

A Critique of OLAS and "Castroism"

Part II:

Subversion of Political Science by the Apologists of Guerrillaism

As a culmination of its meeting, OLAS approved a 20 point catechism of the revolution in Latin America. It is inspired by conveniently selected experiences of the Cuban Revolution, which it raises to the boss for all the revolutions of the continent. It summarizes in its 20-points the theories advanced about the Cuban experience, explains the weaknesses and limitations of the Cuban conception, but leaves bare the fundamental political base of OLAS, its ambiguity and eclecticism, its hopelessly confused position somewhere between revolutionary political science and sonorous phraseology.

It demands a reply by all those who cannot remain indifferent before this authentic profession of faith of adventurism. The recent conference of OLAS closed an ideological stage of the Cuban Revolution and inaugurated a new one which goes from insecurity to petulance, from timidity to absolutism, from immaturity to ideological distortion. The Cuban leaders trample underfoot the revolutionary experiences, shamefully characterizing them as "dogmatic" pretexts, as scleroid orthodoxy. In this way they part company with the revolutionary conception of the world, from Marxist-Leninist theory which served Fidel Castro as a symbolic point of departure to proclaim to the world the transformation of the Cuban Revolution into a socialist revolution.

The similarity, more apparent than real, more superficial than profound, with the conception of revolutionary violence does not absolve "Castroism" of its opportunism. "Castroism" converts a form of struggle into an end in itself, into an embryo capable of doing away with subjective and objective conditions, the action of a Marxist-Leninist Party, the incorporation and participation of the popular masses. The conception of popular revolutionary war becomes a series of armed struggles outside the socio-historical context. The spontaneity of the masses is extolled, and, finally, it idealizes to the point of historical distortion, the successive stages and changes operating throughout the Cuban Revolution.

If the departure of "Castroism" from the revo-

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lutionary conception is a sad story, so is its attitude toward worldwide and continental neo-revisionism.

Hardly a year ago when the Communist Party of Cuba signed with its Latin American colleagues a declaration of principles couched in the usual empty phrases of the neo-revisionist lexicon, the Communist Party of Cuba made manifest its duality of judgment, its lack of ideological soundness, its economic dependence on the USSR, its scorn for the principle of self-reliance, of putting the emphasis on internal factors. While posing as an enfant terrible, it nevertheless danced to the tune of the Soviet baton. Later, on the eve of the Tri-Continental (Jan. 1966) it magnified and distorted an incident with the Chinese comrades using abrupt language, a language they had never used before to criticize the shameless capitulationist positions of the USSR and the CPSU.

In March of the same year, Fidel Castro gave his violent speech against the Communist Party of Venezuela criticizing its rightist position. In this speech (which marked a new political landmark in the tortuous line of "Castroism" expressed without subterfuge at OLAS) he attacked the CPV and all the other base revisionists avoiding a pronouncement of principles. He took the circumstantial, the anecdotal, but he was careful to avoid linking the rightist deviationists with the old C.P.'s; he left out any sort of reference to the capitulationism of the bureaucrats as a worldwide tendency headed by the CPSU; he avoided all reference to neo-revisionism and hypocritically chose the compromise of condemning a counter-revolutionary faction which has prostituted the name of communism.

Castro's criticism, then, is a petty-bourgeois criticism, a typical reaction motivated by cir-

cumstantial facts. He takes aim at the satellites but leaves untouched the counter-revolutionary solar system. Why? We believe that in the course of this article, the reader can find the key to the enigma. Castro prefers to be equidistant between extreme points, although in actual fact he is breaking with only one pole—the revolutionary one.

The OLAS Proclamation

The language of the Proclamation is ambiguous, but of one thing one can be certain: it has nothing in common with the M-L method. Nevertheless point 40 says, "Marxist-Leninist principles orient the revolutionary movement in Latin America." But what the Proclamation does not explain in any of its points is how, in what way, this "orientation" of M-L principles acts through a party whose duty is to map out the strategy and tactics of the struggle, to draw up a program which embraces the fundamental principles of the revolutionary goals, and to lead, orient and raise the popular struggle in accordance with the concrete conditions of time and place. About these so-called dogmatic ideas, the Proclamation says nothing; it mentions only scattered "vanguards," people in the abstract and a priori methods of struggle (points 50, 60, 70, 80, 90 and 100).

