

*The Revolutionary Process*  
IN  
LATIN AMERICA

A SYLLABUS

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CONTENTS

- I. A PANORMIC VIEW OF LATIN AMERICA
- II. THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS AND THE CHARACTER OF THE REVOLUTION
- III. QUESTIONS OF STRATEGY & TACTICS
- IV. THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLES IN THE U.S.

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Note: This syllabus is designed for use in group discussions or classes, also for individual study. It is not complete in itself but is rather a guide to be used in conjunction with the suggested readings. There may be difficulty in obtaining some of these readings; if so, we may be able to be of help.

This is the first edition of the syllabus and undoubtedly has many shortcomings. We shall be grateful for criticisms and suggestions from its users and we hope, on this basis, to revise and improve it in the not too distant future.

National Education Department, CPUSA

## I. A PANORAMIC VIEW OF LATIN AMERICA

### A. Countries and Population

The part of the Western Hemisphere known as Latin America embraces all of South America, Central America, the Caribbean and part of North America. It includes the following 20 independent states: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela in South America; Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama in Central America; Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean; Mexico in North America. It also includes the following colonial or recently liberated territories: Puerto Rico, British Honduras, Trinidad and Tobago, Guayana, Barbados, Jamaica, French Guiana, Surinam, Martinique, Guadeloupe, the Bahamas and some minor islands.

The total population is about 260 million. The annual rate of population growth (2.7%) is greater than that of any other part of the world. Of the present population, two-thirds live in the three largest countries: Brazil, Argentina and Mexico.

### B. Political Status

Most of the countries won their independence in the First War of Independence which began in Haiti in 1804 and ended in 1825. It surged up again in 1895, this time in the Caribbean. Cuba achieved independence in 1902, but under the shadow of the Platt Amendment through which the U.S. assumed the right to intervene in practically all matters and for decades crippled Cuban independence.

Puerto Rico remains, notwithstanding the flower name of Estado Libre Asociado or Commonwealth, a colony of the United States. Many North Americans do not include Puerto Rico as part of Latin America, accepting the imperialist propaganda that it is an integral part of the United States. But Puerto Rico is historically, traditionally and culturally part of the family of Latin American nations.

There are altogether about 8 million people still under direct colonial rule, mostly located in the Antilles.

Cuba had its second war of independence in 1959. This revolution overthrew the bloody Batista dictatorship and instituted genuine independence, political and economic. It constituted a qualitative change, making a stupendous leap forward to socialism, the historic goal for the whole of Latin America.

The United States is recorded in Latin American history as the colossus which has repeatedly intervened, directly and indirectly, in the affairs of these nations. It has intervened through armed invasions and military rule, and through outright support to the gorilla-military cliques. In the last 20 years alone some 70 coups took place, most of them instigated, organized and financed by U.S. imperialism through the Pentagon and the CIA.

## 2-Brief Notes

- I. Latin America has specific peculiarities, distinct from those of Africa and Asia. This is not to overlook the fact that Africa, Asia and Latin America have been and are under the aegis of imperialism. What are some of the specific peculiarities of the Latin American countries?
  1. In his "Notebooks on Imperialism," Lenin classified the world into 3 major groups: Group I-Western Europe, USA, Japan; Group II- Eastern Europe and part of Asia, South and Central America; Group III - semi-colonies and colonies. What is the significance of this?
    - a) Lenin considered- after a profound study - that Latin America, as a specific group of countries, is to be distinguished from countries in semi-colonial status (China before World War II, for example).  
The 6th Congress of the Communist International erroneously placed Latin America in the category of semi-colonies, thereby some of the policies adopted were identical to the policies applicable to the semi-colonies.
    - b) The Latin American countries (except Puerto Rico, Martinique, etc.) were considered by Lenin as politically independent though economically and financially dependent on Great Britain and the USA, with the latter assuming dominance, especially after World War II. In fact, Latin America began the era of national and democratic movement in the wars of independence in 1810-1826. Since then, the countries of Latin America have developed both common characteristics, during the wars of independence against Spain, and the specific features of each country differing from the others in the process of formation of nations.
    - c) It is significant that Lenin considered Eastern Europe. (especially Tzarist Russia) as one of the same group with Latin America, although Russia and Austria possessed colonies while Latin America had none. The basis for this is the then existing political independence of Latin America and Eastern Europe, the socio-economic development as capitalism took roots side by side with feudal relations and feudal economy. Lenin proceeds to show the variants of each group.
    - d) Lenin points out the financial control of South America exercised by Britain to prove some similarity of Latin America with Tzarist Russia where foreign capital was dominant. He quotes Schulze-Gaevernitz regarding Argentina.

"South America and especially Argentina, is so dependent financially on London that it ought to be described as almost a British commercial colony," Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 263.

Lenin comments on Schulze's remarks as follows:

"It is not difficult to imagine what strong connections

(Insert after last paragraph in Section B - page 2)

Indeed, the seeds of expansionism were already to be found in the Monroe Doctrine. First enunciated on December 2, 1823, it warned aggressive European powers to keep their hands off Latin America. Thus, it was intended as an instrument in the fight of the newly-established bourgeois-democratic United States against the encroachments of foreign reaction. However, it did not take long before the Doctrine became a prop for intervention by U.S. capitalism.

### 3-Brief Notes

British finance capital (and its 'faithful' friend, diplomacy) thereby acquires with the Argentine bourgeoisie, with the circles that control the whole of that country's economic and political life". Ibid, p. 263.

