



**THE BITTER TASTE  
OF A SWEET  
REVOLUTION**

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Twenty Years of "Socialist  
Construction" in Cuba

## From the American Sugar Quota to the Russian Sugar Quota

For some years now we have been witnessing the emergence of revolutionary situations in Latin America, in particular in Central American and Caribbean countries. American domination of the region, previously uncontested, is now being breached. After the fall of Somoza and the installation of a regime hostile to the US in Managua, the revolutionary ferment has spread to El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, etc. In fact, the entire region has been transformed into an immense revolutionary volcano. Latin American workers and peasants are throwing off their chains and the whole structure of American imperialism is starting to crack.

It must be said that this region is a key one for American imperialism. It allows for control over the Panama Canal, a vital link between the East and the West of the US, and over the Caribbean, through which pass half of America's imports and exports, including three-quarters of its oil. This region also represents a \$7 billion market, and is an inexhaustible source of raw materials and cheap labor.

The American bourgeoisie is divided on the means to use to confront the rising worker and peasant movements. Some factions promote conciliation, the method of concessions, as was shown at the time of Somoza's fall.

On the other hand, other factions do not want to make any concessions and support the smashing of the revolutionary movement through open repression, through white terror. They see that not only the Russians, but also the

European powers and Japan seek to ally themselves with the reformist leadership of the revolutionary movements in order to extend their spheres of influence in the region, to the detriment of American imperialism.

In fact, the interests of the different imperialist powers are in conflict not only in this part of the world, but throughout the entire planet. The situation is such that, as a consequence of uneven development among the imperialist powers, the need for a new division among them arises, for the control of sources of raw materials, markets, and spheres of influence; a new redivision puts a new imperialist war on the order of the day. Of course, each imperialist power makes its plans and calculations so that the outbreak of the war will occur in the place and at the time that is most favorable for it, and it is evident that the United States does not want a war in Central America or the Caribbean. That is why it is trying to "pacify" the region as quickly as possible, mixing repression and concessions.

But the breadth of the present economic crisis and the sharpening of the contradictions among the different bourgeoisies render all the imperialist "solutions" useless. Concessions and repression, instead of extinguishing the revolutionary flame, fan it. The conflagration spreads from country to country and threatens to extend into Mexico, coming to knock on the very doors of the American citadel.

Mexico today is on the edge of bankruptcy, with an incredible debt of more than \$80 billion, compared to which the debt of Poland seems rather small. The Mexican government has been forced to put on its nationalist mask in order to kneel before the IMF. To avoid a social explosion, the Mexican government subtly encourages thousands of unemployed Mexicans to emigrate to the United States. But American imperialism is closing its borders to the unemployed Mexicans, just as the Mexican government is closing its southern border to Guatemalan peasants. But repression against the worker and peasant masses can not prevent the revolutionary wildfire from crossing the borders and lighting the Mexican powderkeg...and the American one, also! Thus the bastion of world imperialism, the citadel of capitalism, is undermined from within. The millions of immigrants from Latin America, from the Caribbean, and from Mexico, whose blood the American bourgeoisie has sucked

out to build its empire, no longer allow themselves to be crushed without saying a word, and they spread their revolutionary ferment to the four corners of North America. Their cause finds a favorable reception among the severely oppressed Black Nation, hit by the economic crisis and prepared also to make the American bourgeoisie pay for centuries of slavery. The United States has become a true prison-house of nations, like Czarist Russia. And it will meet the same fate as Czarist Russia!

This perspective becomes even more real now, as the possibility is seen more concretely of the necessary relationship between the national movements of oppressed peoples and the white American working class. The bourgeois newspapers have been speaking for some time about the "reconstitution of a white proletariat in the United States." What they are expressing with that is the loss of the privileges of the labor aristocracy. The American bourgeoisie, through the breadth of its pillage of the resources of many countries and the superexploitation of oppressed peoples and nations inside and outside the US, has been able to corrupt wide sections of the American working class with the accumulated superprofits. But those days are past. Due to the growing competition of other powers and the resistance of oppressed peoples, the superprofits have begun to dry up. The pie is smaller and the crumbs that used to fall from the table are becoming rarer. Millions of workers in previously prosperous sectors like the automobile industry, today have to accept cuts in their salaries, or they are simply condemned to unemployment. The newspapers are full of reports about poverty and the resurgence of "soup kitchens," about vagrancy, etc.... The dark clouds of the 1930's gather in the sky.

This does not mean that the labor aristocracy has completely disintegrated, or that chauvinism has disappeared. But the objective conditions are being altered to a point that reveals the possibility of the re-establishment of the alliance between the American working class and the national movements of the oppressed peoples, particularly those oppressed by American imperialism. The development of the economic crisis and imminent imperialist war, weakening the bourgeoisie, are going to broaden those revolutionary perspectives even more. What until recently seemed like the

impregnable fortress of imperialism no longer seems so impregnable.

The giant wavers in its foundations, but it will not fall by itself. Only a solid alliance between the American working class and the revolutionary movements of the oppressed peoples and nations will allow the triumph of the revolution and the overthrow of American imperialism. A true democratic revolution and its transformation into a dictatorship of the proletariat will not be able to maintain and consolidate itself in the Caribbean and Central American region without the firm support of the American working class, and reciprocally, a proletarian revolution in the United States is impossible without the active support of those peoples oppressed by the United States in the peripheral regions.

Furthermore, in order to build this alliance, the working class has to equip itself with its General Staff, its Bolshevik Party, capable of guiding it through the twists and turns of the revolution. "Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement," said Lenin in 1902.

Today this axiom has lost none of its truth. It is the task of revolutionary communists to elaborate that revolutionary theory, basing themselves on Leninism, the Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution,"<sup>1</sup> which continues to be "*a model of tactics for all.*"<sup>2</sup>

Revolutionary communists must elaborate that theory by applying Leninism to the politics of their countries and the world, but also by criticizing the false solutions, the erroneous theories that can only lead the revolutionary movement to a dead end.

That is why it is so important to deal today with the question of Cuba, Guevarism, Castroism, etc.

The Cuban revolution has had a considerable impact on a world scale, but particularly on the Latin American masses. In overthrowing Batista, repelling the Bay of Pigs invasion, and standing up to Yankee imperialism, the masses of Cuban people have galvanized the revolutionary spirit in all of Latin America and have stirred up a vast solidarity movement.

But the Cuban leaders have wanted to give a very special coloring to this support, proclaiming that Cuba should serve as a model for all the Latin American countries to

resolve their problems of domination and enslavement. They have also theorized on their revolutionary experience and have tried to impose it as the model of tactics for all Latin American revolutionaries. Today, more than 20 years after the triumph of the Cuban revolution, and on the eve of new revolutionary confrontations, we have to look closely to see if the Cuban leaders have fulfilled their promises and if Cuba can serve as a model.

### **Cuba: From the Sugar Quota to the Sugar Quota**

The masses rise up and prepare for the assault on power when they can no longer stand the yoke of exploitation and oppression; they rise up with the purpose of changing society, with the purpose of improving their situation materially, culturally, etc. The Cuban leaders have been able to benefit from the support of the immense majority of the population because they promised such a change. They promised to destroy the structures of exploitation, to put an end to the dependence on imperialism. Some years after the triumph of the revolution, they proclaimed their intention to embark upon the road of the construction of a new economic system, socialism, whose basic economic law is: "the securing of the maximum satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole society through the continuous expansion and perfection of socialist production on the basis of higher techniques."<sup>3</sup>

Obviously, given the economic situation of Cuba at the dawn of the revolution, it could not be a question of reaching this objective overnight, in a few years. But today, more than 20 years later, it must be possible to measure the path followed, to see the results, or at least to evaluate the general tendency. Have the structural problems been resolved? Has the dependence on imperialism been abolished? Are they able to secure the maximum satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole society?

To be able to proceed with such an evaluation, we must recall what the situation was before the revolution.

### **Cuba: American Imperialism's Pearl of the Antilles**

In 1959, Cuba was a semi-colony of the United States. American investments at that time reached a billion dollars;

they represented 11% of all American investments in Latin America. In fact, Cuba held third place in importance of American capital investment, after Venezuela and Argentina. The US controlled 90% of the mines, 36% of the best land, 36.65% of sugar production, 90% of the production of electricity, and 79% of the oil, as well as railroads, hotels, and the telephone system.

American control of the Cuban economy was done above all through the control of the sugar industry, which was very important in Cuba. Sugar cane occupied 61% of the agricultural land and 22 large estates (latifundias), many of them American, controlled 70% of the sugar cane land. Of 975,000 workers in the agricultural sector, nearly 50%, that is, 471,000, were employed in sugar production. Sugar was Cuba's principal export product, representing more than 80% of export value. More than 50% of Cuban production was exported to the United States.

The amount of sugar bought each year by the US was fixed by the American Congress. In the framework of those agreements, the United States paid a price higher than that of the free market for Cuban sugar. But the United States did not do this out of altruism. One of the objectives of such a "preferential tariff" was to protect American sugar production whose cost was higher than that of Cuba's. The profits resulting from the preferential tariff went, of course, into the pockets of the American monopolies that controlled the sugar industry, not to the Cuban masses.

The American government had also demanded and obtained, in exchange for this "preferential tariff," tremendous customs advantages for the American exploiters over the Cuban market. Thus, by virtue of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs, confirmed in 1948, the United States had obtained the lowering of the customs duties on 183 products that it exported to Cuba and the maintenance of ridiculously small duties on 393 other products already admitted almost freely due to earlier agreements. Those 576 products represented 81.60% of the exports of the United States to Cuba. The products that continued to be protected by the high customs duties were those of the industries dominated by American capital (rubber, tires, textiles).

The whole Cuban economy was a function of trade with the United States. For example, each year Cuba exported

11,000 tons of tomatoes to the US and imported 1,000 tons in the form of ketchup. All industrialization (railroads, ports, highways) was a function of trade with the United States. Cuba in fact was the perfect illustration of the thesis of the Communist International (C.I.) about colonial oppression. In its description of the "characteristic features of colonial economies and of imperialist colonial policy," the C.I. noted: "Inasmuch, however, as colonial exploitation presupposes a certain encouragement of the development of production in the colonies this production, thanks to the imperialist monopoly, is directed on such lines and accelerated only in such a degree as corresponds to the interests of the metropolis, and, in particular, to the interests of the preservation of its colonial monopoly. It may cause a part of the peasantry, for example, to pass over from grain cultivation to the production of cotton, sugar or rubber (Sudan, Cuba, Java, Egypt), but this takes place in such a way and by such means that it not only in no way corresponds to the interests of the independent economic development of the colonial country, but, on the contrary, still further strengthens the dependence of the latter on the imperialist metropolis. (...) Only where manufacture constitutes a very simple process (tobacco industry, sugar refineries, etc.) or where the expense of transporting raw material can be considerably decreased by the first stage of manufacture being performed on the spot, does the development of production in the colonies attain comparatively large dimensions. In any case, the capitalist enterprises created by the imperialists in the colonies (with the exception of a few enterprises established in case of military needs) are predominantly or exclusively of an agrarian-capitalist character, and are distinguished by a low organic composition of capital. Real industrialisation of the colonial country, in particular the building up of a flourishing engineering industry, which might make possible the independent development of the productive forces of the country, is not accelerated, but, on the contrary, is hindered by the metropolis. *This is the essence of its function of colonial enslavement:* the colonial country is compelled to sacrifice the interests of its independent development and to play the part of an economic (agrarian-raw material) appendage to foreign capitalism, which, at the expense of the labouring classes of the colonial

country, strengthens the economic and political power of the imperialist bourgeoisie in order to perpetuate the monopoly of the latter in the colonies and to increase its expansion as compared with the rest of the world"<sup>4</sup>

Of course, this economic domination of the American imperialists over Cuba was accompanied by political control, which went back many years.

Cuba was Spain's last colony in America, and the United States sought to replace Spain. They used the situation created by the just struggle of the Cuban people against Spanish domination, being waged since 1895, to meddle in the internal affairs of Cuba. In 1898, an American warship, the *Maine*, exploded "mysteriously" in the port of Havana, causing the deaths of 250 American sailors. The American president, McKinley, thus found the pretext to intervene militarily in Cuba to expell the Spanish and declare the "independence" of Cuba. To show the Cubans the limits of their "independence," the United States wrote the Platt Amendment into the Cuban constitution of 1901. Named after the senator who sponsored it, this amendment authorized the United States to intervene by armed force or diplomatic pressure in the affairs of the island to "safeguard their independence and support a stable government, capable of protecting human lives, properties, and freedoms"!!! The Platt Amendment also granted the United States the right to establish military and naval bases, and the right of veto over international treaties and agreements of future governments!

Although the Platt Amendment was later suppressed from the constitution, the United States has maintained its base at Guantanamo until today, and intervened militarily in Cuba every time it felt its economic and military interests were threatened. They intervened in 1906 to subdue the opposition to the Estrada Palma regime; again in 1917, to put down social disturbances and "protect American property," an occupation that lasted until the uprising of 1922. They supported the coups d'etat of Machado in 1924 and of Batista in 1934 and again in 1952. Only 90 miles from the American coast, in the heart of the Caribbean, Cuba was a key piece in American strategy.

On various occasions, though, the superexploited worker and peasant masses, in the "backyard" of the North Ameri-

can paradise, rose up to shake off the yoke of their oppression. Several times they carried nationalist governments to power that promised to put an end to exploitation and oppression. That is what was promised by Jose Martí, the founder of the Cuban Revolutionary Party in the struggle against Spain in 1895, and who was killed in one of the first battles. They were the same promises made by Estrada Palma, General Machado and Ramón Grau San Martín, calling themselves the heirs of Martí when they were swept into power by the people's movement. It is the same promise made by Fidel Castro when he took power after overthrowing the Batista regime in 1959 by means of a popular uprising.