Point 50, for example, maintains that "the armed revolutionary struggle constitutes the fundamental line of the Latin American Revolution." This can be a mere expression of will or, by omission, could imply that in other places this line is not "fundamental." In no place do we find any reference to the struggle of antagonistic classes, the political character of these struggles, the successive transformations that it must undergo. On the contrary, the implication is that optimum objective conditions for the revolution exist uniformly throughout the continent. Of the existence of subjective conditions not a word. The mere will to do so is enough to initiate revolution. If faith can "move mountains," why can it not suffice to overthrow a government?

Points 70 and 80 point to the objective maturity of the armed struggle and 90 expresses in a sentence the whole gamut of necessary and sufficient factors to carry the revolution forward: "to the peoples of each country and their revolutionary vanguards belongs the historical responsibility to advance the revolution."

This beautiful theory has one little detail that needs clearing up: these vanguards, are they to be formed in each country or will they be exported from the outside? Are they synonymous with M-L parties or with groups of revolutionaries without any other specific ideology than to overthrow the governing power and without

any other unifying force than that of agreeing on the particular technique to be used to fight the enemy? Are they vanguards simply because they are taking part in the armed struggle? The Proclamation does not clarify the concept of "vanguards," however, from the works of the Cuban leaders we can draw certain valid conclusions in order to round out our definitions. The pamphlet "La Guerra de Guerrillas" and the Article "The Experience of the Cuban Revolution" (Monthly Review, Oct. 1963) by Che Guevara and all the works of Fidel Castro are perfectly clear and categorical. In them the necessity of a M-L vanguard is completely omitted, or underestimated. The last speech of Fidel Castro leaves no doubt: it entones a hymn to empiricism and gives expression to an ultra-left variety of spontaneity.

In order to consider the objective and subjective conditions excellent, the Proclamation ignores and makes uniform the reality in each country; it ignores and makes uniform revolutionary theory and substitutes a few general formulas valid for all the countries of the continent.

Polemic Against Che Guevara

It is necessary to transcribe extensively an important part of Che Guevara's article, which "The objective conditions for the struggle are given by the hunger of the people, their reaction in the face of this hunger, the terror unleashed to suppress the popular reaction and the wave of hatred that the repression creates.

"Subjective conditions are lacking in America, the most important of which is the consciousness of the possibility of victory by means of violence directed against the imperialist powers and their internal allies. The conditions are created through armed struggle, which makes increasingly clear the necessity for change (and allows one to foresee it) and the destruction of the army by popular forces and its subsequent annihilation (as indispensable conditions of every true revolution).

"Assuming that the conditions come about through the army of the armed struggle, we must explain once again that the setting of this struggle is the countryside, and that, from the countryside, a peasant army which pursues the great objectives for which the peasantry fights (the principle of which is the just distribution of the land), will take the cities. On the ideological base of the working class, whose great thinkers discovered the social laws which rule us, the peasant class (sic!) of America will furnish the great liberation army of the future, as it did in Cuba. This army, created in the countryside in which the subjective conditions for taking power are maturing, (which will conquer the

cities from the outside, unite with the working class and increase the ideological fund, wealth with these new contributions) can and must defeat the oppressor army, initially in skirmishes, fights, surprises and later in great battles, after it has grown from its condition of a miniscule guerrilla band into a great army of liberation. The stage of the consolidation will be, as we indicated earlier, the liquidation of the old army.

"If all these conditions which existed in Cuba can be said to obtain in the rest of the countries of Latin America, in other struggles of the dispossessed to conquer power—what will happen?—Would it be feasible or not? Yes, it is feasible." (M.R., Oct. 1963, p. 20/21)

We can assert, firmly, that this article of Che constitutes the programmatic base of the OLAS Proclamation, its theoretical base. And from our quotation the following conclusions can be drawn:

- a) Objective conditions for making the revolution now exists in all Latin America.
- b) The class called to be the axis of the revolution is a non-individualized (undifferentiated Latin American) peasantry and, by the same reasoning, the principal setting of the struggle is to be the countryside.
- c) The awareness of the possibility of victory by violence constitutes the principal subjective factor.
- d) The revolutionary party is unnecessary; the guerrilla band, from its small inception, and later the army of liberation make up the military-political detachment of the revolution.
- e) At a later stage, the guerrilla band, or the liberation army can base itself on the ideology of the working class or, better expressed, "increasing the ideological capital with these new contributions," from which it can be deduced that the working class brings the ideology (we do not know how) but not its practice. Which is very nice but rather insubstantial, even lamentable.

These programmatic bases lead to the following conclusions:

- 1) Latin America is practically a single country, with a single geographical, political, economic, social, cultural and military reality (debatable assumption).
- 2) The setting, the countryside, and the protagonists, the peasants, are a condition common to all of Latin America.
- 3) The guerrilla army is the party; the "foco" concentrates the fundamental activity of the class struggle.

