, here in —, to attempt revolution, to begin armed struggle against the representatives of that national bourgeoisie on the road to formation, and now in power, would only serve to delay or compromise the advent of the objective conditions. The most progressive elements in the government and the bourgeoisie would be thrown, ipso facto, into the arms of the North Americans. The defeat of the insurrection would allow the most backward elements to once again take the lead, perhaps to wipe out the beginnings of agrarian reform, and even to denationalize the mines. The U.S. would thereupon demand the closing down of the Soviet Embassy that we maintain under heavy penalties and in spite of all provocations, and the departure of the socialist commercial missions. The greatest danger in Latin America is impatience, Jacobinism; to pass on to even less favorable conditions, and to sacrifice a certain future to illusion.

The partisans of reformist strategy steadily decrease in Latin America, for the simple reason that they cannot stand up to the test of experience. Reformism supposes for Latin America the development of states of "national democracy under bourgeois leadership," not aligned to the United States, and progressively able to achieve independence from it. However, the history of the past twenty years has shown that:

(1) A "national bourgeois" party takes over a popular

revolution and seizes power, as the Institutional Revolutionary Party did in Mexico, Acción Democrática in Venezuela, the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement in Bolivia. This progressive petty bourgeoisie, without having the infrastructure of economic power preexistent to its political predominance, then transforms the state not only into an instrument of political control, but also into a source of political power. The state, culmination of the social relations of exploitation in capitalist Europe, becomes in a certain sense the instrument of its restoration. As the institutional expression of the given processes of production in a society, the state, by virtue of a short circuit characteristic of semicolonial countries, is transformed into an instrument of production of the nonexistent processes of production. The proliferation of public jobs, the only source of employment for thousands of unemployed, serves as a substitute for the development of a production apparatus. Without control of the state, this bourgeoisie, economically speaking, is nothing. Political power means everything to it, and it would do anything to preserve it. One does not get into public office if one is not a party member. In Venezuela there is not a single ministerial typist who does not pay dues to the AD before learning to type. Party dues are directly deducted from the salaries of public servants, as union dues are deducted from workers' salaries. A group of fat and cynical people make up the higher and middle range of public servants; of private secretaries; of dishonest lawyers; of businessmen; of police; of officials compromised in the resale of arms; of indebted diplomats; of labor leaders who get into the Ministry of Labor and grow fat off the state apparatus that is, in its own right, parasitic. To wear down and strangle anyone who gets close to its booty is a matter of life and death for them. Threatened by popular demands, this new-rich bourgeoisie betrays the nationalist ideology that at first characterized its leadership of the masses (above all, the peasant masses, by the constantly renewed promise of a "real" agrarian reform). It changes costumes and dedicates itself to collaborate ever more shamelessly with imperialism, whose interests it handles on the spot. Giving and getting: oil, mining, and commercial concessions, in exchange for a few "royalties" and "aid" funds, which are then rapidly invested in highways and private swimming pools. From this angle the regimes of Venezuela and Bolivia (with or without Paz Estenssoro) present startling similarities. The same agrarian reforms, the scanda-

lous ransoms of land in Venezuela and the division of uncultivated lands in eastern Bolivia into private lots, the same populist demagoguery that assures the regime a good name abroad, periodic electoral frauds, maintenance of a kind of parliament, public spectacles to demonstrate support by the workers; all of this presents a semblance of democracy. It is surrounded by "a people in arms," that is, mercenaries recruited among unemployed workers and the lumpen. (In Venezuela, the half dozen legal and extralegal police agencies, in Bolivia the MNR "militias," made up of illiterate Indians and rail workers, the only proletarian union in which governmental terror had any results.) This bourgeoisie must defend its political power against those who gave it to them, the workers and the students who, spurred by Communist and nationalist youth, headed the struggle against Pérez Jiménez for ten years—and against Gómez for twenty—and who, in Bolivia, suffered the long calvary of mining massacres and all the insurrections suppressed by "Rosca." In the end the regimes of "national democracy" give birth to a monster (except for this, there is no teratology in history). This could well be called *demobourgeois fascism*, the supreme transformation of the contradictions into which a bourgeois regime with no bourgeois class enters, a liberalism without liberals.