- e) The countries of Latin America, which gained independence a century and a half ago, never were imperialist colonies. From then on their economic development followed the line of dependent capitalism.  
(Note: of course, within this framework, we must study the changes in Latin American economy and political status in the era of the general crisis of capitalism and the present epoch.)
- f) Latin American countries are qualitatively different in status from the new independent countries on the other continents. Latin America stands between Western Europe and Africa. Two are given examples to illustrate this:

(1) Gross product per capita in 1963:

Africa.....	103
Latin America.....	345
W. Europe.....	1062

(2) Capital accumulation per capita in 1963:

Tropical Africa .....	10
North Africa .....	33.5
Latin America .....	63
Western Europe.....	270

Hence, the problems of Latin America cannot be equated with those of the underdeveloped countries of Africa and Asia. Latin America occupies a special place.

## II. The internal aspects of the Continent's similarity can be more correctly called UNITY in DIVERSITY, between the countries of Latin America. What is the meaning of this?

1. It would be incorrect to view Latin America as a single whole, unless the components of this entity are taken into account and not sacrificed to the whole.
2. To better understand the above, the following factors should be studied: a) the economic structure; b) the level of capitalist development; d) social and class structure.
3. With regard to economic structure: There exist varied levels of internal capitalist development, features of latifundist one-crop agriculture, and foreign imperialist capital. These are the three branches in the economic structure under the aegis of the United States.

#### 4-Brief Notes

Latin America has already passed the initial stage of capitalist development and is now at the stage of average development of a dependent capitalism.

4. Hence, disparity in level of development exists while all countries are dependent upon imperialism. (This disparity is seen in the national income per capita, table 3 of Mieres' article.)
5. There are two parallel processes: Accelerated economic development of each country individually and of the continent as a whole.
6. The Latin American countries have ceased to be purely agrarian and have become agrarian-industrial or industrial agrarian. Hence, the strategy and tactics of the revolution take into account the above changes.
7. U.S. Imperialism is the common enemy. The other continent is so subordinated as is Latin America. Some specific aspects are: banks, shipping, mixed companies, big profits, etc.
8. Some conclusions:
  - a) From an economic and social viewpoint, the Latin American countries can be regarded as a unity in diversity: similar structures and dependent; but at the same time at different levels of capitalist development.
  - b) Latin American problems are not identical with those of the semi-colonies and colonies.
  - c) The economic problem is to create its own modern industry, to make a qualitative Unity in multiform cooperation.
  - d) In the revolutionary struggles, besides the common anti-imperialist front of the peoples of the Continents of Africa, Asia and Latin America, it is important to disclose the features that apply specifically to Latin America.

# # #

There is some capitalist development in agriculture, and this tendency is rising. But there are also hundreds of thousands of peasants existing entirely outside the money economy, in the most primitive forms of feudalism.

In sum, Latin America is an industrial-agrarian region at varying levels of development in which contradictions are deepening 1) between the Latin American countries (and the region as a whole) and imperialism, 2) between the working class and the imperialist-oligarchic forces in each country, and 3) between the peasantry and the latifundists.

#### F. U.S. Political and Military Intervention

Such intervention accompanies and secures economic domination. The Monroe Doctrine was designed and repeatedly interpreted to justify interference and invasion in Latin America. Panamericanism and the Panamerican Federation of Labor were developed as tools for expansionism and subversion. The Organization of American States is the present-day instrument of U.S. domination, accompanied by numerous specialized agencies for exercising control. Further, as noted above, U.S. imperialism has repeatedly intervened, militarily and otherwise, to overthrow democratic governments, engineer reactionary coups and install bloody dictators in power. Through these and other means, U.S. political control has been established and maintained even though, except for Puerto Rico, the Latin American countries have in the main long been nominally independent.

The policies of the Johnson Administration, in line with those of previous administrations, have a threefold aim. First, and basic, is to keep Latin America as a strategic area for monopoly exploitation and for war. Second is the destruction of all democratic trends, movements and governments. The intention to intervene for such purposes, in the name of "fighting Communism," is formally declared in the so-called Johnson Doctrine, which states: "The American nations cannot, must not and will not permit the establishment of another Communist government in the Western Hemisphere." In the name of this "doctrine" the Dominican Republic was invaded by U.S. Marines in 1965 when the people revolted against an oppressive military junta in support of the bourgeois-liberal Juan Bosch.

Since the end of World War II U.S. interventions, direct and indirect, helped to set up or maintain reactionary dictatorships in Paraguay (1949), Bolivia (1951), Cuba (1952), Guatemala (1954), Haiti (1957), Dominican Republic (1963), Brazil (1964), Argentina (1964).

A third aim is the destruction of socialist Cuba, the only truly free territory in Latin America.

U.S. military operations are extensive. They include a network of military bases, the intercontinental military force, and military "aid." Some of the military bases are situated in Puerto Rico (15% of the island's territory is militarized), Panama, Cuba (Guantanamo), Trinidad, Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador and Venezuela. The intercontinental military force, directed by the Pentagon, is designed for the destruction of national liberation movements. It is the military arm of imperialism under the cloak of defense against foreign "subversion" and "invasion."



From 1950-1967, U.S. military "aid" totalled \$762 billion. Such "aid" is conditional on accepting the conditions of the Pentagon and the monopolies, and on increasing military budgets. Latin America has a total military force of 700,000 men, about 360,000 of them in Argentina and Brazil. The national military budgets are at the expense of the people's needs. In Brazil, for example, military expenses make up 20.7% of the national budget as against 10.8% for health and education.