Estrada Palma, Machado, and Ramón Grau San Martín all betrayed the cause that they had promised to support. With the complicity of Yankee imperialism, they decapitated the movements that had brought them to power and became fervent defenders of imperialism.

So what happened with Castro? What is happening with Cuba today? Clearly, Castro has broken the privileged relations with American imperialism in order to establish them with Russia. Then what has been the result of more than 20 years of privileged relations with Russia? Has it resulted in a transformation of the economic structures of the island? Has it been translated into an improvement of the situation of the masses of Cuban people? These are the questions we will now take up.

### **Guevara's Great Leap Forward**

Since the 1959 revolution, the Cuban economy has gone through three periods. The first period was characterized by a wave of nationalizations and by the elaboration of various projects of industrial development and economic planning.

Thus, after vain attempts at alliance with the US, Castro proceeded to a series of nationalizations. First they attacked, within the framework of the agrarian reform, the American sugar companies, such as the well-known United Fruit Company. Afterwards they moved to the Texaco, Esso and Shell oil refineries, which came under the control of the Cuban government. Finally, in the autumn of 1960, the nationalizations were extended to the whole of Cuban private enterprise.



With these nationalizations, the Cuban government wanted to counter the activities of firms hostile to the new government, but also to get the means necessary to transform the Cuban economy. Thus, the Cuban leaders set the goal of ensuring the island's self-sufficiency. They elaborated a project to diversify agriculture to replace the monoculture of sugar. They laid out plans for an accelerated industrialization of Cuba, with the construction of a steel mill, an oil refinery, fertilizer plants, and a series of other projects to equip Cuba with a complete industrial structure. Finally, to get all these projects going and to organize the Cuban economy, a planning organ, the Central Planning Council, was created in 1961 under the leadership of the Minister of Industry, Ernesto "Che" Guevara.

But the economic project of the Cuban leaders was a lamentable failure. The economy was turned upside down. It was a resounding failure for "socialism Guevara-style."

If it is claimed for a moment that Guevara and the Cuban leaders had effectively embarked upon the path of socialist construction, we must realize that they violated certain fundamental rules of the basics of political economy under the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this way, upon nationalizing the entire economy, they went against the rules established by the VI Congress of the C.I. made on the basis of the Soviet experience. In the "Communist Programme" adopted at that congress, it specifies that "Nationalization of production should not, as a rule, be applied to small and middle-sized enterprises," among other reasons, "because the proletariat, after seizing power, may not have sufficient organizing forces at its disposal, particularly in the first phases of the dictatorship, for the purpose of destroying capitalism and at the same time to establish contacts with the smaller and medium individual units of production on a Socialist basis."<sup>5</sup> The Programme continues to specify that "Owing to the prevalence of a large number of small units of production (primarily peasant farms, farmers' enterprises, small artisans, small shopkeepers, etc.) ... it is necessary, in the first stage of development to preserve to some extent, *market forms of economic contacts*, the money system, etc."<sup>6</sup>

The Programme hence recommends against nationalizing the economy in its entirety and for maintaining the

market as a form of economic relationship, as well as the monetary system. But Guevara and his followers not only nationalized the entire economy but also tried, with their voluntarist politics, to suppress the market.

The failure was even more striking. The economy was dislocated. The intention of planning everything immediately led to the worst aberrations. Spare parts were not sufficient and were never sent to the right place. The "official" elimination of the market engendered its rebirth, its resurgence, in the form of a vast black market, freeing itself completely from the control of the planning organisms; this black market has not stopped developing since then.

But it would be false to say that all this is just the result of Guevara's "voluntarist errors." The C.I. had set "a necessary condition precedent to the growth of Socialist forms of economy," namely, "the conquest of power by the proletariat."<sup>7</sup> In Cuba, as we will see later on in more detail, it was not the proletariat that assumed power, but rather the petty bourgeoisie. This class, through its control over the state apparatus, tried to constitute itself as a national bourgeoisie. It was a process that was occurring also at that time in other countries, such as Ghana, Algeria, Mali, etc.

The responsibility of the Russian imperialists in this failure of independent economic development must not be overlooked. Through their form of "aid" and "advice," they did everything to make the "Cuban experience" a failure, in order to later be able to impose their "models" and "technicians." They propagated their chauvinism against the Cuban and Latin American peoples, implying that the difficulties were due to the "Latin temperament" of the Cubans.

Guevara perceived the maneuvers of the Russian imperialists in a confused way and in Algiers denounced the relations that Russia established with dependent countries, saying that they were similar to those maintained by the imperialist countries with those same countries.

However, while Guevara was catching on to the Russians, Castro was signing a three-year economic agreement with them for a new loan of \$167 million. In exchange for this "aid," Cuba renounced the industrialization projects. Castro declared: "The policy of industrialization is not abandoned, it is postponed."<sup>8</sup> The change of direction in political economy is easily recognized when examining the evolution of

the division of investments from 1962 to 1964. The credits given to industry, after having risen in comparison to those of agriculture and the other sectors in 1963, dropped again in 1964.

	1962	1963	1964
Agriculture	27,7	21,5	33,2
Industry	21,6	30,4	27,4
Other sectors	50,7	43,1	31,4
	100	100	100

The Cuban leaders, upon abandoning their policy of industrialization, gave in to the pressures from Moscow and Guevara gave up his position as Minister of Industry, and left Cuba to go to the hills in Bolivia, after time spent in Africa. Meanwhile, in 1962 he published his book, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Method*, in which he demonstrated, as we will see later on, that his incompetence in economic matters was only equaled by his incompetence in matters of revolution.

### The Great Leap Backwards of Castro's Great Harvest

After the abandonment of the policy of industrialization, the Cuban leaders were going to make one last effort to try and ensure Cuba's economic independence. That was the Great Sugar Harvest of 1970, when they set the goal of producing 10 million tons of sugar, which was to allow the "take-off" of the Cuban economy. There was nothing original in this plan. It is characteristic of the efforts of semi-colonial countries that try to escape the grip of imperialism by increasing the sale of raw materials to get foreign exchange to allow the country to industrialize. But here too it was a failure. Not only was the goal of 10 million tons of sugar not reached, but the economy, which had been altered to be at the service of sugar production, was totally disorganized. What was supposed to have been a great leap forward turned into a great leap backward.

The Russians once again took advantage of the disappointment of the Cuban leaders to extend their domination

over the Cuban economy. Castro had to hand over his economic responsibilities to Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, a veteran of PSP, the pro-Moscow Cuban party. In 1970 a Russian-Cuban intergovernmental commission for economic, scientific and technical cooperation was created, and in 1972 Cuba joined COMECON and signed cooperation agreements with Moscow.

Since then, Cuban political economy and Russian-Cuban "cooperation" have been more intimately linked than ever. The intergovernmental commission plays the role of orchestra conductor; it decides what is good for the Cuban economy and what projects to carry out, and the extent of its domain is such that observers of Cuban politics wonder "if the Cuban government can undertake anything without the permission of the Russians."<sup>10</sup>

Russia's attitude toward Cuba is characteristic of the attitude of imperialism toward the colonies, semi-colonies and dependent countries, specifically: "Independent rule, a future of 'free' independent capitalist development, hegemony over an 'independent' people—this imperialism will never voluntarily yield to the national bourgeoisie. In this respect the contradiction of interests between the national bourgeoisie of the colonial country and imperialism is objectively of a radical character. In this respect imperialism demands *capitulation* on the part of the national bourgeoisie."<sup>11</sup>

The Cuban national bourgeoisie and their main representative, Fidel Castro, have capitulated to the diktat of Russian imperialism. They have abandoned the path of "'free' independent capitalist development" by postponing indefinitely their industrialization projects, and they have abandoned "hegemony over an 'independent' people," progressively aligning themselves with Russian foreign policy, in particular since their support for the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

### Russian "Preferential Tariffs"

Today the Cuban economy is entirely dominated by the Russian economy. In 1979, Russia bought 72% of Cuban exports, and supplied Cuba with three-quarters of its imports. In these economic relations, Cuba exports raw materials and imports manufactured products. As a result, in

1978, sugar and nickel made up 98.8% of Russian imports of Cuban products.

For 1982 the Cubans foresee production of 7.4 million tons of sugar, of which half will be sold to Russia. The Eastern bloc will buy approximately 500,000 tons. The rest will be sold on the open market, where it will be subject to price fluctuations. Thus, a ton of sugar that was worth \$950 in November of 1981 was worth no more than \$180 in June of 1982.

As for nickel, of which Cuba has a quarter of the world's reserves, Russia bought 75% of Cuba's production last year, which reached 38,000 tons. On many occasions during the 1960's, the Cuban leaders had requested that a nickel metallurgical industry be created in Cuba, and Russia had promised then that the Moa mine could, in a short time, be made to produce finished nickel. This promise evidently has not been fulfilled, and the mine only produces nickel compounds that are treated again in Russia, as they were previously in the United States. In fact, the situation is exactly the same as what existed under American domination.

In addition to tobacco, whose production has been seriously affected by disease in recent years, Cuba produces citrus fruits. But production is only from 160,000 to 175,000 tons, when the goal was 270,000 tons. Besides, all production is exported to COMECON because the quality does not meet world market standards.

These are the principal sectors of the Cuban economy today.

Much has been said since the establishment of Russian-Cuban relations, about the breadth of the "aid" given by Russia to Cuba, emphasizing that Moscow buys Cuban sugar at 2 to 5 times the market price and Cuban nickel at artificially high prices. There is mention also of the "subsidized" oil that Cuba receives from Russia at the rate of 250,000 barrels per day at a price of \$12.80 per barrel. Altogether, it is calculated that, from 1960 to 1978 Cuba received from the Russians 13 billion dollars in the form of no-interest or low-interest loans, or in the form of subsidies of the price of Cuban sugar and nickel and Russian oil.

However, it is necessary to be more specific regarding some details of these "preferential tariffs."

For example, by importing Cuban sugar Russia has been able to considerably lower its own production of beet sugar, which was much more costly than the "preferential tariff" given to Cuban sugar. As for oil, it must be specified that Russia alone no longer ensures the supply of oil for Cuba (without this being discovered in Russian statistics). For one thing, Russia has concluded a triangular agreement with Mexico, whereby the bill for oil delivered to Cuba is paid for in hard foreign exchange. This transaction should reduce oil imports coming from Russia by 25%. It must be pointed out that the supplying of oil alone to Cuba, when it was completely ensured by Russia, each year mobilized 10% of Russia's oil tanker fleet. According to another agreement, Venezuela will supply oil to Cuba instead of to Spain, with Russia taking charge of supplying Spain with equivalent quantities.

The fact also must be considered that the loans and income from the sale of sugar and nickel (paid in rubles) only allow the purchase of Russian products. Exact information is hard to get about the price paid by Cuba for products imported from Russia, but a study tends to show that the prices of the commodities sold by Russia to the semi-colonies and dependent countries, "beneficiaries of their aid," are from 13% to 15% higher than the price of the same products sold by Russia to the Western countries. This difference reaches 33% to 35% for machines and equipment.<sup>12</sup>

This "model" of economic exchange between Russia and Cuba, the exchange of manufactured products for raw materials, is a very familiar model. It is the model of relations between imperialism and the colonies, semi-colonies and dependent countries. The "preferential tariffs" that Russia pays for sugar and nickel should not fool anyone. These prices are very low, even if they are higher than those of the world market, which are ridiculously low. Besides, a "preferential tariff" for buying raw materials is a tactic frequently utilized by the various imperialist powers to develop their influence over a given country. France pays a "preferential tariff" for Algerian oil and gas in exchange for an opening of the Algerian market to French products and greater French influence in the country. And let us remember that the United States had already established a "preferential tariff" for Cuban sugar before 1959!

The thesis of the C.I. about the essence of colonial oppression that we already cited to describe the relations between the United States and Cuba before 1959 still applies perfectly today to Russian-Cuban relations. As we have already demonstrated in this chapter, "Real industrialization of the colonial country, in particular the building up of a flourishing engineering industry, which might make possible the independent development of the productive forces of the country, is not accelerated, but, on the contrary, is hindered by the metropolis."<sup>13</sup> That is exactly what happened in Cuba when Russia forced the Cuban bourgeoisie to capitulate and abandon their plans for the industrialization of the country. The C.I. tells us: "*This is the essence of its function of colonial enslavement: the colonial country is compelled to sacrifice the interests of its independent development and to play the part of an economic (agrarian-raw material) appendage to foreign capitalism, which, at the expense of the labouring classes of the colonial country, strengthens the economic and political power of the imperialist bourgeoisie in order to perpetuate the monopoly of the latter in the colonies and to increase its expansion as compared with the rest of the world.*"<sup>14</sup> Today Cuba in effect serves as an economic appendage of Russia and contributes to reinforcing the expansion of Russian imperialism throughout the world.

## Two Conceptions of Proletarian Internationalism

The apologists of Russian imperialism try to present the relations between Russia and Cuba as "fraternal relations between socialist nations," as relations based on the principles of proletarian internationalism. Others, taking the inverse of this thesis, emphasize correctly the imperialist character of the relations between Russia and Cuba, but use this to try to denounce socialism, saying that the USSR has always been imperialist since Stalin. Where is the truth in all this?

The Programme of the C.I. assigned the following task to the USSR: "Every assistance to be rendered to the economic, political and cultural growth of the formerly oppressed 'territories,' 'dominions' and 'colonies,' with the object of transferring them to Socialist lines, so that a durable basis may be laid for complete national equality."<sup>15</sup> Precisely

within that perspective was developed the politics of the USSR of Stalin concerning the oppressed nationalities. Besides recognizing the equal rights of the different nations, favoring their cultural development, and likewise favoring the development of the different national languages, the USSR of Stalin set itself the goal of equality in law of the different nationalities. And Stalin's USSR took on the objective of developing EQUALITY IN DEEDS for the different nationalities.