Point 100 states: "The guerrilla army, as the embryo of the liberation army, constitutes the most effective method for initiating and developing the revolutionary struggle in the majority of the countries." In this point we can find a certain shade of difference from Guevara's

thesis: we understand it as a concession to the moderates and neo-revisionists at OLAS.

Che at first admits of some distinctions between certain countries of Latin America, although later he denies them strategic value and does not find it necessary to apply other tactics. Then he says in another place: "The countries which, without being effectively industrialized, have developed these medium and light industry, or, simply, have undergone a process of concentration of their population in large centers, will find it difficult to raise a guerrilla army." In addition to the sparcity of the analysis and his omission of examples which contradict the conclusion of the analysis (Argentina, Brazil, Mexico) he leaves in a cloud the cause of the concentration in urban centers. But this little "contradiction" does not phase "comrade" Guevara. Not at all, because a few lines later he maintains:

"With regard to what we were saying earlier about large urban concentrations, in conditions of backwardness, it may be advisable to develop protracted struggle outside the city limits. More explicitly: the presence of a guerrilla "foco" in any mountain, in a country with populous cities, maintaining a perennial "foco" of rebellion, makes it difficult for the repressive powers, even in the course of years, to liquidate guerrillas with social bases established in a terrain favorable for a guerrilla struggle where people exist who consistently apply the tactic and strategy of this type of warfare." (Article cited, p. 24)

Further on, Che notes that "we would not venture to assert that the success of a popular rebellion having a guerrilla base within the city would not be possible. No one can object to this idea theoretically, at least, this is not our intention." After this, Che does an about-face and opposes all the causes which bring about the triumph of a guerrilla force in an urban zone. The only objection we are going to raise is that the urban guerrilla force does not constitute, within the practical ideological patrimony of the M-L arsenal, the most elevated form of the struggle in very special conditions (see The Guerrilla War, Lenin, Complete Works, Vol. 2 Spanish Edition).

To wind up his conclusion Che writes: "These are the considerations which make us think that, even in cases where urban predominance is very great, the central political "foco" of the struggle can develop in the countryside."

Whether conciously or not, the central thesis of Gueverra tends to cause an important truth to disappear: the predominant role which the proletariat plays in a whole series of Latin American countries. From this we can trace the tendency to minimize industrial development and, finally, the existence of a numerous prole-

tariat—the key actor theoretically and practically—of the revolutionary drama of the continent.

But Guevara, in order to strengthen his guerrilla and peasant schemes, overestimates the countryside and the peasantry (a manner directly proportional to his scheme) and underestimates (inversely proportional) the industrial development, the existence and role of the urban proletariat, the great contradictions in the cities and the national differences.

Guevara admits of peculiarities, but they are not too important nor do they prevent the application of the recipe to any country. "Certainly there are differences in Latin America. An Argentine peasant does not have the same mentality as a common peasant of Peru, Bolivia, or Ecuador, but land hunger, always a desire of the peasant, provides the general tonic of America and since, in general, they are even more exploited than those of Cuba, the possibility that this class will take up arms is increased," ends his analysis.

To tell the truth, we do not know what to admire more in the optimistic and simple affirmation of Che—his contempt for objective reality (a contempt which becomes converted into mystification, as we shall see later) or his ignorance of elementary details of the revolutionary science of M-L. Because to speak of the peasantry in general (or, what is equivalent, as the most absurd kind of abstraction) without distinguishing the peasantry which forms part of the capitalist agrarian structure, as is the case in Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico and Chile, or in Bolivia, where a type of agrarian reform was concocted which, not only did not basically resolve (nor could resolve) the problems of the Bolivian peasantry, but which upgraded the ancient semi-feudal situation to the point where it could become the mainstay of Bolivian reaction (the peasants are now confronting the Bolivian miners and constituted the social base which gave rise to the coup d'etat of Barrientos) and the case of the Peruvian, Columbian or Northeast Brazilian peasantry subjected to ferocious exploitation and made into modern serfs of the large landowners.