#### G. The Alliance for Progress

This is a neo-colonialist policy, adopted in 1961 to counter the growing popularity of the Cuban revolution and the mounting unrest in other countries. The U.S. pledged loans of up to \$20 billion in 10 years, supposedly to aid the governments to initiate extensive economic and social reforms. These were to include the strengthening of democratic institutions, raising per capita production by 2.5% a year, large-scale housing construction, improved wage scales, reduction of illiteracy, measures to fight disease and improve health conditions, stabilization of the monetary system, agrarian reforms, stimulation of private enterprise.

The failure of the program has become so glaring that it is spoken of as the "Alliance for Backwardness." The nine "wise men" in charge of its operation resigned in 1966, declaring that the U.S. has exercised excessive domination. And so it has. The controlling group consists of U.S. corporation executives. The U.S. government has the final voice in the granting of loans and refuses them to those countries which adopt even mild nationalization or other progressive measures. Loans are granted which benefit U.S. financiers. Whatever small reforms have occurred (e.g., land reform in Chile) have been won through mass struggle outside the framework of the Alliance for Progress.

Today the idea of a Latin American common market is projected, to be patterned on the Central American common market formed in 1960. But such schemes, by breaking down tariff barriers and other means, are intended to facilitate U.S. economic penetration, not to benefit the Latin American people.

Despite all imperialist-inspired programs of "reform," the economic and social conditions of the masses in Latin America steadily worsen. Food production falls farther and farther behind population growth, as do education and other social services. These are the fruits of the twin evils of imperialism and feudalism. And here lie the roots of the revolutionary process in Latin America.

#### READINGS:

(Note: Suggestion of reading matter presents a problem due to a lack of English texts which properly analyze and interpret facts and data or which deal properly with the strategy and tactics of the revolution in Latin America. This is made up in part by use of lengthy quotations translated from the Spanish in subsequent sections of the syllabus. References to books such as that of John Gerassi are given for the factual material they contain. Their interpretations of Latin American developments should be viewed with caution.)

F. Mieres and C. Medina, "The Crisis of Structures and the Way Out," World Marxist Review, May 1967.

John Gerassi, The Great Fkar in Latin America, MacMillan, New York, 1967 pp. 17-47 (living conditions), 224-248 (relations between the U.S. and Latin America), 251-293 (Alliance for Progress).

Waldo Atias, "The Planned Inter-American Armed Force Is a Grave Threat to Peace," World Marxist Rview, February 1967.

Jack Woddiss, Introduction to Neo-Colonialism, International Publishers, New York, 1967, pp. 103-114 (Alliance for Progress).

Patricia Bell, Puerto Rico: "Island Paradise" of U.S. Imperialism, New Outlook Publishers, 1967.

Victor Perlo, Marines in Santo Domingo, New Outlook Publishers, 1965.

Henry Winston, New Colonialism, U.S. Style, New Outlook Publishers, 1965, pp. 11-12, 19-20.

#### STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. Why do we reject the idea that Puerto Rico is part of the United States?
2. What are the basic causes of economic backwardness and poverty in Latin America?
3. In what ways does U.S. monopoly capital exploit the peoples of Latin America?
4. By what means does U.S. imperialism maintain political domination over the Latin American countries?
5. What is the Alliance for Progress? Why has it failed?
6. What are the manifestations of feudalism in the Latin American countryside? How would you explain the technological backwardness of Latin American agriculture?

## II. THE REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS AND THE CHARACTER OF THE REVOLUTION

### A. A New Historic Epoch

The new epoch in Latin America is characterized by the unfolding of a revolutionary process involving all strata of the people in all forms of struggle. It is the second war of independence, taking place under new historical conditions.

The new stage was initiated by the Cuban revolution, although there were earlier beginnings in Bolivia and Guatemala in the early fifties. The significance of the Cuban revolution lay in the following features: 1) the people's forces came to power; 2) they ended imperialist domination, displaced the old ruling classes and took over their enterprises, and eliminated the big landed properties; 3) they carried the revolution to its logical conclusion, socialism proclaiming Marxism-Leninism as its ideology.

The revolutionary process is continental in scope, with an accompanying unevenness due to the variations in levels of development, national characteristics and historical backgrounds in different countries. This continental character was expressed by Luis Corvalan, general secretary of the Communist Party of Chile, in these words:

The entire continent is in ferment. The struggle for the second independence of our countries has begun. In all Latin American nations the broadest and most vigorous patriotic fronts are being molded, and all of these striking out at the same enemy and coordinating their actions, are forging a single continental front against imperialist intervention, broadening the road to revolution. ("Path to Independence in Chile," Political Affairs, Jan. 1966. Excerpts from report to 13th National Congress, CP of Chile.)

This revolutionary process is part of a new epoch in world history. The 1917 October Revolution in Russia initiated the era of transition from capitalism to socialism, an era of the conflict between the two systems, of socialist and national liberation revolutions. Today this process has reached a point at which the balance of power between the ascendant forces of socialism and national liberation and the declining forces of capitalism and colonialism has shifted in favor of the former. Today the forces opposing imperialism have become strong enough increasingly to exert the major influence on the course of events. This is the essential content of the new epoch. This is the historical context of the successful Cuban Revolution and the revolutionary ferment in Latin America as a whole.

### B. Forms and Direction of Struggles

The revolutionary ferment expresses itself in a variety of forms of struggle. In 1966, for example, there were bloody strike struggles, including general strikes, which involved 38 million workers and in countries like Chile, Uruguay and Mexico were directed against oppressive, anti-democratic decrees.

There are the struggles of the peasants for land. In some countries there are frequent armed battles with the feudal landlord and government forces. Armed self-defense groups have developed, giving rise to guerrilla detachments (Colombia, Guatemala, Venezuela) which have been carrying on armed struggle for some years. Some of them have been joined by workers, students and other intellectuals.