In his report to the XII Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1923, Stalin expressed this goal the following way: "The second factor, comrades, which is also hindering the union of the formerly oppressed peoples around the Russian proletariat, is the actual inequality of nations that we have inherited from the period of tsarism.

"We have proclaimed juridical equality and are practising it; but juridical equality, although in itself of very great importance in the history of the development of the Soviet republics, is still far from being actual equality. Formally, all the backward nationalities and all the peoples enjoy just as many rights as are enjoyed by the other, more advanced, nations which constitute our federation. But the trouble is that some nationalities have no proletarians of their own, have not undergone industrial development, have not even started on this road, are terribly backward culturally and are entirely unable to take advantage of the rights granted them by the revolution. This, comrades, is a far more important question than that of the schools. Some of our comrades here think that the knot can be cut by putting the question of schools and language in the forefront. That is not so, comrades. Schools will not carry you very far. These schools are developing, so are the languages, but actual inequality remains the basis of all the discontent and friction. Schools and language will not settle the matter; what is needed is real, systematic, sincere and genuine proletarian assistance on our part to the labouring masses of the culturally and economically backward nationalities. In addition to schools and language, the Russian proletariat must take all measures to create in the border regions, in the culturally backward republics, and they are not backward because of any fault of their own—but because they were formerly regarded as sources of raw materials—must take

all measures to ensure the building of centres of industry in these republics."<sup>16</sup>

This policy of aid for the industrialization of the oppressed nations in order to achieve equality in fact was applied by the USSR also after the Second World War to the People's Democracies. Even bourgeois authors are forced to recognize that an organism like COMECON did not have, before Stalin's death, more than a formal existence. "Each one of the countries of Eastern Europe, on the initiative of the Soviet model, follow an almost autarkic policy of development" and "remain subject to the Stalinist conception, according to which a country can only break out of underdevelopment and the resulting dependence through the expansion of all the principal industrial branches, with heavy industry as the basis."<sup>17</sup>

It was only in 1961 and 1962 that the Russian leaders, after having restored capitalism in Russia, felt pressured to institute a greater economic integration and a division of labor among the different countries of COMECON. Besides seeing economic advantages in this for the Russians, Khrushchov sought in the integration of Eastern Europe a means of struggle against the centrifugal tendencies that might develop. He was striving for not only economic integration, but also the transformation of COMECON into a meaningful "planning" organism, naturally at the service of Russian interests. Clearly it was no longer a question of favoring equality in fact among the different nations, of favoring the development of industrialization in the different countries, but rather of getting their submission to the diktats of Moscow. The economic reprisals taken against Albania were to serve as an example for all those who might have been tempted to oppose this.

The economic crisis that is affecting the COMECON countries today, Poland being undoubtedly the most spectacular example, reveals the same essential characteristics as the crisis hitting the countries of the Western bloc. It is proof of the failure of "socialism" á la Khrushchov and Brezhnev. It shows that the countries of the two blocs are ruled by the same economic laws.

In presenting his report to the XVII Congress of the CPSU(B) in 1934, during the height of the great crisis hitting the entire capitalist world, Stalin was able with pride

to counterpose to the breakdown of the capitalist system, the enormous accomplishments of the Soviet Union on the road of socialist construction. This was shown when comparing the volume of industrial production of principal countries.

**Volume of industrial production  
(in percentage relative to the level before the war).**

	1913	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933
USSR	100	194,3	252,1	314,7	359,0	391,9
U.S.	100	170,2	137,3	115,9	91,4	110,2
England	100	99,1	91,5	83,0	82,5	85,2
Germany	100	113,0	99,8	81,0	67,6	75,4
France	100	139,0	140,0	124,0	96,1	107,6

While the working masses of the capitalist countries suffered starvation wages or wandered by the thousands looking for a job, the working class of the USSR, on the basis of the progress of industry and agriculture, had managed to raise its material and cultural standard of living to the point that unemployment had completely disappeared, to the point that the average annual salary for workers in industry had almost doubled from 1930 to 1933, and to the point that the workday had dropped to 7 hours in all surface industry.<sup>19</sup> The USSR was functioning then according to the basic economic law of socialism: "the securing of the maximum satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole society through the continuous expansion and perfection of socialist production on the basis of higher techniques."<sup>20</sup>

But today unemployment has returned to Russia and essential products are lacking. The military budget swallows the largest part of the country's resources. In his speech at the last congress of the Russian revisionist party, Brezhnev had to recognize publicly that the country's agriculture was in a catastrophic crisis.

This situation is a consequence of the restoration of capitalism after the assassination of Stalin. It is proof that the Russian economy has been functioning since that time according to the basic economic law of capitalism: "the securing of maximum capitalist profit through the exploitation, ruin and impoverishment of the majority of the population of the given country, through the enslavement and systematic robbery of the peoples of other countries, especially backward countries, and lastly, through wars and militarization of the national economy, which are utilized for the obtaining of the highest profits."<sup>21</sup>

Cuba is precisely one of those backward countries, enslaved and systematically robbed by Moscow's "red" bourgeoisie.

### **"Schools Will Not Carry You Very Far"—(Stalin)**

In attempting to camouflage the enslavement of the Cuban people by the new czars of the Kremlin, the pen-pushers of Russian imperialism often point to the enormous progress made by Cuba after the Revolution of 1959 in the area of literacy and schooling. To teach the population of a given country to read and write is, without a doubt, a great step forward. Nevertheless, in itself it is not a revolutionary step, in that the achievement of literacy does not go beyond the frontiers of capitalist development. It is a task of the bourgeois democratic revolution and acceptable to the bourgeoisie. In reality, it is necessary for the development of capitalism on a large scale.

An organization like the World Bank "discovered" that recently. Thus, in its Report on World Development-1980,<sup>22</sup> it says that "human development characterized by an improvement in schooling, health, nutrition and family planning on a local scale promotes economic growth as efficiently as capital invested in industry." The World Bank "experts" have realized that "educated peasants," those that have at least 4 years of schooling, produce 13% more than "uneducated peasants." They use better seeds and fertilizers, know better irrigation techniques, etc. . . . The World Bank concludes that "on a large scale (in particular in primary schooling) the productivity of the human investments is greater than the physical productivity."

The tremendous progress made by Cuba in the literacy and schooling of the population is not enough to say that

Cuba has escaped underdevelopment and that it is not enslaved by Russia. As Stalin pointed out to those who, in their solution to the problem of the inequality in fact among the nations, focused only on the schools: "That is not so, comrades. Schools will not carry you very far . . . In addition to schools and language, the Russian proletariat must take all measures to create in the border regions, in the culturally backward republics—and they are not backward because of any fault of their own, but because they were formerly regarded as sources of raw materials—must take all measures to ensure the building of centres of industry in these republics."<sup>23</sup>

It must be evident to every honest observer that Russia considers Cuba as just a source of raw materials, and that they have no intention of creating centers of industry. On the contrary, they have done everything until now to impede the development of such centers.

Elsewhere Russia naturally makes good use of recently trained Cuban technicians by sending them to African and Latin American countries, like Angola and Nicaragua, thus using their skin color or the fact that they are Latin Americans, to better dominate those countries through Cuban intermediaries. There is nothing new under the sun in this. As Stalin explained: "There is an old, special system of governing nations, under which a bourgeois authority favours certain nationalities, grants them privileges and humbles the other nations, not wishing to be bothered with them. Thus by favouring one nationality, it uses it to keep down the others."<sup>24</sup>

### **Abandoning the Positions of the Proletariat is Never an "Option"**

Finally, if we make an accounting of the 20 years of the "construction of socialism" in Cuba, we will realize that the situation today is not fundamentally different than that of 1959. The Cuban economy today is dominated by Russia instead of the United States. The Russian "preferential tariff" on sugar rules over the Cuban economy the same way the American one did. The Cuban worker and peasant masses face such sharp problems of housing, transport and the shortage of essential goods that thousands of persons decided to emigrate to the United States, when the Cuban government temporarily allowed it.

Some assert that the Cuban leaders had no other "option" than aligning themselves with Russia and that it was not possible for Cuba to build socialism on its own basis. We agree that the question of the possibility of building socialism in a single country should not be considered in a dogmatic and idealist way. The VI Congress of C.I. spoke of the semi-colonies as "having the rudiments of and in some cases considerably developed industry, but in the majority of cases inadequate for independent Socialist construction."<sup>25</sup> The International said: "As a rule, transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat in these countries will be possible only through a series of preparatory stages, as the outcome of a whole period of transformation of bourgeois-democratic revolution into Socialist revolution, while in the majority of cases, successful Socialist construction will be possible only if direct support is obtained from the countries in which the proletarian dictatorship is established."<sup>26</sup> In addition, for the countries in the Antilles region, characterized among other things by their geographic distance from the USSR, the C.I. showed the need for a grouping of those countries in a Soviet Federation for the construction of socialism.

Others argue that the objective and subjective conditions were not ready in 1959 for the triumph of a revolution that could evolve towards a socialist revolution. They are surely right. But this does not justify the fact that all the supposed revolutionaries have abandoned the class positions of the proletariat in order to capitulate to the bourgeoisie.

That Castro, Guevara and company, have done this should not surprise us. As we will see, they were not representatives of the proletariat, but rather of the national bourgeoisie. They have followed the habitual path of the bourgeoisie from the oppressed nations, selling themselves to imperialism. As Lenin pointed out: "the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations always converts the slogan of national liberation into a means for deceiving the workers; in internal politics it utilizes these slogans as a means for concluding reactionary agreements with the bourgeoisie of the ruling nation...in the realm of foreign politics it strives to enter into pacts with one of the rival imperialist powers for the purpose of achieving its own predatory aims."<sup>27</sup> The Cuban leaders at first sought to conclude reactionary

agreements with the American bourgeoisie, but in the face of the failure of the negotiations, they sought to enter into a pact with a rival power, Russian imperialism.

Today, if the occasion presents itself, they are ready to do a turn-about, as shown by the testimony of the former American representative in Cuba, who reproached the United States for not having given sufficient attention to the overtures of the Cuban government, for not having "taken advantage of" the economic difficulties affecting Cuba today.

In effect, it is expected that Cuba, in spite of Russian "aid," will have a budget deficit in 1983 of \$980 million, which is three times more than last year. Cuba has a foreign debt of \$10.5 billion. Of that, \$7.3 billion is owed to Russia and \$3.2 billion to the West, of which \$1.8 billion is to governments and \$1.4 billion is to Canadian and European banks. Financial difficulties have grown with the fall in the price of sugar and the rise in interest rates to the point that Cuba has been forced to ask that its debt be "rescheduled."

Cuba is seeking a bigger opening to the West, hoping to increase the proportion of their trade with the West, which presently stands at 30% of their total foreign trade. Cuba is also hoping to attract foreign capital. In February 1982, the Cuban government quietly passed a law on foreign investment that allows Western capitalists to hold 49% of the stock in joint enterprises with the Cuban government, with the repatriation of all profits and dividends. Havana has proclaimed that it will not intervene, even in the setting of prices or production. The law also authorizes the companies to control and fire workers and to choose their own managers and directors. Priority will be given to the tourist industry. In this way, Cuba could again become the tourist attraction that it was before 1959. Already in 1981, over 200,000 tourists visited Cuban beaches.

The newspapers have also revealed that Castro had offered to pull the 19,000 Cuban soldiers out of Angola and to stop the shipment of arms to the revolutionary movements in Central America, in exchange for the lifting of the US embargo.<sup>28</sup>

But American imperialism feels in such a strong posture in view of Cuba's economic difficulties that it demanded even more: the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Ethiopia

and the departure of Russian advisors from Cuba!

The possibility should not be discounted that one day the Cuban leaders might make a 180 degree turn and ally themselves with the United States. Many would then cry betrayal, but in fact, it would be nothing more than the continuation of the same line that has prevailed since the beginning of the sixties, the line that "justifies" selling oneself to the highest bidder, the line of submission to imperialism.

The betrayal of the Cuban revolution, endorsed by all the supposed "communists" (Russian, Chinese, Albanian, etc.), has had immeasurable tragic consequences for the Cuban and Latin American proletariat. Thousands of valiant fighters have died for having followed the nebulous Castroite and Guevarist theories that Khrushchov, Mao and Hoxha helped to popularize.

Today the Latin American proletariat sees the bankruptcy of "Cuban socialism" and is able to appraise the blind alley into which the "Cuban path" has led the revolution. At the dawn of new revolutionary battles, it becomes essential to purge the revolutionary movement of revisionist theories and to re-establish Leninism, "the theory and tactics of proletarian revolution,"<sup>29</sup> Bolshevism, which is "a model of tactics for all!"

## The Theoretical Creations of Guevara, Castro and Debray

In January 1959, Fidel Castro, at the head of his "barbudos," made a triumphal entrance into Havana. He assumed power thanks to a general strike and a popular uprising, organized in large part by the July 26th Movement, an organization led by Castro. The success of the uprising of 1959 occurred after several failures in previous similar attempts.

On July 26, 1953, leading 165 people, mainly students, Castro launched an assault on the Moncada Military Barracks in Santiago de Cuba, the second most important barracks in the country, with the objective of seizing it. The attack was to coincide with a popular uprising throughout the entire country. But the operation failed: 71 people were killed and Castro was taken prisoner.

Castro used his trial as a political tribune, with his famous defense, known as "History Will Absolve Me," to denounce the regime and advance his political program. Sentenced to 15 years at forced labor, he would be freed in 1955, thanks to a general amnesty. He then left Cuba for Mexico, where he met the Argentine, Ernesto Guevara, with whom he prepared a new expedition to Cuba.