(2) When a bourgeois politician, or some part of the "national bourgeoisie," refuses to betray his national vocation by selling out to the United States, he then tries democratic-bourgeois reforms: a real antifeudal agrarian reform, the extension of voting rights to the illiterate, the establishment of diplomatic and commercial relations with all countries, control of the profits of the large North American companies, etc. To resist the pressures of the North American ambassador (known to Ecuadorians as "the viceroy"), the press campaigns, the institutional obstacles the parliamentary majority sets up (the harvested fruit of electoral fraud), the "President" is obliged to resort to the popular masses. He seeks the support of the workers' parties and unions, and perhaps the backing of the peasant leagues (as in Brazil). From that moment on the regime sees itself threatened by the specter of an army coup d'état. Cornered between the working and peasant classes, whose enthusiasm the regime has sparked and who press it from behind, and, on the other side, the army, mobilized by the injured oligarchy and the grimaces of the North American De-

partment of State, who block it from the front, the "President" totters, looks for a way out, a respite. He compromises, but it is too late; the entire ruling class, alerted by the precipitous rush of events, has already guessed that the mechanism set in motion will lead to his downfall. The triumph of a policy of national independence implies the adoption of socialist measures: this truth, once discovered, provokes panic. The bourgeoisie then abandon their sorcerer's apprentice, and it matters little to them that constitutional legality, which was their champion against "subversion," is trampled by the military. On any pretext (in Brazil, a measure of clemency from Goulart for the mutinous sailors), the prefectures are occupied; the provincial garrisons do not answer the president's telephone calls; some tanks advance toward the presidential palace; the streets are empty: the coup d'état is here. The "President" and a handful of advisers are left in the air. Precisely because constitutional legality has been respected throughout the process, no other kind of army opposes the regular troops. Nor are the people armed. There may be a last-ditch effort, condemned to be nothing more than a symbol, the small popular demonstrations that appear here and there, and are dispersed by rifles. Unable to pose a serious alternative to the armed representatives of *his own class* and the Department of State, the "President" takes a plane to Uruguay or Panama. In this way Arbenz fell in 1954 (with direct help from the United States Army, which equipped, trained, and organized Castillo Armas' mercenaries), Bosch in Santo Domingo in 1963, and Goulart in Brazil in 1964, as well as Arosemena in Ecuador, Arévalo and Villeda Morales in Central America, and so many others, all replaced by a military junta or regime. This tragicomedy has known no exceptions, even with the Bonapartist variations of the national bourgeoisie such as Vargas (Brazil, 1954) or Perón (Argentina, 1955). The order of the acts and the scenes remains essentially the same; just as this farce is related to us, the history of the bourgeois heroes of reformism has the earmarks of religious myth. Reformism, which is inverted dogmatism, hides in a cyclical theory of history so as to better cover its ears to the real lessons of history. Like the beautiful phoenix, if it dies one night the morning will witness its rebirth. The bourgeois heroes of progress, those unfortunates, have such a strong predilection for romance, while their tragedy ends in comedy every time.

Such is the second term of the alternative: a bourgeois (an



individual or group of individuals), though he might be courageous enough to accept literally the nationalist ideology offered by his class, is not brave enough to break with it—even though he may be entrusted with converting his class. In carrying through bourgeois reform of feudal society, he is strangled by his own class, which turns the army—the instrument of its political domination—against him. Far from admitting its inconsistencies, the nationalist bourgeoisie decries the distance that separates *what it is*—bourgeois and ally of agrarian feudalism and of foreign capital, from *what it says it is*—national and anti-imperialist. The bourgeoisie would prefer that they be taken at their own word—to a point. In politics, as in everything else, the golden mean is bourgeois virtue.

How does an alternative arise? From the explosive situation the Cuban Revolution created in Latin America. It has given an example to the whole world. Like Russia before 1917, Latin America is ready to give birth to two revolutions, the bourgeois-democratic and the socialist, and it cannot realize one without realizing the other. "[It] cannot contain the one by postponing the other." Therefore, it is risky to rely on the "national bourgeoisie," even where one has developed, to make the bourgeois-democratic revolution, for it knows very well what that process will unleash. To say that it is up to the proletariat and the peasantry to fulfill the historic task of the bourgeoisie is to say that the present alternative is not between the (peaceful) bourgeois revolution and the (violent) socialist revolution. The promoters of the Alliance for Progress have asserted this in accord with the reformist point of view. But today they confess that it is simply a struggle between revolution and counter-revolution. In this way the good Kennedy types in Washington have put aside their doubts and have deliberately welcomed counterrevolution. The Thomas Mann doctrine which relates to the recognition of de facto governments illustrates this. In view of this, imperialism has only two choices: avoid the bourgeois-democratic revolution (military coup d'état), or when it comes about anyhow, change it essentially (demobourgeois fascism). If the creature is already there, cage it; if it is merely conceived, abort it. It does not matter what the reformist Communists and Christian Democrats in Chile think about this; there is no third alternative. There is yet more: since Cuba has put an end to accidents (the 1910 "democratic" Mexican and the 1932 Bolivian revolutions belong to the *belle époque* of carelessness,