The youth, especially the university students and their organizations, are in a number of places in the forefront of battle. Elements within the Catholic Church have also joined in the fight.

In the course of these struggles, powerful anti-imperialist coalitions are being forged. The Communist parties are generally in the vanguard of these patriotic struggles.

The direction which these battles are taking is toward radical structural changes. The demands are for nationalization of the big enterprises, for independent foreign trade, for radical agrarian reforms giving land and government subsidies to the peasants, for democracy and popular participation in parliamentary bodies, etc. In fighting for them, the working people are able to acquire consciousness of their own strength, of the need to fight for power, for socialism.

### C. Character of the Revolution

This is historically determined by the objective conditions in Latin America as a whole and in each country. The immediate strategic task imposed by these conditions is freedom from imperialist domination and feudalism. Hence the basically anti-imperialist, anti-feudal character of the revolution, whatever the variations in different countries or regions. Hence, too, the concept of the democratic people's coalition--of the alliance of workers and peasants, supported by intellectuals, middle-class groupings and sections of the national bourgeoisie, as constituting the revolutionary forces.

From this stage the revolution is destined to pass to the socialist stage. The interconnections between the two depend on the specific conditions and relationship of forces in each country. Thus the era of exploitation of man by man is in the process of coming to an end in Latin America. The Cuban Revolution is the first great step toward this historic destiny. Beginning with overthrow of the Batista regime and the establishment of the genuine independence of Cuba, it swiftly passed over into the socialist revolution, to the emergence of the first socialist state in the Western Hemisphere.

Some dogmatist and "ultra-revolutionary" groupings deny the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal features of the revolution and project the socialist revolution as the immediate--the only--perspective and task. But this is to ignore the objective conditions and the level of struggle imposed by them, as well as the great variations in these conditions from country to country.

The following are excerpts from programmatic statements by some Latin American Communist parties bearing on the character and tasks of the revolution:

Argentina:

Since the democratic, agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution is the one that corresponds to the present stage of development in our country, and since the social classes will not disappear, our Program envisages a coalition of all parties, workers and popular forces, for the formation of a broad democratic coalition government. (XII Congress of the CP of Argentina, Report of Victorio Codovilla, February 23, 1963, p. 72. Not available in English.)

The fundamental task of the democratic, agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution is to extirpate the very roots of imperialist domination... Only through the expropriation of the imperialist enterprises and the big landed properties will it be possible to build an independent and prosperous economy. Ibid., p. 80.)

... unity is more than ever urgent through a democratic and patriotic front to put an end to the military-fascist government and form a provisional government of a broad democratic and anti-imperialist coalition which is to call for a Constituent Assembly to decide on the political, economic and social regime for the country. (Ibid., p. 70.)

Chile:

Only the complete liberation of the country from imperialism, the nationalization of copper and other riches now in its hands, the complete liquidation of the latifundia and the suppression of the private monopolies, can place us on the road to the solution of our basic problems.... Once these objectives are accomplished, it will be necessary to develop paths to socialism. (XIII Congress, CP of Chile, Report of Luis Corvalan. Mimeographed, in English.)

The line of the Communists is to unite the majority of the country, all the classes and social strata which are anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchy around the working class and the worker-peasant alliance. (Political Affairs, January 1966.)

Mexico:

Our Party has raised the question of a democratic-people's and anti-imperialist revolution, profoundly popular because of the changes it proposes and the forces that propel it, eminently patriotic because it will break up the ties of dependence of Mexico to the economic domination of imperialism. It will establish national independence and sovereignty. It is clearly democratic because it will replace the reactionary government of the big bourgeoisie with a democratic-people's government that will respect the rights of the working class and the people in general. It will make real the slogan of "all the land to those who till it" and will mobilize its power against big Mexican monopoly capital.

...the new revolution will advance over the limitations of bourgeois democracy and will prepare the advent of socialist democracy. As it brings about economic transformation, the new revolution will weaken the economic foundations of capitalism and create the material conditions for the passage to socialism. (XV Congress, CP of Mexico, Report of Arnaldo Verdugo Martinez, general secretary. Politica, June 1-14, 1967. Not available in English.)

### Colombia:

Our country needs a revolutionary change that will radically transform the economic and political structure.... This radical change can only be an anti-imperialist, agrarian revolution... for a patriotic government of national liberation....

In Latin America the victory of the anti-imperialist revolution and the construction of socialism began with the glorious Cuban Revolution which has initiated the emancipation of the Latin American peoples and has placed with utmost urgency the need to carry out the revolutionary advance in our countries. (Program of the CP of Colombia, adopted at the X Congress, January 1966. Not available in English.)

### READINGS:

Roque Dalton and Victor Miranda, "Present Phase of the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America," World Marxist Review, May 1966.

Luis Corvalan, "Path to K dependence in Chile," Political Affairs, January 1966.

Alberto Moreau, "Catholics and Marxists in Latin America," Political Affairs, July 1966.

Alberto Ferrari, "Lessons of the Popular Front and Latin America," World Marxist Review, January 1967.

Statement of 81 Communist and Workers Parties, New Century Publishers, New York, 1961, Section IV.

### STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. What features of the revolutionary process are common to Latin American countries generally?

2. How does the new world epoch affect the revolutionary process in Latin America?

3. What are the chief forms of struggles taking place in the Latin American countries? What is the nature of the demands raised in these struggles?

4. What is the character of the revolution in Latin America? What is its strategic aim?

5. A Monthly Review editorial (March 1963) states:

There is only one ruling class in Latin America today, and it is basically bourgeois in its outlook and interests. It follows that the only possible revolution is one that overthrows bourgeois rule and installs the peasantry and/or the proletariat as the new ruling class(es). The other side of the revolutionary coin can only be the substitution of socialist for bourgeois property relations. In other words, the only possible revolution in Latin America today is a socialist revolution.