In November of 1956, Castro and 85 men embarked in a ship, the Granma, headed for Cuba, where their landing was to coincide with a series of uprisings in Oriente province. But it was just a new version of Moncada. The uprisings were smashed and the Granma, the victim of a storm, ran aground on the coast of Oriente province where Batista's men were waiting. Only 12 managed to escape and gather in the Sierra Maestra, the mountain range from which the guerrilla movement was organized. This movement progressively developed and culminated in victory in 1959.



## Who Was Fidel Castro?

Castro, whose father was a plantation owner, began his political activity at the University of Havana, where he enrolled in the Law School in 1945. He was a militant then in the center of groups of activists, called "action groups." These "action groups" were not communist groups. On the contrary, they participated actively in 1947 in an anti-communist campaign to expell communists from trade union organizations!! In fact, these "action groups" were nationalist groups that proclaimed that terrorism was a method of struggle. In 1947, Castro himself participated in a plot that proposed assassinating Trujillo, the dictator of the Dominican Republic.

Castro was also a member of the Orthodox Party, a nationalist party. He was to have been a candidate from this party in the 1952 elections. But Batista's coup blocked the elections, thus closing off the accession to power of the Orthodox Party, whose victory seemed assured. Later the Orthodox Party split and Castro formed his own group, the one that launched the attack on Moncada and that later took the name, July 26th Movement, to commemorate that action.

Hence Castro was not a communist, his movement did not claim to be communist, and his program was not a communist one.

The July 26th Movement's program, Castro's program, was a bourgeois democratic program. It called for the re-establishment of the 1940 Constitution, democratic institutions, and agrarian reform. Castro and his *barbudos*, "bearded ones," asserted clearly that their banner was that of the bourgeois revolution, the banner of the struggle for national independence, the banner of Jose Marti, the hero of the struggle for Cuba's independence from Spain. It proclaimed its goal as that of completing the bourgeois democratic revolution begun by Marti at the beginning of the century. This was also the goal set by Estrada Palma, Machado and Grau San Martin, but which they had all betrayed to conclude pacts with imperialism, to smash the popular movements that had brought them to power and to keep Cuba as a semi-colony of the United States.

## Castro's Conversion to "Communism"

Once in power, Castro sought, like his predecessors, to make a pact with U.S. imperialism. In April, he went to the United States and Canada, looking to negotiate a more favorable "understanding" for the Cuban bourgeoisie than that which existed under Batista, trying to utilize the contradictions existing among the different factions of the North American bourgeoisie.

Those contradictions did indeed exist. Certain sections of the American bourgeoisie supported Batista unconditionally, while others, recognizing the weakness of his power, were in search of a replacement. (A similar situation existed several years ago in Nicaragua, when the bourgeoisie was divided on whether to support Somoza.) Starting in 1958, the United States, due to the growing unpopularity of the Batista regime, disassociated itself officially from it and adopted a friendly attitude toward Castro. Thus, for example, a meeting was held in Miami at the end of November, 1958, with the participation of two high functionaries of the Department of State, an Assistant Secretary of State, and the chief of the Latin American division of the CIA, during which they reached the conclusion that they had to convince Batista to step down in favor of a moderate government.

Castro and his July 26th Movement took advantage of these contradictions within the American bourgeoisie to assume and maintain power. But instead of arriving at a new understanding with American imperialism, they arrived at a confrontation.

In 1959, in the first agrarian reform, several American sugar companies, including the United Fruit Company, were nationalized. This alone did not provoke the confrontation. That came in April of 1960 when the three oil refineries on the island (Shell, Texaco, and Standard Oil) refused to treat crude oil that the Cuban government had just purchased from Russia. This purchase occurred after economic agreements were reached following Mikoyan's visit to Cuba in February of 1960. These agreements were of a limited character and encompassed the purchase by Russia of 425,000 tons of sugar in 1960 and a million tons each in of the following four years, as well as the opening of \$100 million credit for the purchase of industrial equipment and oil.

The Cuban government responded to the boycott of the refineries by nationalizing them. The U.S. Congress then authorized President Eisenhower to reduce the Cuban sugar quota by 700,000 tons. Castro attacked by nationalizing all the big American companies. The United States suspended its importation of Cuban sugar and decreed a total embargo on trade with Cuba.

On January 3, 1961, the United States broke relations with Cuba and on April 15, groups of Cubans in the pay of the CIA landed in the Bay of Pigs with the intention of taking over the island. They were easily defeated. Kennedy had to recognize publicly that this operation had been prepared with the complicity of the American government.

A little while later, in December of 1961, Castro's conversion to "communism" took place. In his new profession of faith, he declared, "I am a Marxist-Leninist and I will be one until the last day of my life." On the same occasion he announced the creation of the Unified Party of the Socialist Revolution. The first congress of this Party took place in 1975; in other words, more than 14 years after its creation!!

Normally communists follow an inverse path. They elaborate a program and create a Party, whose goal is to make the Revolution and institute the dictatorship of the proletariat. But it must be said that they have a different conception than Castro in regard to the dictatorship of the proletariat. As Stalin related: "The dictatorship of the proletariat is not simply a governmental top stratum 'skillfully' 'selected' by the careful hand of an 'experienced strategist,' and 'judiciously relying' on the support of one section or another of the population. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the class alliance between the proletariat and the labouring masses of the peasantry for the purpose of overthrowing capital, for achieving the final victory of socialism, on the condition that the guiding force of this alliance is the proletariat."<sup>31</sup>

In proclaiming himself a Marxist-Leninist and Cuba socialist, Castro's goal was not to lay out the class alliance of the proletariat and the toiling masses of the peasantry, but rather to force the Russians' hand to get a commitment of military support in case of new American aggression.

Castro's profession of "Marxist-Leninist" faith would have important repercussions for Cuba's relations with the other

Latin American countries. The Cuban revolution had benefited from the considerable support for it among the Latin American popular masses. This sympathy had even extended to the governmental sphere in different countries, who saw in it a chance to extract concessions from US imperialism.

But after Castro's profession of faith, the United States managed in January of 1962 to get the Organization of American States (OAS) to pass unanimously a resolution stipulating that "the drawing near of any member of the Organization of American States to Marxism-Leninism is incompatible with the Pan American system," and that "the current Cuban government, which has proclaimed itself officially as a Marxist-Leninist government, is incompatible with the views and principles of the Pan American system."<sup>31,1</sup> In fact, the United States used the traditional tactic of the carrot and the stick to isolate Cuba. They made concessions to the Latin American bourgeoisies in the framework of the "Alliance for Progress," and demonstrated by the sending of Marines to Santo Domingo to smash a popular uprising that it would not tolerate a new Cuba in what it considered its own backyard.

For its part, Cuba realized, seeing Russia's capitulation during the missile crisis and its timid support for Vietnam in the face of the intensification of the American commitment, that its adherence to "the great family of socialist countries" might not have all the virtues that had been attributed to it at the beginning. It was now evident to the Cuban leaders that Russia would not risk itself in an armed confrontation with the United States to defend Cuba. It was becoming imperative to develop active support for Cuba in Latin America and the creation of guerrilla movements in various countries seemed like a way to weaken American imperialism. It was in this context that in 1962 Guevara published his famous short work, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Method*, that was to become the bible of the Latin American guerrillas.

### Guevarism

In his book Guevara draws up a balance sheet of the Cuban Revolution, drawing out its lessons and proposing them as the model for Latin American revolutionaries.

The main thesis that Guevara derives from the Cuban Revolution is the need for armed struggle. He begins his

book by saying: "The armed victory of the Cuban people over the Batista dictatorship has not only been an heroic triumph noticed by observers throughout the whole world: it has also been an upsetting of the old dogmas concerning the leadership of the popular masses of Latin America."<sup>32</sup>

And for Guevara what are these "old dogmas" that have been upset?

He says: "In our Latin American situation, we believe that the Cuban Revolution made three fundamental contributions to the mechanics of revolutionary movements in the Americas. First, the people's forces can win a war against the army. Second, one need not always wait for the existence of all conditions favoring revolution; the insurrectionary nucleus can create them. Third, in underdeveloped Latin America, the arena of the armed struggle should be fundamentally the country."<sup>33</sup>

Without saying it explicitly, Guevara is taking issue with the revisionist "communist" parties of Latin America who all had subscribed quickly to the Khrushovite theses on peaceful coexistence and the peaceful transition to socialism. He made the question of "armed struggle" the line of demarcation between the "genuine" revolutionaries and the holders of the "old dogmas," the revisionist parties who had abandoned the goal of proletarian revolution, aspiring to play a role in bourgeois politics by means of parliamentarism.

But the promotion of armed struggle is not synonymous with a break with the "old dogmas." As Stalin noted: "It must be emphasized that the path of reforms, the constitutional path, does not in the least exclude 'revolutionary acts' or 'revolutionary struggle.' When determining the revolutionary or reformist character of this or that party, the decisive element must be considered, not the 'revolutionary acts' in themselves, but rather the goals and political tasks in the name of which they have been undertaken and used by the Party."<sup>34</sup> As we will see later on, Guevara does not question the "goals and political tasks" of the revisionist parties, but just the means that they use, their abandonment of "revolutionary actions."

He continues, saying: "We must ask ourselves why the guerrilla fights. We arrive at the inevitable conclusion that the guerrilla is a social reformer."<sup>35</sup> Guevara assigns the guerrillas the same "goals and political tasks" as the CP

revisionists, the "goals and political tasks" of the Latin American liberal bourgeoisie. As he himself says: "Jose Marti is the mentor of our revolution"! Not Lenin, not Stalin, but... Jose Marti!

### **Guevarism and the Denial of the Leading Role of the Working Class**

More than 130 years ago, Marx and Engels elaborated the theoretical conceptions upon which communists base themselves to set their "goals and political tasks." In the Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels clearly established that, among all the classes that today oppose the bourgeoisie, only the proletariat is the truly revolutionary class. "The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of Modern Industry; the proletariat is its special and essential product."<sup>35.1</sup> And it is this class of proletarians whose interests the communists represent. As Marx and Engels said: "They (the Communists) have no interests separate and apart from those of the proletariat as a whole," but "they have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions, and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement."<sup>36</sup>

Later Lenin developed the ideas of Marx and Engels in the conditions of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. Stalin explained: "Marx and Engels pursued their activities in the pre-revolutionary period (we have the proletarian revolution in mind), when developed imperialism did not yet exist, in the period of the proletarians' preparation for revolution, in the period when the proletarian revolution was not yet an immediate practical inevitability. But Lenin, the disciple of Marx and Engels, pursued his activities in the period of developed imperialism, in the period of the unfolding proletarian revolution, when the proletarian revolution had already triumphed in one country, had smashed bourgeois democracy and had ushered in the era of proletarian democracy, the era of the Soviets."<sup>37</sup>

Thus was born Leninism, the "Marxism of the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. To be more exact, Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular."<sup>38</sup>

Stalin sums up the Leninist theory of proletarian revolution in three fundamental theses:

"First thesis: The domination of finance capital in the advanced capitalist countries; the issue of stocks and bonds as one of the principal operations of finance capital; the export of capital to the sources of raw materials, which is one of the foundations of imperialism; the omnipotence of a financial oligarchy, which is the result of the domination of finance capital—all this reveals the grossly parasitic character of monopolist capitalism, makes the yoke of the capitalist trusts and syndicates a hundred times more burdensome, intensifies the indignation of the working class with the foundations of capitalism, and brings the masses to the proletarian revolution as their only salvation.

"Hence the first conclusion: intensification of the revolutionary crisis within the capitalist countries and growth of the elements of an explosion on the internal, proletarian front in the 'metropolises'.

"Second thesis: The increase in the export of capital to the colonies and dependent countries; the expansion of 'spheres of influence' and colonial possessions until they cover the whole globe; the transformation of capitalism into a world system of financial enslavement and colonial oppression of the vast majority of the population of the world by a handful of 'advanced' countries—all this has, on the one hand, converted the separate national economies and national territories into links in a single chain called world economy, and, on the other hand, split the population of the globe into two camps: a handful of 'advanced' capitalist countries which exploit and oppress vast colonies and dependencies, and the huge majority consisting of colonial and dependent countries which are compelled to wage a struggle for liberation from the imperialist yoke.

"Hence the second conclusion: intensification of the revolutionary crisis in the colonial countries and growth of the elements of revolt against imperialism on the external, colonial front.

"Third thesis: The monopolistic possession of 'spheres of influence' and colonies; the uneven development of the capitalist countries, leading to a frenzied struggle for the redivision of the world between the countries which have already seized territories and those claiming their 'share';

imperialist wars as the only means of restoring the disturbed 'equilibrium'—all this leads to the intensification of the struggle on the third front, the inter-capitalist front, which weakens imperialism and facilitates the union of the first two fronts against imperialism: the front of the revolutionary proletariat and the front of colonial emancipation.

"Hence the third conclusion: that under imperialism wars cannot be averted, and that a coalition between the proletarian revolution in Europe and the colonial revolution in the East in a united world front of revolution against the world front of imperialism is inevitable.

"Lenin combines all these conclusions into one general conclusion that 'imperialism is the eve of the socialist revolution.'"<sup>39</sup>

But for Guevara, these are surely just "old dogmas." Guevara does not want to be the representative of the interests of the only thoroughly revolutionary class, the proletariat. For him, "the guerrilla is above all an agrarian revolutionary. He understands the aspirations of the great mass of peasants: to be owner of the land, owner of the means of production, of the animals, of everything that he has desired for years, of what makes up his life and makes up also the land, where they will die."<sup>40</sup> This of course has nothing to do with Leninism, with the theory of proletarian revolution. It is the open rejection of the leading role of the proletariat.