Does it not sound ridiculous to write about the distinct "mentality" of an Argentine peasant and then nevertheless, persist in considering him the axis of the revolution in Argentina? Casting a glance at our chacareros, arrendatarios and small and middle agrario-capitalist proprietors who go about incorporating new acquisitions to attain a standard of living in keeping with the last word in material comfort, to suppose that in them resides the social base of the Argentine guerrilla force and to see in our

countryside the setting for the liberation struggle which can have for an immediate goal the "agrarian reform" is to lose all sense of reality. On the other hand, the marrow of the question is found in the "different mentality" of the peasantry: did comrade Guevara ask himself what were the material roots which determined the different mentalities? Perhaps they arise from some sociological motivation. Or maybe they are a whim of fate? Or perhaps a diabolical plot of the climate? Would it not be, we ask ourselves, due to the fact that the distinct roles which the peasantry have in relation to the actual productive relations (not those Che wishes to occupy himself with) give rise to the particularities which differentiate the peasant "mentalities" of the continent? Is it not the social existence which conditions the conscience of the peasant and not their conscience (which Che attributes to them) which gives them their particular mentality?

But Guevara has need of an exploited peasantry which extends the length and breadth of the continent of Latin America for his theory to function. And he has also to deny the troublesome "exceptionality" which is attributed to the Cuban revolution in order to set it up as the model for all the national and social liberation struggles of the continent. On pages 14, 15 and 16 of the above cited article, Che Guevara makes a point of demonstrating that exceptionality did not exist, but on the contrary, the Cuban Revolution ushered in the revolutionary era of the Latin American continent. And in an effort to champion the Cuban experience he does not hesitate to assert: "Never in America has there been produced a fact of such extraordinary circumstances, such deep roots and such transcendent consequences for the destiny of the progressive movements of the continent as our great revolution. To such an extreme that it has been called by some as the most important event in America and that it follows in order of importance the trilogy constituted by the Russian Revolution, the triumph over the Hitlerian armies and the consequent social transformations, and the Chinese Revolution." And so there can be no mistake, in order to fan the enthusiasm of the revolutionaries of America and the world, he characterizes the content of the Cuban Revolution with the following attributes: "And so was born, in January 1959, the first Social Revolution of the whole Caribbean zone and the most profound of the American Revolutions." From that we can infer that "comrade" Guevara, bouyed up by an uncontrollable enthusiasm, has forgotten a small fact; the honorary collaboration in the "First Social Revolution" of Yankee imperial-

ism, Jules Dubois, Prio Socarras, Gran San Martin, Urrutia, and so forth. To make a comparison that is not at all arbitrary, it would be like making the Argentine Socialist Revolution in collaboration with the CIA, Silvano Sanlander, Aramburu, Frondizi, and General Senornas...

Vietnamese People's War Contradicts OLAS Proclamation

Endorsing the ideas of Che, the OLAS proclamation incorporates in point 140 Cuba as the boss for the revolution of our continent, expressing that: "140: The Cuban Revolution, as a symbol of the triumph of the armed revolutionary movement, constitutes the vanguard of the Latin American anti-imperialist movement" with the exception of an insignificant subtlety: the Cuban Revolution which for Che constituted the "first social revolution in the area of the Caribbean" functions as "the symbol of the revolutionary armed movement, constitutes the vanguard of the Latin American anti-imperialist movement." Because every social revolution in the continent will have an anti-imperialist content, it does not follow that every movement or anti-imperialist revolution will necessarily have a sense of social revolution. Unless the term "social" means one thing to Che (and the "modest" inclusion of the urban guerrilla army in the list of great revolutionary events of the century leads one to suspect this) and something very different in the OLAS Proclamation.

But the observed omission of the Indo-Chinese revolution in Che's statement is not repeated in the case of the Proclamation. We read in point 190: "The heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people lends to all revolutionary peoples who fight imperialism as inestimable help and constitutes an inspiring example to the people of Latin America." No one can doubt that the bloody struggle of the Vietnamese people constitutes an inestimable aid for the cause of world revolution. And that it has been the object of ignoble deals on the part of Soviet revisionism which does not hesitate to deliberately sacrifice the cause of the Vietnamese people in exchange for world peace, coexistence and pacific emulation, all euphemistic subterfuges which attempt to hide the objective of the capitulationist line of the USSR: to improve the material well-being of the Soviet people even though to realize this they must deliver up the present and future of the Vietnamese nation and people to the North American cannibals. And that the sinister plots hatched against the interests of the Vietnamese people by the contemporary "Huns" led by the modern Atilla, Johnson, and the Soviet pacifists was not judged with even a minimum of severity by the leaders of the Cuban revolution, who, in shameful "compensa-

tion" hysterically attacked the Peoples Republic of China and the CPC.

But what really jars us is the final part of point 190: "all the self-interpretations of the Cuban revolution..." We think that the improvisation and utilization of chance factors should be deemphasized—that empiricism as a road to power should be rejected and a scientific analysis of reality should be applied.