Comment on this.

### III. QUESTIONS OF STRATEGY AND TACTICS

#### A. Methods and Forms of Struggle

The revolutionary process and the rapid maturing of a revolutionary situation in some countries have posed anew certain basic questions of strategy and tactics for the revolutionary forces, particularly the Communists. Among these are: 1) peaceful and non-peaceful paths of the revolution; 2) the general strategy for Latin America and for each individual country; 3) relationship of the guerrilla movement to other forms of mass struggle; 4) the role of the vanguard.

The question of peaceful and non-peaceful paths to socialism has been a subject of discussion among Communists the world over. The Communist Party of the United States, in its draft program, has stated its position as follows: 1) the socialist revolution is a democratic act, an expression of the democratic will of the majority; 2) the Party seeks to bring that will to expression through peaceful means; 3) at the same time the ruling class will not hesitate to use violence to thwart such expression; 4) the possibility of a peaceful path rests on the ability of the revolutionary forces to prevent resort of the ruling class to violence.

Speaking of the anti-imperialist struggle generally, Gus Hall states:

... As is true of any revolutionary movement, the anti-imperialist movements, whether in the countries of oppression or those of the oppressed, are in the first place popular mass movements. Above all else, what is involved is leading, teaching, mobilizing, organizing masses for struggle. A policy or a tactic is only as successful as it is effective in moving masses into struggle.

Because masses respond to the concrete effects of the policies of imperialism on their lives, there can be no world-wide tactical blueprints for all countries, for all times.

Because tactics of struggle must of necessity be in each case a reflection of a very specific set of circumstances, the tactical decisions must be left to the forces which are on the spot.

Mass struggle can only be indigenous.

Leadership can only be indigenous.

The decision as to whether a leadership should project a peaceful or non-peaceful line, or some specific combination of the two, must also be based on a specific set of circumstances involving critical assessments on such questions as what the masses are ready to do and the specific relationship of forces at the given moment. Therefore, such a decision must also be left to the leadership on the spot.

Furthermore, since such decisions must be based on current and even momentary developments, it would seem that while it is possible



on the basis of past experiences and the over-all relationship of forces to project a possible course for the battles ahead and in these terms to meet the need to prepare for all eventualities, it is not possible to make a decision and issue a pronouncement on the exact nature of the decisive battles to come. ...

It is one thing for a party to say that, based on past experiences, based on the present relationship of forces, our people need to prepare for all eventualities including a non-peaceful solution of the issues. It is another thing for a party to say: "For our country the solution will be an armed struggle." (Imperialist Rivalries and the World Struggle for Peace, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1968, pp. 21-22.)

#### B. The Place of Armed Struggle

Certain groups in Latin America have advanced the idea that the only path to revolution is armed struggle. This idea is most systematically developed in the book by Régis Debray, Revolution in the Revolution? (Monthly Review Publishers, New York, 1967.) The foundation and the center of all revolutionary struggle, he maintains, is the organization of military action. He writes: "In Latin America today a political line which, in terms of its consequences, is not susceptible to expression as a precise and consistent military line, cannot be considered revolutionary." (P. 24.)

He writes further that in Latin America today "it is...inconceivable that there can be political cadres who are not simultaneously military cadres," and he speaks contemptuously of those political leaders who "prefer to concern themselves, day after day, with world trade unionism or to involve themselves in the mechanisms of a thousand and one 'international democratic organizations' dedicated to their own survival rather than devote themselves to a serious and concrete study of military questions related to the war of their people." (P. 88.)

But such a conception places the struggle in a straitjacket. It rejects the need to combine all forms of struggle in keeping with the specific conditions in each country. It neglects the necessity to vary tactics in accord with the ebb and flow of the revolutionary process. It belittles the importance of mass action. Hence in practice it serves to immobilize the popular struggles.

Debray proposes in all cases to launch the revolution with the formation by groups of dedicated revolutionaries of guerrilla nuclei or focos. These would proceed to win a base among the peasantry, to extend their operations and ultimately to carry the struggle to the cities. It does not matter whether the conditions for guerrilla warfare exist in the given case; presumably the focos are to create the conditions. But this is simply a form of Blanquism, of the idea that a handful of dedicated plotters can carry out a social revolution anywhere and at any time.

On these questions Luis Corvalán, general secretary of the Communist Party of Chile, states:

Certainly, it is not easy to define the place and the exact time for guerrilla or some other form of armed action. Lenin warned against reckless adventures which, as a rule, cause a senseless waste of lives and end in retreat. On the other hand, Leninism has always been creatively bold, infused with the desire to advance the revolutionary cause. It would be wrong, therefore, both to reject out of hand or blindly accept any specific form of struggle. The main thing is to embark squarely on the path of struggle, size up the situation to the best of one's ability and decide on the most propitious course of action. The revolutionary must be ready to take the offensive at any moment, to retreat when necessary, and to perceive situations favorable for revolution. ("Alliance of Anti-Imperialist Forces in Latin America," Political Affairs, September 1967.)

On the place of armed insurrection, Lenin himself wrote in 1917:

To be successful, insurrection must rely not on conspiracy and not on a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a revolutionary upsurge of the people. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely on that turning-point in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the vacillations in the ranks of the enemy and in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution are strongest. That is the third point. And these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish Marxism from Blanquism. ("Marxism and Insurrection," Collected Works, Progress Publishers, Moscow, Vol. 26, pp. 22-23.)