### The Alliance of the Working Class and the Peasantry

Although Leninism upholds the leading role of the working class, it is not uninterested in the question of the peasantry. On the contrary, the peasant question is intimately linked to the question of the leading role of the working class. It is a question of the allies of the proletariat in the struggle for power, the question of the transformation of the peasantry from a reserve of the bourgeoisie to a reserve of the proletariat. As Stalin noted: "In this sense the peasant question is part of the general question of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and as such it is one of the most vital problems of Leninism."<sup>41</sup>

The problem with Guevara is that in advancing the peasant question, he does not place it in the framework of "the general question of the dictatorship of the proletariat," but

rather in the general question of the . . . bourgeois revolution!

Guevara struggled against the "old dogmas" of the Latin American revisionist parties and their indifferent or negative attitude toward the peasant question. But such indifference, such a negative attitude, did not come from their support of Leninism. Very much to the contrary. It is explained above all by the fact that those parties had no faith in the dictatorship of the proletariat and had no intention of leading the proletariat to power. This was plain in the Moscow declarations of 1957 and 1960, which centered the proletariat's attention around an alliance with the national bourgeoisie in the semi-colonies. These declarations center only on the question of national independence, its achievement for the colonies and its defense for the semi-colonies. The peasantry is hardly mentioned, and when it is, it is only as an ally in the struggle for national independence. The agrarian revolution is not even mentioned; there is only talk of "agrarian reforms." The whole concept of the "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry" is rejected in favor of "national democracy" under the hegemony of the national bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, where there exists only the "opportunity to work for the enactment of an agrarian reform and other democratic and social changes."<sup>42</sup>

Instead of re-establishing Leninism on this question, Guevara goes against the revisionist theories by adopting an indifferent and negative attitude toward the proletariat. In fact, he totally ignores the proletariat!

Of course, in the overwhelming majority of Latin American countries, the proletariat is a minority of the population. But it was in Czarist Russia, too. And that did not stop Lenin from stating that "The proletariat must in its own interest assume the leadership of the peasant revolution,"<sup>43</sup> and extending that to a world scale in the Second Congress of the Communist International, saying: "The preponderance of pre-capitalist relationships is still the main determining feature in these countries, so that there can be no question of a purely proletarian movement in them. There is practically no industrial proletariat in these countries. Nevertheless, we have assumed, we must assume, the role of leader even there."<sup>44</sup>

But why is it precisely the proletariat that must assume the leading role? Why must communists base their activity on the proletariat?

"Because the proletariat, as a class, was growing from year to year, was developing politically, easily lent itself to organization owing to the conditions of labour prevailing in large-scale production, and was the most revolutionary class owing to its proletarian status, for it had nothing to lose in the revolution but its chains.

"The case was different with the peasantry:

"The peasantry (. . .), despite its numerical strength, was a labouring class that was connected with the most backward form of economy, small-scale production, owing to which it had not and could not have any great future before it.

"Far from growing as a class, the peasantry was splitting up more and more into bourgeois (kulaks) and poor peasants (proletarians and semi-proletarians). Moreover, being scattered, it lent itself less easily than the proletariat to organization, and, consisting of small owners, it joined the revolutionary movement less readily than the proletariat."<sup>45</sup>

### Guevaratism, a Form of Menshevism

Guevara's "new dogmas" on the way of leading a revolution are not as new as they seem. In fact, they are nothing more than the old menshevik, opportunist theories, in a new form. Lenin carried out a tireless struggle against the mensheviks on these questions and the differences were not confined to just the Russian revolution. When Lenin criticized the tactics of the mensheviks, he was also criticizing the tactics of international opportunism. Likewise, justifying the tactics of Marxists in the period of the bourgeois revolution and establishing the distinction between the bourgeois revolution and the socialist revolution, he formulated at the same time the principles of Marxist tactics in the period of the transition from the bourgeois revolution to the proletarian revolution. It is vital to comprehend the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism on this question. Stalin explained this difference in the following manner: "In 1905, differences developed between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks in Russia on the question of the character of the Russian revolution. The Bolsheviks advocated an alliance between the working class and the peasantry under the hegemony of the proletariat. The Bolsheviks affirmed that the objective must be a revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry for the purpose of

passing immediately from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution, with the support of the rural poor secured. The Mensheviks in Russia rejected the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat in the bourgeois-democratic revolution; instead of the policy of an alliance between the working class and the peasantry, they preferred the policy of an agreement with the liberal bourgeoisie, and they declared that the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry was a reactionary Blanquist scheme that ran counter to the development of the bourgeois revolution."<sup>46</sup>

Today the mensheviks are not against the peasantry. Like Guevara, they proclaimed themselves to be representatives of the peasantry. While the Bolsheviks tried to establish "the hegemony of the proletariat, that is, its leading role in the bourgeois revolution, the proletariat implemented a policy of alliance with the peasantry and a policy of isolation of the liberal bourgeoisie," the mensheviks like Guevara strive to implement a policy of alliance between the peasantry and the liberal bourgeoisie and a policy of isolation toward the proletariat. The policy of alliance with the liberal bourgeoisie manifested itself concretely in the case of the Guevarista guerrillas, through their links with the revisionist CP. That is, the revisionists represented the interests of the liberal bourgeoisie of the cities and the guerrillas represented the interests of the kulaks. The liberal bourgeoisie has an interest in supporting the "agrarian reformer" because they have an interest in an "agrarian reform" that extends the national capitalist market.

In the chapter of *Foundations of Leninism* that deals with strategy and tactics, Stalin explains in a schematic way the stages of the revolution in Russia. He says: "First stage. 1903 to February 1917. Objective: to overthrow tsarism and completely wipe out the survivals of mediaevalism. The main force of the revolution: the proletariat. Immediate reserves: the peasantry. Direction of the main blow: the isolation of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie, which was striving to win over the peasantry and liquidate the revolution by a compromise with tsarism. Plan for disposition of forces: alliance of the working class with the peasantry."<sup>47</sup>

Only after having gone through this stage could the proletariat, led by its party, pass immediately to the second

stage which Stalin describes in the following way: "Second stage. March 1917 to October 1917. Objective: to overthrow imperialism in Russia and to withdraw from the imperialist war. The main force of the revolution: the proletariat. Immediate reserves: the poor peasantry. The proletariat of neighbouring countries as probable reserves. The protracted war and the crisis of imperialism as a favourable factor. Direction of the main blow: isolation of the petty-bourgeois democrats (Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries), who were striving to win over the toiling masses of the peasantry to put an end to the revolution by a compromise with imperialism. Plan for the disposition of forces: alliance of the proletariat with the poor peasantry."<sup>48</sup>

This plan is not something particular to Russia. Let us remember that "when he (Lenin) substantiated the Marxist tactics in the period of the bourgeois revolution and drew the distinction between the bourgeois revolution and the Socialist revolution, he at the same time formulated the fundamental principles of the Marxist tactics in the period of transition from the bourgeois revolution to the Socialist revolution."<sup>49</sup>

But for Guevara and the Cuban leaders, these are "old dogmas." They prefer the dogmas of Jose Marti. Their strategic plan had only one stage and it could be understood this way: Objective: replace the Cuban bourgeoisie linked to American imperialism. The main force of the revolution: the petty bourgeoisie. Immediate reserves: the peasantry. Probable reserves: the petty bourgeoisie and possibly a fraction of the bourgeoisie in the Latin American countries. Direction of the main blow: seek to resume a new alliance with American imperialism, or with a rival imperialist power, Russia.

### **Bolshevism and Guerrilla Warfare**

It is within the framework of the "strategic plan" that we have just described that Guevara's third thesis must be understood, namely, "one need not always wait for the existence of all conditions favoring revolution; the insurrectionary nucleus can create them."<sup>50</sup>

This adventurist and Blanquist thesis is totally anti-Leninist. It goes completely against "the fundamental law of revolution" as formulated by Lenin. "The fundamental law

of revolution, which has been confirmed by all revolutions, and particularly by all three Russian revolutions in the twentieth century, is as follows: it is not enough for revolution that the exploited and oppressed masses should understand the impossibility of living in the old way and demand changes; it is essential for revolution that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. Only when the 'lower classes' do not want the old way, and when the 'upper classes' cannot carry on in the old way—only then can revolution triumph."

Lenin says further that "everything is fully ripe for the decisive battle" if "1) all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, are sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength; that 2) all the vacillating, wavering, unstable, intermediate elements—the petty bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois democrats as distinct from the bourgeoisie—have sufficiently exposed themselves in the eyes of the people, have sufficiently disgraced themselves through their practical bankruptcy; and that 3) among the proletariat a mass sentiment in favour of supporting the most determined, supremely bold, revolutionary action against the bourgeoisie has arisen and begun vigorously to grow. Then revolution is indeed ripe; then, indeed, if we have correctly gauged all the conditions indicated and briefly outlined above, and if we have chosen the moment rightly, our victory is assured."<sup>51</sup> Guevara not only did not take into account Lenin's criteria, but his thesis is contradicted by the very experience of the Cuban revolution, with the failure of Moncada and the landing of the Granma, as well as the failure of the guerrilla focos that Cuba tried to stir up in Latin America, such as Che's own in Bolivia!!

This does not mean that Bolsheviks negate guerrilla warfare as a form of struggle. In his work, *Guerrilla Warfare*, Lenin laid out the two essential requirements that a communist must keep in mind in examining the question of the forms of struggle.

"In the first place, Marxism differs from all primitive forms of socialism by not binding the movement to any one particular form of struggle. It recognises the most varied forms of struggle; and it does not 'concoct' them, but only generalises, organises, gives conscious expression to those

forms of struggle of the revolutionary classes which arise of themselves in the course of the movement. Absolutely hostile to all abstract formulas and to all doctrinaire recipes, Marxism demands an attentive attitude to the *mass struggle* in progress, which, as the movement develops, as the class-consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute, continually gives rise to new and more varied methods of defence and attack. Marxism, therefore, positively does not reject any form of struggle."<sup>52</sup>

But in reality, the Cuban theoreticians did not perceive guerrilla warfare as one form of struggle within the framework of the mass struggle "as the movement develops, as the class-consciousness of the masses grows, as economic and political crises become acute," but as the act of a small group of guerrillas and as THE form of struggle, promoted in a dogmatic and doctrinaire way, to the detriment of the other forms of struggle.

Lenin continues: "In the second place, Marxism demands an absolutely *historical* examination of the question of the forms of struggle. To treat this question apart from the concrete historical situation betrays a failure to understand the rudiments of dialectical materialism. At different stages of economic evolution, depending on differences in political, national-cultural, living and other conditions, different forms of struggle come to the fore and become the principal forms of struggle; and in connection with this, the secondary, auxiliary forms of struggle undergo change in their turn."<sup>53</sup>

But for the Cuban leaders, the promotion of guerrilla warfare, of insurrection in certain Latin American countries, was done overlooking "the concrete historical situation." It was done solely as a function of Cuba's national interests. The "red" bourgeoisie of Cuba incited thousands and thousands of Latin American revolutionaries to go the mountains and form "insurrectional focos" to distract American imperialism and protect their national interests.

Lenin sums up the Bolshevik position on guerrilla warfare, saying that "... the party of the proletariat can never regard guerrilla warfare as the only, or even as the chief, method of struggle; it means that this method must be subordinated to other methods, that it must be commensurate with the chief methods of warfare, and must be ennobled by the enlightening and organising influence of socialism. And without

this latter condition, *all*, positively all, methods of struggle in bourgeois society bring the proletariat into close association with the various non-proletarian strata above and below it and, if left to the spontaneous course of events, become frayed, corrupted and prostituted."<sup>54</sup>

Lenin goes on to give several examples of this degeneration. "Strikes, if left to the spontaneous course of events, become corrupted into 'alliances' — agreements between the workers and the masters against the consumers. Parliament becomes corrupted into a brothel, where a gang of bourgeois politicians barter wholesale and retail 'national freedom,' 'liberalism,' 'democracy,' republicanism, anti-clericalism, socialism and all other wares in demand. A newspaper becomes corrupted into a public pimp, into a means of corrupting the masses, of pandering to the low instincts of the mob, and so on and so forth. Social-Democracy (i.e., Bolshevism — Editor's note) knows of no universal methods of struggle, such as would shut off the proletariat by a Chinese wall from the strata standing slightly above or slightly below it. At different periods Social-Democracy applies different methods, *always* qualifying the choice of them by *strictly* defined ideological and organisational conditions"<sup>55</sup>

Castro, Guevara and company have subordinated guerrilla warfare only to their strategy of the defense of Cuban national interests and this is accommodated to agreements with the "gangs of bourgeois politicians" of the revisionist parties. This is because, in spite of the denunciations of the betrayal and reformism of the old revisionist parties, the Cuban leaders did not hesitate to make deals with those same parties. Also, only two years after the defeat of Guevara's foco, a conference was held in Havana under the sponsorship of the Cuban party of the Latin American revisionist parties, an agreement was reached between Cuba and the majority of the revisionist parties on the question of armed struggle. The participants committed themselves to support the armed struggle in 6 countries: Venezuela, Colombia, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, and Haiti.<sup>56</sup> In the other countries, they could continue with the "old dogmas" of peaceful transition, and the revisionist parties of those countries became the privileged "revolutionary" spokesmen for the Cuban revolution in Latin America!

After having sought initially the support of the Latin American countries, the Cuban leaders later began to promote guerrilla warfare, often in those same countries. This did not stop them, when they saw it in their interest, from ending their support for the guerrillas and supporting the openly reformist movement like that of Allende in Chile, or supporting the military dictatorships like that of Velasco in Peru, and even the Argentine military junta during the war over the Falkland (Malvinas) Islands. Often the same thing happened with the guerrilla movements themselves! Thus, the Black Panthers in the United States and the FLQ in Quebec broke up and their ex-militants threw their support to openly reformist solutions of the Black and Quebecois bourgeoisies. And what can be said of Regis Debray, today an adviser to the president of imperialist France!