before the Cuban Revolution), the abortion *manu militaire* is the rule today. One can see this in the suppressions by military coups d'état during the past two years.

Consequently, whoever persists in playing at revolution, whether liberal or socialist, from above (without an armed popular organization), within the rules of constitutional legality, plays a strange game in which there is an election which can only be lost in one of two ways. Either one can be sent to prison, to exile, or to a common grave (demobourgeois fascism). Arbenz (Guatemala, 1954), or Betancourt (Venezuela, 1959): betrayed or betrayer. When the day of the real confrontation arrives, it will only be necessary to have a few more rifles. In a supreme irony of history, the surest road in Latin America to a future that will sing of blood and tears has been baptised "the peaceful road to socialism."

The Brazilian experience of "basic reforms," attempted by Goulart's government, reunites the conditions of victory at the highest level: a powerful mass movement supported by the central power, one of the most solid Communist parties on the continent, located at the very heart of the state apparatus, and an army infiltrated from top to bottom (or so it was believed) by a strong democratic, even revolutionary, movement. Hope crystallized among those in Latin America who thought it more economical to seize control of the bourgeois state from *within*. The fall of Goulart, a beautiful example, wrecked these hopes almost everywhere. It was bad luck that Goulart tried to drag the Communist Party down with him. A few days before the coup d'état the Brazilian Communist Party's general secretary answered the questions of his worried friends. "We're in power now, let's not get alarmed." The party infiltrated the bourgeois governmental apparatus without completely dominating it, thus permitting reaction to kill two birds with one stone. Now the militants cannot hide their bitterness. Torn apart, the Brazilian Communist Party is crumbling away in the bitter struggles, reciprocal accusations, and recapitulations. The forced awakening is as sad as the dreams were beautiful.

The implacable course of real class struggle always makes its voice heard. The Colombian Communist Party, under the orientation of its general secretary, Vicira, has known how to adapt itself to historical conditions when it was necessary, and has openly attached itself to the cause of the peasants of Marquetalia. One could guess that by coordinating its activities



with those of the Venezuelan guerrillas of the Andes and of Lara, and by extending the guerrilla war along those frontierless plains that join both countries, as it is trying to do, the Colombian guerrillas have accelerated in a singular way the liberation of the two neighboring countries—Colombia and Venezuela. Now a Bolivian unity of national struggle has been realized, *without which American liberation would be delayed for a long time*. In regard to those whose numbers are dwindling and who obstinately refuse to criticize their failures (Peru, Chile, Brazil), their very silence denounces them, revealing their mistaken emphasis on patience. This cardinal virtue of the revolutionaries is not respectable when it is raised in theoretical argument against all the evidence that reasoning and reality offer. On the contrary, anyone could easily denounce the impatience of the Castroite youth when they articulate the ways and goals of the revolution. But has anyone ever considered this paradox: that it has been those same patient parties who have yielded to this blind realism, and to the policy of immediate gains and long-range losses? Does not true revolutionary patience consist of building the fundamental revolutionary apparatus through a long struggle, choosing once and for all the class banner (which does not exclude alliances), and organizing the exploited around this nucleus? Does it not consist of the irreversible growth of the 26th of July movement in Cuba, of the Venezuelan FALN, and the Colombian self-defense militias which were transformed into a guerrilla army before they had been a regular army? The "impatient ones" show the most surprising tactical flexibility. They arrange the broadest alliances without compromising their positions, and they face the long war calmly. Castroite impatience does not say "Let's seize power tomorrow," but rather, "No matter how long and twisting this road may be, and precisely for that reason, we must never lose sight of the final aim—destruction of the semi-colonial state—in order to avoid useless detours."