There are diverse views and much debate on questions of strategy and tactics in the Latin American Left. The following quotations indicate the positions of a number of Communist parties on the question of peaceful and non-peaceful paths to revolution. What they illustrate particularly is the variety of situations and the necessity of combining forms of struggle and of shifting tactics as circumstances change.

#### Mexico:

From the study of these tendencies (U.S. interventionist policy and bourgeois reaction at home--A.M.) we conclude that most probably the revolution in Mexico will be one of armed struggle. Now, we say: this is most probable. But we are conscious that the outcome of the revolution depends not only on the bourgeoisie; it depends also on our possibilities and capacity and on those of the entire movement to pave the way for another path and course of development. Thus, the use of one or another form of struggle is a tactical problem. (XV Congress of the CP of Mexico, Report of Arnaldo Verdugo Martinez, June 1967.)

Cuba:

That revolution should take place by peaceful means or come into being after a painful birth, does not depend on the revolutionaries; it depends on the reactionary forces of the old society which do not allow the birth of the new, a birth engendered by the old as a result of its contradictions....

In many Latin American countries today, the revolution is inevitable. This fact is not determined by anybody's will. It is determined by the frightful conditions of exploitation to which man of the Americas is subjected, by the development of the revolutionary consciousness of the masses, by the world crisis of imperialism and by the world movement of the oppressed peoples. (Second Declaration of Havana, presented by Fidel Castro on February 4, 1962.)

Venezuela:

For more than six years now we have been carrying on, together with other revolutionaries, a deep-going struggle against colonial domination and for a patriotic government. Armed struggle has been waged against the official violence of the Betancourt government. Our very blood and innumerable sacrifices have irrigated Venezuelan soil on the altar of our lofty ideals. Serious Left errors were committed during these years and we suffered serious setbacks. To prepare and organize the insurrection in our country requires taking into account the present period and today's situation within the democratic and people's movement.

We Venezuelan Communists believe we interpret the essence of Leninism when we pose the need to regroup our forces, to bury our dead, to heal our wounds and prepare for new battles. Consequently, we will determine the tasks, slogans and forms of struggle that will rapidly lead to recuperation and the involvement of masses in battle, utilizing fully the political crisis shaking Venezuela....

It is true that we face a revolution of continental proportions, but it is equally true that each country will have to take into account its own peculiarities and traditions in order to give form to this unique revolutionary process in Latin America: national liberation marching toward socialism....

There is no confusion in the CP of Venezuela concerning a revolutionary policy, which uses all forms of struggle, among them pre-eminently the armed struggle which cannot be counterposed to the other forms if one does not wish to fall into infantile mistakes. (Statement by CP of Venezuela, Documentos Politicos, July 1967. Not available in English.)

Bolivia:

With regard to the guerrilla method of struggle, Comrade Kolle said this constitutes a tactical category within the framework of the various forms of struggle; its coming into being, he said, is determined by concrete historical reality. Since the present general situation is characterized by a counter-revolutionary offensive of the state-military machine, the CP of Bolivia considers it necessary to face a period of the gathering of forces which will strengthen the possibility of building a people's anti-imperialist front for taking power--this without rejecting any other form of struggle, and in the light of the status of the mass movements. "The guerrillas," he declared, "emerged without evaluating adequately the political and social factors necessary for their development; they were born prematurely." In spite of this, the Party extended its solidarity, without effecting organic participation." (Interview with Juan Kolle, member of national secretariat, CP of Bolivia, in El Siglo of Chile, reported in Nuestra Palabra, Buenos Aires, December 19, 1967.)

Colombia:

The correct combination of all forms of mass struggles is and will surely be the very essence of our tactical line. However, to the degree that the class conflict deepens and the movement of national liberation advances, facing repression and growing intervention of Yankee imperialism, the people's armed struggle will be transformed into the principal form as the decisive factor for taking power.... At the same time, the combination of all methods of struggle, bringing forth to the main level that which corresponds to each concrete situation, is a faithful interpretation of Marxism-Leninism and its application to the social process in our fatherland.... The great historical changes will not be brought about by terroristic conspiracies or by individual exploits. The only way to achieve them is to organize a great popular movement, to establish a patriotic front of national liberation--the broadest united front, based on the worker-peasant alliance with the active participation of the middle classes, students, intellectuals, technical specialists and democratically-minded military groupings. (X Congress, CP of Colombia, January 1966, political resolution. In English, abridged, in Information Bulletin, Prague, No. 69, April 15, 1966.)

The immediate perspective, the method of struggle we must especially emphasize is the organization of actions for the demands of the working people. (CP of Colombia, Central Committee Plenum. Noticias de Colombia, March 1967.)

Central America:

The exchange of experiences has shown that in accordance with the existing conditions in each country and the strategy and tactics elaborated by each party, the working-class movement is advancing through a variety of forms of struggle, from peaceful to armed strug-

gle. (Joint statement of Communist parties of Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and El Salvador, Voz de Mexico, June 18, 1967.)

### C. The Role of the Working Class and the Party

Debray dismisses the working class as a revolutionary force and sees the revolution as based on the peasantry, led by the guerrilla forces. It is only the guerrillas, he writes, who are the true revolutionaries. He writes that "any man, even a comrade, who spends his life in a city is unwittingly bourgeois in comparison with a guerrillero." (P. 70.) The leadership of the Party, he maintains, must leave the cities and join the guerrillas in the countryside. He says:

...As we know, the mountain proletarianizes the bourgeois and peasant elements, and the city can bourgeoisify the proletarians. The tactical conflicts that are bound to arise, the differences in evaluation and line, conceal a class conflict, in which the interests of the proletariat are not, paradoxically enough, on the side which one would expect. (Pp. 76-77.)