This is not surprising. These forces represent the interests of factions of the bourgeoisie that seek a new arrangement of their relations with American imperialism, specifically a new world economic order. Guevara was their mouthpiece when he declared: "We consider that the only just solution to the current problems of humanity is the total suppression of the exploitation of the dependent countries by the developed capitalist countries."<sup>57</sup>

Lenin said that the "division of nations into oppressor and oppressed...forms the essence of imperialism,"<sup>58</sup> and showed that what was needed was to destroy imperialism through a coalition of the proletarian revolution in the advanced countries and the bourgeois democratic revolution in the colonies, semi-colonies and dependent countries in a single world front of revolution against the world front of imperialism.

Guevara and the Cuban leaders promoted the formation of a coalition of the bourgeoisies of the nations oppressed by American imperialism with a view toward creating a "new world economic order." To reach this objective they were ready to promote "revolutionary actions." But once again, as Stalin pointed out: "When determining the revolutionary or reformist character of this or that party, the decisive element must be considered, not the 'revolutionary acts' in themselves, but rather the goals and political tasks in the name of which they have been undertaken and used by the Party."<sup>59</sup>



## Castroism: The New Adventurism

January, 1967 saw the publication of Regis Debray's book, *Revolution in the Revolution*, destined to enjoy great success. The book was written after a series of conversations between Debray and Castro, and it is known that it is Castro who is speaking through Debray. One hundred thousand copies of the book were published immediately and it became one of the basic texts studied in the cells of the Cuban party.

Just as was the case with Guevara's book, the context of this publication is important. The United States had started the bombing of North Vietnam and the "timid" response of the Russians showed the Cuban leaders once more the weakness of Russian "protection." Cuban worries had grown even more following the American military intervention in Santo Domingo.

As if this were not enough, the Russians now showed interest in developing state to state relations with the governing regimes in Latin America. Finally, the Venezuelan revisionist party, which had been carrying on armed struggle for many years, began at the end of 1965 to try and withdraw from this after having suffered a series of defeats. If such a disengagement were to take place, it would mean an important setback for Cuba, which had supported and actively promoted this guerrilla movement. It was in this extremely threatening context for the Cuban leaders that Guevara launched his call to create "two, three, many Vietnams" and that *Revolution in the Revolution* was published.

In this work, the need for armed struggle is not debated. It is taken for granted. But it criticizes different conceptions of armed struggle. It takes issue with the experience of armed self-defense in Colombia and Bolivia and with the seizure of land by the peasants and factories by the workers, which are classified as economism and spontaneity. It criticizes armed propaganda, as practiced in Vietnam, in which the guerrillas strive to develop popular support for political work, citing the fact that the population is too dispersed in Latin America. It differs also with the Chinese model, with its guerrilla base area, said to be inapplicable to Latin America due to the lack of a sanctuary or a great territory. The

Debray-Castro alternative is that of the mobile strategic force, the guerrilla "foco" that had made the Cuban revolution successful. The Cuban model is thus elevated to a dogma. But the most important aspect of the book is the criticism about the subordination of the guerrilla movement to the party; it is a criticism of the negative experience of Venezuela and praise for the positive experience of Cuba.

## Castroism Buries the Working Class

In defining their "goals and political tasks," Debray-Castro also appeal to Jose Marti. And they are much clearer than Guevara. They say: "An anti-imperialist national liberation struggle can not be carried out under the aegis of Marxism-Leninism and the working class in the conditions of Latin America, which are characterized by the existence of a numerically small working class, frequently penetrated by reformism and aristocratized in fact by relatively high salaries paid by the big enterprises of the foreign and national monopolies!"<sup>60</sup> We have already seen that the numerical weakness of the working class in a country is not a criterion to deny its leading role, but Debray-Castro go even further than Guevara, relegating the entire Latin American working class to the category of labor aristocracy! The Chilean and Bolivian miners and the industrial workers of Sao Paulo would be happy to learn that according to Debray-Castro, they are all "aristocratized"! It is not even necessary to wonder what Debray-Castro must think of the working class in the imperialist countries!

If the working class then is too corrupted to lead the national liberation struggle, which is the class whose purity allows it to aspire to take leadership of "the anti-imperialist national liberation struggle"? None other than the petty bourgeoisie, of course. "The students are, in Latin America, the vanguard of the revolution," Debray-Castro tell us<sup>61</sup> and "the composition of those commandos is mainly student or petty bourgeois (the Cuban 'July 26th' had the same social composition)."<sup>62</sup> But wait! Let us be careful of hasty judgments about this petty bourgeoisie, Debray-Guevara advise us. Let us liquidate the working class with a stroke of the pen, but "it would be ridiculous to lend the word 'petty bourgeois' the implicit meaning that it has in Europe."<sup>63</sup> Now it is better understood why "the anti-imperialist national

liberation struggle can not be carried out under the aegis of Marxism-Leninism...in the conditions of Latin America": the workers are not workers and the petty bourgeois are not petty bourgeois!

The VI Congress of the C.I. had a somewhat different opinion about this subject: "The petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, the students and such-like, are very frequently the most determined representatives, not only of the specific interests of the petty bourgeoisie, but also of the general objective interests of the entire national bourgeoisie... The upward growth of the revolutionary wave may drive them into the labor movement, bringing with them their petty-bourgeois ideology of vacillation and indecision."<sup>64</sup>

Furthermore, let us do justice to Debray-Castro; for them, those petty bourgeois stop being petty bourgeois upon situating themselves in the vanguard, as long as they fulfill certain specific conditions, namely that they leave the cities to follow the path of the guerrilla in the mountains. In the logic of their reasoning, Debray-Castro have gotten to the point of identifying the city with the bourgeoisie and the countryside with the proletariat! "The city, says Fidel, is a cemetery of revolutionaries."<sup>65</sup> "When a guerrilla speaks with his urban leaders or their representatives abroad, he is dealing with 'his' bourgeoisie."<sup>66</sup> "Every man, even if he is a comrade, who spends his life in a city is a bourgeois without knowing it, in comparison with the guerrilla."<sup>67</sup> Because, according to Debray-Castro, "How could a city-dweller, no matter how Marxist-Leninist, understand the vital importance of a square meter of nylon, of a jar of jelly, of a pair of boots?"<sup>68</sup>

Here then is the secret, the petty bourgeoisie must proletarianize itself. How? By grasping Marxism-Leninism? No! Rather with the manual labor... of the peasant!!! "Cleaning a corner of the forest to be able to cultivate it, working the land in common, hunting, etc.,... These material conditions inevitably lead the foco to proletarianize itself morally and ideologically. Whether their members are peasants or petty bourgeois, the guerrilla center can not become anything other than an army of proletarians."<sup>69</sup> The model of the perfect revolutionary is no longer that of Lenin or Stalin, but that of Robinson Crusoe. In fact, Baden-Powell-Debray, in their boy scout manual, go as far as to write that "the

rural fighter educates himself day and night through his contact with the outdoor world." How poetic! How bucolic! In reality, what could be more "educational" than breathing the fresh night air in a cordillera of the Andes! What's more, "The mountain proletarianizes bourgeois and peasants, the city can bourgeoisify even the proletarians."<sup>70</sup> One can imagine the dismay of the Uruguayans with the Debray-Castro thesis, given that Uruguay has no mountains. They are condemned to bourgeoisification!

But Debray-Castro have, in spite of everything, tried to justify all this nonsense with more "strategic" arguments like "the armed revolutionary struggle can only be carried out in the countryside. In the city, this struggle is broken... The irrefutable arguments of Che Guevara about this subject are well known: before attacking the weakest link, an insurrectional center must stay away from the urban zones, as well as from the strongest links of the chain, which is to say there where all the State's repressive and administrative bodies are concentrated."<sup>71</sup>

In reality, Che's "irrefutable arguments" are well known, among which his Bolivian experience should head the list. Che kept such a distance from the "strongest links in the chain" by setting up the foco in a practically uninhabited site in Bolivia, that hardly a few months later the guerrillas, hungry and with no resources, fell easy prey to the "State's repressive bodies" that had known how to reinforce their "weakest link!"

Castro and Debray were not as dogmatic as Guevara. For example, the American government published an edition of *Guerrilla Warfare: A Method*, for the training of their anti-guerrilla forces. In this text, Guevara's text is on the left hand page while on the right hand page it shows the way to combat what Guevara developed.

### Debray Theorizes Against Theory

Debray-Castro display a total disdain for theory. Debray is enthusiastic in telling how, "in two years of war, Fidel did not have even one meeting in his area of operations"<sup>72</sup> and celebrates the fact that the Cuban guerrillas "are the first socialist guerrillas who have not adopted the system of the political commissars. This system does not seem to correspond to the Latin American reality." Evidently, Latin Ameri-

can revolutionaries do not need political meetings. They are so different from the European petty bourgeoisie. They proletarianize themselves through their "contact with the outdoor world"! Naturally, Debray would not accept such a system for himself. The European petty bourgeoisie is so different!

For the Guevara-Debray-Castro band, the physical qualities of the guerrillas surpass their intellectual faculties, their political training. Several guerrillas were treated harshly by their leaders because they tried to teach themselves, to educate themselves politically. They were told that it was more useful to get busy "cleaning a corner of the forest"! There was fear that they would ponder the well known theses of Lenin that "without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement" and that "the role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory,"<sup>72.1</sup> and that they would thus discover the great fraud of Castroism and Guevarism!

Debray-Castro of course also saw the need for a party. They did it for purely opportunist reasons. They did not want to completely break their ties with the revisionist parties, which would have meant the creation of new parties. They polemicized against the subordination of the guerrilla movement to the revisionist parties, but not against the maintenance of ties with them. This was the way that Guevara's guerrilla movement in Bolivia was dependent on the revisionist party for its supplies. And it was that party, undoubtedly with the agreement of the Russians, that sold out Guevara to the forces of Barrientos.<sup>73\*</sup>

### Castroism: the Caudillismo of Modern Times

Debray-Castro tried to justify their theories by invoking the "specific character" of Latin American conditions and trying to present Castroism as a "creative" application of Marxism-Leninism. Debray tells us that "Castroism is

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\*The responsibility of Regis Debray, then in the hands of Barrientos, in Guevara's assassination should not be overlooked either. In fact, shortly before his death, Guevara wrote in his diary: "It seems to me that the Frenchman talked too much!" In his "necessary introduction" to Che's Bolivian diary, Castro tried hard to keep Debray free from suspicion. But without success.

nothing more than the concrete process of the regeneration of Marxism-Leninism, starting from the 'previous conditions' of each country. Thus, it would never have the same physiognomy twice, from country to country: it can win only by surprising... because Castroism, or Leninism recuperated and adjusted to the historic conditions of a continent that Lenin was ignorant of, is passing, whether one wants it or not, into the reality of revolutionary strategies."<sup>74</sup>

Debray takes as his own the old opportunist theory according to which Leninism is just a Russian phenomenon. Stalin said: "Some say that Leninism is the application of Marxism to the conditions that are peculiar to the situation in Russia. This definition contains a particle of truth, but not the whole truth by any means. Lenin, indeed, applied Marxism to Russian conditions, and applied it in a masterly way. But if Leninism were only the application of Marxism to the conditions that are peculiar to Russia it would be a purely national and only a national, a purely Russian and only a Russian, phenomenon. We know, however, that Leninism is not merely a Russian, but an international phenomenon rooted in the whole of international development."<sup>75</sup> Leninism is the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution in general, the theory and tactics of the dictatorship; Leninism is a model of tactics for all.

Obviously this is very different from the "regenerated Leninism" and "recuperated Leninism" of Debray. In fact, Debray recognizes without modesty that Castroism is nothing more nor less than the old nationalism "regenerated" and "recuperated." He says: "It is in the old struggles for national independence that 'Castroism' particular to each country takes on that revolutionary passion..."

"Fidel read Marti before reading Lenin; a Venezuelan 'castroite' or revolutionary nationalist will have read Bolivar's correspondence before *The State and Revolution*; a Colombian, the constitutional plans of Nariño; an Ecuadorian, Montalvo; a Peruvian, Mariategui, and will have pondered Tupac Amaru."<sup>76</sup>

Debray even ties Castroism to the national movements like Peronism and the Brazilian populism of the 1930's and 1940's, two movements that flirted with fascism. He says: "There is a far closer relationship between Fidelismo and the two most historically important forms of South American

nationalism, which can today be called Bonapartist nationalism: Peronism in Argentina and the populism of Vargas in Brazil. These two ideologies have by now definitely entered into decline, leaving a vacuum which Fidelismo is, little by little, occupying.<sup>77</sup> Hence, Castroism is "regenerated" and "recuperated" Peronism!

Debray goes even further in uniting Castroism with *caudillismo*. "There is no Castroite movement in the abstract. There are revolutionary leaders in each country who, carrying on the indelible tradition of *caudillismo*, left their mark on a national organization, after having passed their tests, in view of all the militants."<sup>78</sup> Castro is Pancho Villa "regenerated" and "recuperated"!!!

Debray and Castro go backwards an era. In the era of imperialism, they propagate the nationalist ideas of the bourgeois revolutions of the 19th century. They are the Don Quijotes and Sancho Panzas of the revolution in Latin America!

We could feel content laughing at all this if the results of their "theoretical" work were not so tragic. It has led thousands and thousands of Latin American revolutionaries to slaughter. Debray and Castro have their hands drenched in the blood of those fighters killed at the hands of the Latin American repressive forces, trained by American imperialism. Castro pushed them into the bullets of the soldiers in order to defend the selfish interests of the Cuban "red" bourgeoisie. The "naive" Debray stepped over their stacked corpses to clear his path to the Elysee (the French presidential palace).