Without a common source, this passion for efficiency and a direct blow, aimed at the foundations of the state, its army, and its police, would not be shared by thousands of militant revolutionaries from Guatemala to Brazil. It is not necessary to produce statistical tables to show that the Latin American masses are victims today of a kind of *peaceful genocide*, on the part of imperialism and the ruling class. Without including

deaths resulting from the wars that periodically devastate the continent (300,000 killed in Colombia between 1948 and 1958), we choose two figures at random from the official tables: in the suburbs of Recife in Brazil's Northeast, of every 1,000 newborn infants, 500 die before they are two years old. The life expectancy of adults who labor in the Bolivian mines or on the fazendas of Northeast Brazil barely passes thirty. This is a cross section of America. Latin America suffers, much more than the rest of the Third World, a greater population increase (approximately 3 percent per annum), which the generally feudal processes of production now in force make really dramatic. Compared with the Western world, this growth in population would create different rates of historical development everywhere. For example, the program the Communist Party of the Soviet Union adopted at the Twenty-second Congress fixes a limit of one generation—at the most half a century, but even this seems too short—for the building of Communism. But many Brazilian Communists, in setting time limits, do not allow more than a few years for the building of a new society, however unrealistic this may seem. The Soviet Union's increase in productive capacity is helped by a population growth that is not excessive. Brazil's population rate of increase, on the other hand, is: over the next twenty years it will double its population from 60 to 120 million inhabitants. This may go some way to explain the *state of emergency* in which our American comrades live. If they fail to act quickly or if they stay where they are, they will be more easily killed off, one by one. This passion for action explains the impatience of Castroites as well as vague feelings of imminent salvation, the hungry man's mysticism which stalks the peasants of Northeast Brazil. Once one understands the fact that the levels and therefore the rates of possible change vary in different parts of the world one can begin to understand that the margin of time between formulating a strategy for taking power and the tactics that follow it up is smaller in South America than in Europe. One can also understand why slogans imported directly from Europe (for example, those referring to peaceful coexistence) encounter so much difficulty in being adapted to real Latin American situations. It is easy to admit that the inequalities in world-wide development, especially population growth, are explained by unequal revolutionary patterns and forms of action. But it is

equally clear that those differences of timing within world-wide revolutionary action can seem to provoke contradictions within the revolutionary world to exactly the extent that the differences are not recognized for what they are and taken into account.

For this reason, some reformists consider the Castroite conception of revolution a dangerous adventure. To gain time, to conserve energy, guarantee the legality of the organization, send the most militant to the European socialist countries (and have them come back denationalized, without any connections with their real milieu, rejected or ignored by the militants in the interior), is correct conduct for the vanguard. Reformism regards every initiative that tends to further the armed struggle, that is, to answer with illegal weapons the undeclared war (which goes under the names of silicosis, infantile parasites, brutalization, slow death . . .) that imperialism unleashes against its victims will be "premature" and provocative. The leaders and militants of the new Castroite generation, the Cubans themselves, view the conditions for the armed struggle more generally. The development of the objective conditions are in danger of being arranged by the enemy and compromised or retarded if the Latin American revolutionaries fail to advance seriously the *long* struggle for power by "realistic" efforts and specific revolutionary actions.

Whoever sees the opposition between the two attitudes as internal and inevitable is probably looking for an escape through the backdoor of neutrality. European Marxism, it will be said, is tainted with positivism (it has an empirical basis): "It is enough to be familiar with [the objective conditions] to act correctly." And Cuban Marxism is tinged with voluntarism (it has an Idealist base): "It is not always necessary to expect that all the conditions for the revolution will be given," Che Guevara once wrote; "the insurrectional center can create them."

But this attempt to compare two things that are not comparable is unrealistic. As with every false theory, it gives rise to nothing practical and reflects nothing. It would be fitting to point out here, as we have tried to do elsewhere, that the methodological instructions grouped under the name "Castroism" constitute, in the concrete conditions of the majority of Latin American nations, "a guide for action." As such, so-called Castroism, which is Leninism, is not in any way closed. Assimilated and recreated by the Latin American masses, it is the guiding force for the first steps of continental liberation. Let

us listen closely to the murmur that reaches us from the neighboring mountains of Venezuela and Colombia. Latin America is entering a long era of struggle, where difficult but certain victories await it.