Thus, he negates the role of the working class in the cities and reduces the struggle there to terrorist acts in support of the guerrillas (p. 75).

In doing so he ignores the degree of industrialization in the main Latin American countries and writes off a major section of the working people there. In Argentina, wage workers make up 75% of the active population, in Chile 60%, in Mexico 43%, in Brazil 36%, in Colombia 36%, and in Venezuela 54%. In some countries, production has become highly concentrated: in Argentina 65% of total industrial production is carried on by 3% of the enterprises. The masses of grossly exploited workers in these industries Debray proposed to abandon as being "bourgeoisified."

Abandonment of the working class as a revolutionary force leads to abandonment of the Marxist-Leninist party as the revolutionary vanguard. Debray asserts that the "vanguard is not necessarily the Marxist-Leninist party;... those who want to make the revolution have the right and duty to constitute themselves a vanguard, independently of these parties." (P. 98.)

Indeed, it is the guerrilla forces who constitute the real vanguard, not the political party. "Eventually," he states, "the future People's Army will beget the party of which it is to be, theoretically, the instrument: essentially the party is the army." (P. 105.) Or: "The guerrilla force is the party in embryo." (P. 106.) And further: "Without armed struggle there is no well-defined vanguard." (P. 124.) Youth and physical aptitude become the main qualifications for leadership, not political development. The training of cadres in Marxist-Leninist theory is derided; military action alone is the training school.

In short, Debray repudiates the entire Leninist concept of vanguard and rejects the role of revolutionary theory. Out of guerrilla battles somehow, spontaneously, a party of socialism will emerge. His "revolution in the revolution" is in reality a "revolution" against all Marxist concepts of revolution, of scientific socialism,

and the substitution for these concepts of a petty-bourgeois adventurism. The Latin American Communist parties have generally rejected and fought against all such ideas as obstructing genuine revolutionary struggle.

READINGS:

Luis Corvalán, "Anti-Imperialist Forces in Latin America," Political Affairs, September 1967.

Alberto Gomez, "The Revolutionary Forces of Colombia," Political Affairs, October 1967.

R. Otero, "Some Problems of the Working-Class and Trade Union Movement in Latin America," World Marxist Review, July 1967.

Debray's book, or substantial sections of it, should also be read. In addition, the following articles in World Marxist Review contain useful supplementary material:

Luis Sanchez, "Nicaraguan Communists in Van of the Liberation Movement," February 1967.

O. Vargas, "Peaceful Way of Achieving Democracy and Social Progress in Costa Rica," July 1966.

R. Otero, "The Communists of Bolivia in the Fight for Unity of the Popular Forces," April 1967.

J. M. Fortuny, "Guatemala: The Political Situation and Revolutionary Tactics," February 1967.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. What determines whether the path of revolution will be peaceful or non-peaceful in a particular country?
2. What is the relationship of guerrilla warfare to other forms of struggle? On what grounds must the question of whether to resort to armed struggle be decided? What is Blanquism?
3. Can the peasantry play the leading role in the national liberation revolution? In the socialist revolution?
4. In what ways do Debray's ideas depart from the Leninist conception of a vanguard?
5. Why is the involvement of the masses essential as the base of revolutionary struggle? Why is it not possible for small, determined groups to bring about the overthrow of the existing order?

#### IV. THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLE IN THE U.S.

##### A. Proletarian Internationalism

The Marxist-Leninist approach to the struggle against national oppression is based on the concept of proletarian internationalism--on the recognition that workers of all countries have the same fundamental interest--the abolition of capitalist exploitation, and a common enemy--world capitalism. This community of interest is expressed in Karl Marx's slogan: "Workingmen of all countries, unite!" Such unity is an essential condition for the successful struggle for progress and socialism.

In particular, the workers of both oppressing and oppressed countries have a common exploiter and a common interest. As Marx and Engels stated, "A people that oppresses other peoples cannot itself be free."

Within the United States, the fight for Negro freedom is the necessary condition for the advance of all workers. As Marx noted many years ago:

In the United States of North America, every independent movement of the workers was paralyzed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the republic. Labor cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where that in the black is branded. (Capital, Vol. I, International Publishers, New York, p. 287.)

This is no less fundamental today. White and black workers face a common oppressor: U.S. monopoly capital, which strives to divide them to the detriment of both. White workers therefore have a direct self-interest in fighting against racism and Negro oppression. Similarly, U.S. monopoly capital is the common oppressor and exploiter of the working class in the United States and the peoples of Latin America. Hence U.S. workers cannot fight successfully to advance their own fundamental interests if they do not also fight against U.S. imperialist domination in Latin America.

##### B. Past Opposition to U.S. Expansionism

1) Mexican War (1846-48). The annexation of Texas and the predatory war against Mexico were widely opposed in this country. Many trade unions openly protested these actions, as did major sections of the industrialists. Abraham Lincoln condemned President Polk's actions in Congress, saying that "the blood of this war, like the blood of Abel, is crying out against him." (J. B. McMaster, A History of the People of the United States, Vol. VII, p. 465.)

Senator Thomas Corwin of Ohio stated: "If I were a Mexican I would tell you: 'Have you not room in your own country? ... If you come into mine, we will greet you with bloody hands and welcome you to hospitable graves.'" (Charles and Mary Beard, The Rise of American Civilization, Vol. I, p. 606.) And Representative Joshua R. Giddings, also of Ohio, condemned the war as "a war against an unoffending people, without adequate or just cause, for the purpose of conquest;

with the design of extending slavery; in violation of the Constitution, against the dictates of justice, humanity, the sentiments of the age in which we live, and the precepts of the religion which we profess." (Ibid.)