Debray rendered valiant service to French imperialism. He wholeheartedly wished the Latin American masses to march under the banner of the Martis, Bolivars, etc., rather than the red banner of the Bolshevik program. French imperialism is ready to support the Latin American "revolutionary governments," like the Sandinista government, to help them preserve their "national independence" from the United States, just as, at the beginning of the century, the United States supported the Latin American liberation movements and defended the "national independence" of those countries from Spain. And imperialist France of Mitterrand-Debray will not hesitate for a moment in helping the national bourgeoisies of those countries to smash every

revolutionary movement that struggles for the establishment of the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the working class and peasantry, to drown in blood every movement that endangers their imperialist interests, just as Debray did not hesitate a second in selling out Guevara to the forces of Barrientos to save his skin.

## Bolshevism Continues to Be a Model of Tactics for All

Debray sums up his appreciation of Castroism with these words: "Historically, Fidelism is an empirical and consequent revolutionary action which encountered Marxism on its way as its own truth."<sup>79</sup> In fact, it is true that Castroism is an empirical nationalist movement which has encountered "on its way as its own truth" . . . imperialist Russia.

Stalin had predicted that if capital managed to smash the Soviet Republic, "there would set in an era of the blackest reaction in all the capitalist and colonial countries, the working class and oppressed peoples would be seized by the throat, the positions of international communism would be lost."<sup>80</sup> That is exactly what has occurred. The Russian revisionists themselves have not only revised all the theses of Bolshevism, but they have also assured the gross revisionism of people like Guevara, Castro, etc. They have sought to deviate the workers' movement by distorting the Leninist positions, like those on the revolution in the colonies, semi-colonies and dependent countries.

In the Second Congress of the C.I., Lenin had given the following directive: "We, as Communists, should and will support bourgeois liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organizing the peasantry and the broad mass of the exploited in a revolutionary spirit."<sup>81</sup> He also spoke of "the need for determined struggle against the attempt to paint the bourgeois-democratic liberation trends in the backward countries in communist colors."<sup>82</sup>

But the Russian leaders have, in the case of Cuba, done exactly the opposite of what Lenin recommended, working

hard to "paint in communist colors" the Castros, Guevaras, etc. They have also utilized the Cuban revolution to make people swallow their revision of Marxism-Leninism, in particular their thesis on peaceful coexistence.

### The "New Phase" of the General Crisis of the World Capitalist System

At the time of Stalin's death, the international communist movement recognized that the general crisis of the world capitalist system had known two stages. The first phase had started with the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in the context of the First World War, and the creation of the USSR. The second phase had been marked by the constitution of the socialist camp at the end of the Second World War, which had led to the breakup of the single world market and determined the greater aggravation of the general crisis of the world capitalist system.

But in the conference of 81 "Communist" and "Worker's" Parties in November 1960 in Moscow, it was declared that "A new stage has begun in the development of the general crisis of capitalism." It was specified that, "This stage is distinguished by the fact that it has set in, not as a result of the world war, but in the conditions of competition and struggle between the two systems, an increasing change in the balance of forces in favor of socialism, and a marked aggravation of all the contradictions of imperialism. It has taken place at a time when a successful struggle by the peace-loving forces to bring about and promote peaceful coexistence has prevented the imperialists from undermining world peace by their aggressive actions, and in an atmosphere of growing struggle by the broad masses of the people for democracy, national liberation and socialism."<sup>83</sup>

Hence, for the revisionists, we have entered a "new phase" of peaceful coexistence, in which war is no longer inevitable, where it has become possible for the working class to take power peacefully and where the victory of socialism on a world scale is possible in a peaceful way.

We did in fact enter a "new phase,"...but not of the aggravation of the general crisis of the world capitalist system. With the restoration of capitalism in the USSR, with the opening of the former Soviet market to the imperialist powers, with the substitution of "competition" be-

tween the two systems (that is, capitalist competition) for the life-and-death struggle, the general crisis of capitalism was going to experience a period of respite.

In this "new phase" it was also possible, according to the revisionists, that "favorable domestic and international conditions arise in many countries for the establishment of an independent national democracy."<sup>84</sup> For the revisionists this "independent national democracy" is "a state which consistently upholds its political and economic independence,"<sup>85</sup> a state following the path of "non-capitalist development." This new concept would be reserved for only certain countries (Cuba, Guinea, Ghana, Mali, and Indonesia) but it has been the Cuban experience which has served as the model for the elaboration of the concept.

Until that point, the international communist movement had always unmasked the fraud of the constitution of an independent state that was nothing but a semi-colony of imperialism, and called for the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry as a stage toward the installation of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in order to end the ties of dependence on imperialism.

In the Communist Programme adopted by the VI Congress of the C.I., it emphasizes that "The special conditions of the revolutionary struggle prevailing in colonial and semi-colonial countries, the inevitably long period of struggle required for the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry and for the transformation of this dictatorship into the dictatorship of the proletariat, and, finally, the decisive importance of the national aspects of the struggle, impose upon the Communist Parties of these countries a number of special tasks, which are preparatory stages to the general tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat." And the Communist International goes on to enumerate the principal tasks, namely:

- "1. To overthrow the rule of foreign imperialism, of the feudal rulers and of the landlord bureaucracy.
- "2. To establish the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry on a Soviet basis.
- "3. Complete national independence and national unification.
- "4. Annulment of State debts.
- "5. Nationalization of large-scale enterprises (industrial,

transport, banking and others), owned by the imperialists.  
"6. The confiscation of landlord, church and monastery lands. The nationalization of all the land.

"7. Introduction of the 8-hour day.

"8. The organization of revolutionary workers' and peasants' armies."<sup>86</sup>

But this program is thrown overboard by the revisionists, who in their "new phase" prostrate themselves before the so-called "national democratic states." They no longer assign the Communist Parties the tasks of struggling for "the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry and for the transformation of this dictatorship into the dictatorship of the proletariat," but rather that of "working actively for a consistent completion of the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic revolution, for the establishment of national democracies."<sup>87</sup>

They no longer talk of "overthrowing the rule of foreign imperialism, of the feudal rulers and of the landlord bureaucracy," but of vague "fights against imperialism and its military blocs."<sup>88</sup> They no longer talk of "the confiscation of landlord, church and monastery lands," of "the nationalization of all the land," but in an evasive way they mention "the opportunity to work for the enactment of an agrarian reform and other democratic and social changes." It is no longer a question of the "annulment of State debts," of the "nationalization of large-scale enterprises owned by the imperialists," but just simply "the restriction of foreign monopolies and their expulsion from the national economy," and of the parallel creation of a "state sector in the national economy... independent of foreign monopolies."<sup>89</sup>

In addition, the existence of communist parties is no longer necessary for the formation of such "independent national democracies" and not even for their transition to socialism!

It has always been a basic axiom of communism that a communist party is needed for the victory of the revolution, the installation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the construction of socialism. But in the "new phase" of our revisionists, this truth is no longer valid. It would now be possible to pass over to socialism in spite of the absence of a party (and they take Cuba as an example!).

The new "theoreticians" of the Kremlin have taken their revision of Marxism to the point of writing that Cuba was

"unconsciously" applying the dictatorship of the proletariat! They wrote that, "The application of the methods of the dictatorship of the proletariat, whether in a conscious or unconscious way, have been the guarantee of the success of the struggle (in Cuba) although the working class has not been homogenous in the first link of the Revolution."<sup>89.1</sup>

In fact, the "new phase" was that of the abandonment of all the communist positions, even of the most elementary. It was the "phase" of the restoration of capitalism in the USSR, of the transformation of the country of Soviets into an imperialist country, of the alliance of the new "red" bourgeoisie of the Kremlin with the national bourgeoisies of the "independent national democracies," the new semi-colonies of Russian imperialism.

### **The Chinese and Albanian Parties in the Same Swampy "New Phase" as the Russians**

The blame for the years of great darkness that have followed the restoration of capitalism in the USSR belongs not only to the Russian revisionists, but also to those who eventually proclaimed their "opposition" to the revisionists' theses, but only so they could advance the same theses under a "revolutionary" mask, that is, China and Albania.

It must first be noted that the Chinese Communist Party and the Party of Labor of Albania openly supported the revisionist theses of the XX Congress of the CPSU, and signed the Moscow Declarations of 1957 and 1960. The Party of Labor of Albania (PLA) today tries to deny this support, but they said in their Third Congress, among other things, that "The questions of principle which were posed at the XXth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union concerning the development of the present international situation have a great historic importance for humanity and constitute a precious treasure which has been added to Marxism-Leninism in the concrete circumstances of the present international situation."<sup>89.2</sup>

Later, when the Chinese and Albanians began their polemics against the Russian revisionists, they did not question the Russian theses that denied the inevitability of war.

The *History of the CPSU(B)* summarizes in the following manner Lenin's teachings on the inevitability of war in the epoch of imperialism: "Lenin showed that under imperial-

ism the unevenness of development and the contradictions of capitalism have grown particularly acute, that the struggle for markets and fields for the export of capital, the struggle for colonies, for sources of raw material, makes periodical imperialist wars for the redivision of the world inevitable."<sup>89,3</sup> But for Mao and the CPC, these teachings no longer are correct.

In their polemics with the Russians, the CPC declared: "Comrade Mao Tse-tung's main aim in stating that 'the East wind prevails over the West wind' was to point to the growing possibility that a new world war could be prevented and that the socialist countries would be able to carry on their construction in a peaceful environment. These propositions of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's have been and are the consistent views of the Communist Party of China. It is thus clear that the leaders of the CPSU are deliberately concocting a lie in alleging that the Chinese Communist Party does 'not believe in the possibility of preventing a new world war.'"<sup>90</sup>

The CPC adds: "The possibility of preventing a new world war is one thing; the possibility of preventing all wars, including revolutionary wars, is another. And it is completely wrong to confuse the two."<sup>91</sup>

It is therefore evident that the differences between the CPSU and the CPC, when their alliance fell apart, were not about the question of the inevitability of war. Rather, the split was between the open social-pacifism of Khrushchov, who propagated the absurd idea of "a world without war" and similar nonsense, and the "revolutionary" pacifism of Mao's CPC, that claimed that war was not inevitable under imperialism as long as "revolution" was able to prevent war.

Naturally Mao was vague about the meaning he gave the expression "revolution," an expression devoid of class content that he used instead of proletarian revolution. Lenin, on the contrary, said, "It is now our duty to show the proletariat and the whole people the inadequacy of the slogan of 'revolution'; we must show how necessary it is to have a clear and unambiguous, consistent, and determined definition of the very content of the revolution."<sup>92</sup>

In addition, even if one believes that the only way "revolution will prevent world war" is through a proletarian revolution capable of overthrowing imperialism in all the

main imperialist countries, for this to happen, imperialism would have to be overthrown simultaneously in all countries. This is nothing other than the Trotskyite theory of permanent revolution, which is the denial of the law of uneven development, of the possibility of the victory of the revolution in a single country, of the Leninist theory of revolution.

Today, the Chinese leaders have abandoned all pretense of hiding their imperialist views under a "revolutionary" mask, and they prefer open alliances with the Western imperialist powers, the United States in particular. The Albanians, on the contrary, keep putting forward Maoist-Trotskyite theories, denying the inevitability of imperialist war and giving the international proletariat illusions about the possibility of "preventing war" by means of vague "revolutions." In their last Congress, the PLA reiterated their adherence to "revolutionary" pacifism, affirming that "everything attests that the present world situation is filled with a general conflagration and local wars, just as it is filled with liberation struggles and revolutions. The evolution of events will show if imperialism manages to lead the world to a new catastrophe, or if the peoples block the outbreak of war and save humanity."<sup>93</sup>

The CPC and the PLA were not opposed either to the essence of the CPSU's position on "independent national democracies." China gave some hints of opposition, because it saw in this position support by the Russians for India in the border conflict between China and India. But the CPC itself for some time had been putting forth a similar content with their concept of "new democracy." As for the PLA, they never said anything either about the revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry.

Hence, the split of the CPC and PLA with Russian revisionism, just like the recent rupture between the CPC and PLA, was not a true split. They were centrist "ruptures" and helped to deviate the revolutionary movement. Here we have looked at only two questions, that of the inevitability of war and that of democratic revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, but we could demonstrate the betrayal of the CPSU, CPC and PLA on all the important questions of the proletarian revolution. In reality, the positions of the revolutionary international proletariat were



lost, and a period of "freedom of criticism" began, in which "a hundred schools" blossomed into an abundance of "new theories" that attacked from everywhere at once the positions of Bolshevism. Naturally, Castroism and Guevarism were among these.

Instead of criticizing the Castroite and Guevaraist theories for what they were, i. e., bourgeois theories, the Russian revisionists propagated, defended and used them to counter Maoism, especially in Latin America. For their part, the Chinese leaders refrained from criticizing the Cuban theories systematically, in hopes of one day finding room for compromise with the Cuban and Russian leaders. This was also because it was difficult to do a systematic criticism of Castroism and Guevarism on the basis of Maoism, since on several points they share the same conceptions.

### **Cuba, Russia's Secret Thrust Against China**

The Russian leaders quickly saw the advantages that they could get from the Cuban revolution in countering China's splittist intentions. From the theoretical point of view, Cuba was presented as proof that, by advocating peaceful co-existence, they were not negating the possibility of victorious violent revolutions. The Russians also utilized Cuba to combat China's attempts to develop their influence in the semi-colonial countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It is within this context that one must understand the holding of the Tricontinental Conference in Havana in January of 1966, thanks to Russia's efforts within the Organization of Solidarity with the African and Asian Peoples (OSAAP).

Since 1963, the OSAAP had been a special arena of Russian-Chinese confrontation. China sought to have Russia expelled from this organization, invoking different pretexts. In supporting the Cuban initiative in the Tricontinental Conference, Russia sought to stop China's influence in the Afro-Asian movement, extending the movement so as to include Latin America and giving Cuba a primary role. Castro showed himself to be up to the expectations that his Russian masters had for him.

Thus, on the eve of the opening of the Tricontinental Conference, Castro made a scandalous declaration meant to neutralize China. He claimed to have just been informed that in the ongoing negotiations for a Chinese-Cuban trade

agreement, the Chinese side could not supply Cuba with the 250,000 tons of rice that they had delivered in 1965, and that for 1966 the Chinese were offering only 135,000 tons. Castro declared that because of that, the rice ration of the Cubans would be cut in half! This statement by Castro had considerable impact on the various delegations present in Havana. That is why it was no surprise to see them follow the Cuban example during the debates and deny support to Chinese efforts to have the Russians condemned.<sup>94</sup>

After the conference Castro continued his attack against China on the basis of the rice situation, accusing China of having allied itself in fact with the American bloc, using the kind of arguments against China that China used against Russia. Castro said that it was not simply a question of tons of rice, but the "fundamental question of knowing if in the world of the future, the powerful countries will continue to arrogate to themselves the right of blackmail, of practicing extortion and pressure, of committing aggression and of strangling the smaller countries."<sup>95</sup> The Russian leaders must have split their sides laughing.

Cuba also carried the struggle to each Latin American country against the newly created Maoist parties. In fact, as we have already seen, the publication in January of 1967 of Regis Debray's book, *Revolution in the Revolution?*, was partly intended to struggle against Maoist theories and thus against the mini-parties that propagated them. The Chinese had sought to split the old pro-Russian revisionist parties by creating new "Marxist-Leninist" parties. The Russian bourgeoisie responded through Cuba, which promoted the guerilla movement, a movement that was in fact tied to the old pro-Russian revisionist parties.

Indeed, there were many points in common between Castroism and Maoism. The two are forms of menshevism which call for a four-class alliance and submission to the national bourgeoisie. They both promote the leading role of the petty bourgeoisie. Both Mao and Castro were against "book worship," which is to say against Marxist-Leninist theory, and both elaborated nebulous theories about the primacy of the peasantry, about the countryside encircling the cities, etc.

Attacking the Castroite groups by name, the Maoist groups and parties were not very successful. The pro-Cuban groups benefited from the popularity of the Cuban revolu-

tion among the Latin American masses, and showed themselves to be much more active in the guerrilla struggle. It must be said that China, which in the framework of the elaboration of the theory of three worlds with its open alliance with United States imperialism, had no interest in offending their future ally by stimulating armed struggle in its own backyard. China's support for the Pinochet regime, after the coup in Chile, definitively discredited it, as well as its satellite parties, in Latin America.

The PLA has not had a more consistent stand toward Cuba either. In his "Reflections on China," Hoxha reveals his most intimate thoughts about Castro and Cuba. He tells us: "What do the Chinese comrades think about the question of Cuba? Isn't it time, without leaving aside our principles, for them to change a little their rigid positions toward Cuba, in these moments when Castro has contradictions with the Soviets, with the capitalists of the countries of Latin America, and as usual, with the United States? We know well who Castro is and what are his ideas, aspirations, and methods. But the fact is that, in spite of the very difficult economic situation in his country, to a certain extent and in his way he resists both the Soviets and Americans, and calls for 'world revolution.' Castro does not adhere to our ideas, and we do not adhere to his either. But while his ideas can not influence us, maybe ours can influence him.

"The fact is that, through certain indications, we have the impression that he wants to get closer to us, that he needs us. Must we then persist in a 'rigid' attitude and not implement a principled policy to deepen the differences between Castro and the Soviets? No, not at all. We have to act. What do the Chinese plan to do in these circumstances so that we can coordinate our actions?

"In the entirety of Castro's anarchist activities, there are certain facts that must not be forgotten, such as for example his firm opposition to the Americans, in the missile affair, his battle in the Bay of Pigs, and now the disagreements with the Soviets. Certainly Castro is not pure, but he can't be compared to certain Korean or Rumanian leaders. Castro is animated by a spirit of resistance. Based on these aspects of his nature, let us try, without departing from our principles, to influence him, in a good sense, because it is in the interests of the revolution."<sup>96</sup>

Thus, Hoxha saw in 1967, a little after the publication of *Revolution in the Revolution?*, the possibility "without departing from our principles" of getting closer to Castro, that man "animated by a spirit of resistance," of being able "to influence him in a good sense"! This is an eloquent commentary on Hoxha's principles. They are the same "principles" that led him to support the Argentine military junta during the war over the Falkland (Malvinas) islands, to support even today the bloody regime of Khomeini in Iran, and to agree to not denounce the role of French imperialism in Africa for the past three years in exchange for some sales of chrome to France.

### Castro's African Adventure

Russia has also used Cuba for its expansionist aims in Africa. Cuba's first spectacular action in Africa was undoubtedly the intervention at the side of the MPLA in Angola. But it must be noted that the Cuban presence in Africa did not begin with the war in Angola. Already by that time, Cuba had military or technical advisors in various African countries like the Congo (Brazzaville), Guinea, Algeria, Mozambique, and Somalia. Guerrillas from the MPLA and other movements also had received military training in Cuba.

The Cuban intervention in Angola at first offered Castro an opportunity to polish up his prestige, somewhat tarnished by the sinking situation in Latin America. After a series of defeats, Castro needed a mobilizing success, and the struggle against the racist South African regime was a chance that he could not pass up. On this occasion the Russians and Castro used the fact that a significant part of the Cuban population is Black. The former used this to develop their influence in Africa, the latter to attenuate potential racial conflicts in Cuba itself. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that the sending of the Cuban expeditionary corps was baptized "Operation Carlotta," from the name of a Black slave who had died in Cuba in 1843 after having led a slave rebellion. Castro declared then that Cuba was not only a Latin American country, but also an "Afro-Latin" country. The Cuban intervention in Angola also had the effect of raising Cuba's popularity in the Caribbean countries with large Black populations.

This question of the Black race is a question of the greatest importance for all revolutionary communists. In 1928, the Communist International, in its *Resolution* on the Black question, stated about the Black question in the United States, as part of the world problem: "The Negro question in the United States must be treated in its relation to the Negro questions and struggles in other parts of the world. The Negro race everywhere is an oppressed race. Whether it is a minority (U.S.A., etc.), majority (South Africa) or inhabits a so-called independent state (Liberia, etc.), the Negroes are oppressed by imperialism. Thus, a common tie of interest is established for the revolutionary struggle of race and national liberation from imperialist domination of the Negroes in various parts of the world. A strong Negro revolutionary movement in the U.S.A. will be able to influence and direct the revolutionary movement in all those parts of the world where the Negroes are oppressed by imperialism."<sup>97</sup> Revolutionary communists should take this teaching into account in their work.

The bourgeoisie and imperialism try to manipulate the Black question for their own interests, as the Cuban intervention in Angola attests. Even the United States has been able to take advantage of it. When Andrew Young (who is Black) was ambassador of the U.S. to the UNO, he stated that Cuba played a stabilizing role in Angola! No doubt he was thinking about the interests of Gulf Oil, that had not been nationalized and had been able to continue operating in Cabinda under the protection of Cuban troops!

After the success of "Operation Carlotta" in Angola, which Castro was able to measure during a triumphal tour of Africa in the spring of 1977, things went poorly for Cuba with their intervention in Ethiopia. Here the new regime was no longer threatened by the intentions of states like South Africa, but rather by separatist movements, one of which was actively supported by Somalia (then also allied to the Russians) and the other, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, which upheld and looked to the Cuban revolution! The Cuban troops then appeared in the light of day for what they were, that is, troops charged with defending the interests of Russian imperialism. The military failures and the social and financial weight represented by Cuba's military commitment in Africa are making themselves felt heavily

today and are stirring up growing discontent among the Cuban masses, especially among the Black masses, who bear the biggest part of the burden and increasingly resent the oppression of which they are victims. The Cuban intervention then is backfiring against the Cuban leaders and Russian imperialism. It is helping to discredit Castro and to demonstrate that Russia is in no way different than Western imperialism.

### **Unmask Castroism! Restore Bolshevism!**

The image of a revolutionary Cuba building socialism has paled with the years. With an economy still based on the export of raw materials, Cuba is not a model of economic development, an alternative to the semi-colonial underdevelopment of Latin American countries. Likewise, the economic crisis punishes Cuba as harshly as it does the other capitalist economies, which shows that Cuba is still a link in the imperialist chain. In spite of everything, many workers and peasants in Latin America and other regions of the world today still believe the declarations of the Cuban ideologues who try to present the present difficulties as "temporary," and they still put their hopes in Cuba.

Castroism and Guevarism are not revolutionary theories. They can not stand the test of theoretical or practical criticism. In all the places where they have been applied, they have led the revolutionary movement to a dead end, to failure. Nevertheless, hundreds of Latin American revolutionaries today are still basing their activities on some "improved" version of those theories.

The Cuban regime has demonstrated in practice that under a facade of "internationalism," they are only concerned about their own interests or those of their imperialist masters: whether it is through their betrayal of the Latin American workers and peasants following their alliance with the revisionist parties of those countries or through their support for fascist regimes like that of Argentina, or whether it is through their collaboration with the Derg in Ethiopia to oppress the workers and peasants of that country or to put down the Eritrean national movement. However, in spite of all this, some internationalists even today hesitate to condemn the Cuban interventions along with the interventions of the Western powers.

Why is this?

First, because among the oppressed masses there is still great sympathy for the Cuban revolution and its resolute opposition to American imperialism, sympathy that the Cuban leaders exploit to their advantage with a lot of demagogy.

Second, because Castro and company can take advantage of the great confusion that has existed in the international communist movement since the assassination of Comrade Stalin and the revision of the principles of Marxism-Leninism by the Khrushchovs, Maos and Hoxhas.

But today, revolutionary communists around the world are more and more proving the total bankruptcy of the different supposedly communist trends, whether they be pro-Russian, Maoist, or pro-Albanian, and who see the necessity of returning to the teachings of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the heritage of Lenin, Stalin and the Third International. Facing the imminent imperialist war, revolutionary communists are more and more seeing the need to prepare themselves starting today to transform this war into a civil war against the bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries, and into national revolutionary wars against imperialism in the colonies, semi-colonies and dependent countries. To do that, it is important that revolutionary communists not succumb to spontaneity, that they put into practice the teachings of Lenin at the Second Congress of the C.I. to the effect that the communists of all countries "must under all circumstances uphold the independence of the proletarian movement even if in its most rudimentary form."<sup>98</sup>

This does not mean, however, that revolutionary communists should expect immediate victories. Stalin recalled that, "A correct policy is by no means bound to lead always and without fail to direct victory over the enemy. Direct victory over the enemy is not determined by correct policy alone; it is determined first and foremost by the correlation of class forces, by a marked preponderance of strength on the side of the revolution, but disintegration in the enemy's camp, by a favourable international situation.

"Only given these conditions can a correct policy of the proletariat lead to direct victory.

"But there is one obligatory requirement which a correct policy must satisfy always and under all conditions. That re-

quirement is that the party's policy must enhance the fighting capacity of the proletariat, multiply its ties with the labouring masses, increase its prestige among these masses, and convert the proletariat into the hegemon of the revolution."<sup>99</sup>

To support these teachings, Stalin gave the example of the 1905 Revolution in Russia, when the revolution had suffered a defeat, in spite of the fact that the Bolsheviks had a correct policy, because the feudal survivals and autocracy were then stronger than the revolutionary workers' movement. But in spite of the defeat of the revolution, the Bolshevik Party, with its correct policy, managed to "increase the fighting capacity of the proletariat, multiply their links with the toiling masses, raise the authority of the proletariat among those masses, ensure the proletariat the hegemony of the revolution" and made possible the victory of the revolution in 1917. One can easily imagine how different the situation would be today if genuinely communist forces, with a correct policy of "upholding the independence of the proletarian movement even if in its most rudimentary form," had existed in the Cuban revolution of 1959. Without a doubt, they would not have been able to ensure proletarian hegemony of the revolution at that moment; but they would have permitted its development and thus avoided the subordination of the interests of the proletariat to those of the national bourgeoisie, as happened. Unfortunately this did not occur and the revolutionary movement has suffered the tragic consequences.

Latin American revolutionary communists, particularly those participating in the ongoing revolutionary struggles, as in Central America, thus have a very special responsibility. At this moment they are the focus of all those interested in the development of the revolutionary movement. They can use the tribune that is today theirs to criticize the Castroite line on the basis of their practice, to restore the Bolshevik line and thus take the first steps to "increase the fighting capacity of the proletariat, multiply their links with the toiling masses, raise the authority of the proletariat among those masses, ensure the proletariat the hegemony of the revolution" not only in Central America, but in all of Latin America and in the entire world.

This does not mean that communists should stand aloof from the revolutionary processes currently in progress to

"develop theory" or "build the party." Lenin explained that "in certain periods of sharp economic and political crises, the class struggle develops into a true civil war, that is to say, into an armed struggle between two parts of the population. In such periods, the Marxist has the obligation of situating himself from the point of view of the civil war. Any moral condemnation of this is absolutely inadmissible from the point of view of Marxism."<sup>100</sup>

The tasks confronting Latin American Marxist-Leninists are particularly complex. But the revolutionary battles in which they are involved are just the prelude to much bigger revolutionary battles. Imperialism is in agony. The hour nears in which we will again witness the coalition between the proletarian front in the metropolises and the national revolutionary front in the colonies, semi-colonies and dependent countries. But to forge this front, to build this alliance against imperialism, to establish the hegemony of the proletariat, it is necessary to unmask the Cuban leaders and throw their rotten theories into the trash bin of history.

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