2) Spanish-American War (1898-1900). This war was launched by rising U.S. monopoly capital in the quest for colonies. Of the opposition to it William Z. Foster writes:

These imperialist aggressions awoke widespread alarm and opposition among the democratic masses in the United States. Anti-imperialism became the central slogan of Bryan's presidential campaign of 1900. Mark Twain sharply voiced this popular indignation by declaring that in the flag the "white stripes /should be/ painted black and the stars replaced by the skull and cross-bones." And, in Chicago, in October, 1899, an anti-imperialist conference was held with delegates from thirty states. (Outline Political History of the Americas, International Publishers, New York, 1951, p. 232.)

In addition, the Anti-Imperialist League, with more than half a million members, was formed under Senator Hoar of Massachusetts.

3) Later opposition. The twenties and thirties witnessed widespread opposition to the actions of U.S. imperialism. Thus, in 1926 many groups, including a large number of trade unions, condemned the invasion of Nicaragua by U.S. Marines and the persecution of the Nicaraguan patriot Sandino. Participating in these protests was the Anti-Imperialist League, which continued to play the role of an important rallying center during these years.

Indicative of this anti-imperialist sentiment was the exposure of U.S. "gun-boat diplomacy" by General Smedley D. Butler in 1931. He said:

I spent thirty-three years and four months in active service as a member of our country's most agile military force--the Marine Corps. I served in all commissioned ranks from a second lieutenant to major-general. And during that period I spent most of my time being a high-class muscle man for Big Business, for Wall Street, and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer for capitalism....

Thus I helped to make Mexico and especially Tampico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in.... I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-12. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. I helped make Honduras "right" for American fruit companies in 1903. In China in 1927 I helped see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested. (New York Times, August 21, 1931.)

There exists, therefore, a considerable historical background of struggle against the predatory actions of U.S. imperialism in Latin America.



### C. Our Responsibilities Today

1) Puerto Rican Independence. The fight for the independence of Puerto Rico stands high on the list of responsibilities of workers and the progressive forces generally in this country. Despite the fiction that Puerto Rico is a self-governing Commonwealth, the fact is that it is governed by the U.S. Congress, in which it has no representation. This colonial control is used to maintain Puerto Rico as a captive market for high-priced U.S. goods, as a source of superprofits for U.S. investors, and as a strategic military base for the U.S. armed forces. English is forcibly imposed as the official language, and U.S. culture is thrust upon the people from all sides. The movement for independence is subjected to all sorts of repression.

The only real answer to the problems of Puerto Rico is the relinquishing of all controls by the United States and the recognition of Puerto Rico's sovereignty as a free and independent state. The fight to achieve this goal demands the active support and struggle of the working people in the United States.

2) Defense of the Cuban Revolution. Proletarian internationalism demands all-out defense of the Cuban Revolution, defense of the right of the Cuban people to have the social system they deem appropriate for themselves. The slogan of all progressives must be "Hands off Cuba." Demands must be raised for dismantling the U.S. military base at Guantanamo and returning the territory to its rightful owners, the Cuban people, and for lifting the embargo on Cuba and establishing normal trade relations with her. The great achievements of the socialist revolution in Cuba should be popularized in this country and the lies spread about it should be refuted.

3) International Labor Solidarity. The International Affairs Department of the AFL-CIO, headed by Jay Lovestone, has established a shameful record of interference in the affairs of Latin American trade unions in the name of "anti-Communism." The AFL-CIO has been made an arm of the State Department and the CIA, an instrument of U.S. imperialism. An all-out fight to end these disgraceful policies must be waged. International solidarity of U.S. and Latin American workers must be promoted (for example, between U.S. and Chilean copper workers) and the efforts of U.S. monopoly capital to divide them must be defeated.

4) Genuine Aid to Latin America. It is essential to fight for the scrapping of the Alliance for Progress and all other schemes for using "aid" as an instrument of imperialist oppression. These must be replaced by a policy of long-term, low interest loans for industrialization and modernization of the economy, with no strings attached. An end must be put also to the present policy of using military "aid" for the arming of reactionary regimes and tying the Latin American countries militarily to U.S. imperialism.

5) Full Equality for Minorities in the U.S. The domestic counterpart of imperialist domination of Latin America is the oppression and discrimination visited upon minorities of Latin American extraction in this country. Closely tied to the struggle against imperialist oppression, therefore, is the fight to end oppression and discrimination here.

6) Organized Action. There is urgent need for unity of all forces opposing interference in the internal affairs of the Latin American countries and for the formation of a strong, broad anti-imperialist movement which will mobilize public opinion and action in support of the fighting Latin American peoples.

READINGS:

V. I. Lenin, The Right of Nations to Self-Determination, International Publishers, New York, 1951, pp. 65, 73-78, 87-90.

New Program of the CPUSA (Second Draft), Ch. VI, pp. 8-13.

Gus Hall, Imperialist Rivalries and the World Struggle for Peace, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1968, pp. 17-20.

Henry Winston, New Colonialism, U.S. Style, New Outlook Publishers, New York, 1965, pp. 22-29.

George Morris, CIA and American Labor, International Publishers, New York, 1967, Ch. 6, 9.

Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1963, pp. 398-403.

STUDY QUESTIONS:

1. What is proletarianism? How does it differ from bourgeois nationalism?
2. Why is it in the interest of workers in the United States to fight against U.S. imperialism's oppression of Latin America?
3. What led Northern industrialists to oppose the Mexican War in 1846?
4. What can be done in this country to fight for Puerto Rican independence?
5. In what ways can the trade union movement in this country promote solidarity with the workers of the Latin American countries?

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