To say that the struggle of the Vietnamese comrades "constitutes the inspiring examples for the Latin American people is something very serious and every serious question deserves consideration. The whole content of the Proclamation is the negation of the Vietnamese experience. It is to make a mockery of it, taking note of the surface similarity without daring to study its lessons, its origins, its development, the diverse stages that had to be gone through in the course of the long and bloody struggle against the particular enemies of the revolution.

And the first conclusion that should be drawn is that the Indo-Chinese did not count on the help of the colonial power of the various imperialisms interested in participating in the division and exploitation of the Vietnamese people. That the Indo-Chinese revolution was directed by a Communist Party. That in the midst of the diverse forms of struggle the conditions for a single anti-imperialist and anti-colonial front were forged, that the oneness with the people arose from the incorporation and participation of the masses in the political struggle. That this struggle was raised to the extent that definite conditions were generated that culminated in a revolutionary war involving all the people. That the struggle of the Vietnamese people is the consequence of a national internal process in which the ripening of the objective and subjective conditions were held, oriented, and directed by the Indo-Chinese Communists. That the Indo-Chinese Revolution, finally, was not decreed by any external organization but was the consequence, the result and the derivation of internal historical conditions, managed and brought to the ultimate outcome by the Communists. And moreover, the Indo-Chinese revolution did not begin by "the guerrilla force as the embryo of the liberation army" nor by installing any "foco" which was able to awaken the sleeping conscience of the people, but that the developing conscience of the Vietnamese carried out at the proper time and place guerrilla war, regular war, and took over local powers snatched from the enemy. The guerrilla force and the "foco" did not seek the adherence, encouragement and aid of the people, but emerged as a more advanced form of the people's struggle directed by the Party. And let it be well understood by its Communist Party, which by no means was ever replaced by the

guerrilla force or the army, but which, on the other hand, operated as a revolutionary instrument subordinated to the leadership of the Party.

So the Vietnamese Peoples War cannot serve as a catechism for OLAS, to give it a halo it does not deserve, an origin which is opposite, a method while genuine in Indo-China becomes artificial when the other premises of the revolution are not observed.

We end recalling the "so be it" of the Proclamation: "The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution." This is certain, but if making the revolution is the duty of every revolutionary, the first thing which must be done is to mark off the territory. Making a revolution is more complex than fighting a guerrilla war. The hidden meaning of the "dictum" can be translated as follows: "The duty of every revolutionary is to make guerrilla war." With this transformation the formula loses depth but gains in precision. And while the guerrilla struggle can (and likewise cannot) be an aspect of the revolution, the revolution is something much more complicated, arduous, scientific, and multiphased than guerrilla warfare. Every guerrilla is a part of the revolution, but not every revolutionary need be synonymous with a guerrilla. From this we draw a new conclusion: every revolutionary can be a guerrilla but not every guerrilla can be a revolutionary. Thus we arrive at a much clearer and logical OLAS formula: "The duty of every guerrilla is to fight guerrilla warfare." And with this, we have enunciated the true dimension, without leaving room for any mistake, of the slogan with which the OLAS proclamation closes.

For us, the duty of every revolutionary is really to make, and not to play at or with, the revolution. At each moment, in each historical circumstance, emerge the duties of the revolutionary organization (because more than the duty, in the singular, of every revolutionary—a concept which basically encompasses a great quantity of petty-bourgeois individuals—is the duty, in the plural, of the organization of the revolutionaries). And as we have seen, for OLAS, revolution and guerrilla war are twins, or better stated, siamese concepts. Making revolution, for Marx and Engels, founders of scientific socialism, was to clarify revolutionary theory, participate in the heroic activities of the movement, and to activate and expand the organization of the millions of proletarians of the world. Making the revolution for Lenin, consisted in the creative development of revolutionary theory, forging an organization of revolutionaries (the Party) and participating in all aspects and with diverse methods in the class struggle to the point of triumphant culmination—the proletarian revolution (the dictatorship of the proletariat) and the same is true for Mao Tse-tung, Ho Chi Min etc.

The duty of every revolutionary is to avoid high-sounding phrases, the artificial fires of pseudo-revolutionary verbalism and to duly appreciate the value of revolutionary theory without which there can be no revolutionary movement (Lenin).

Seven long years have passed since the Cuban guerrilla war. We believe that the best service anyone can do for the Latin American revolution is to establish that the duty of every revolutionary is to make a profound self-criticism.

Part III: SOME CONCLUSIONS

This critical work has suffered under the double tyranny of space and time. It is part of a larger effort. We felt it imperative to speed up its appearance because we believe that at present, in our continent, left adventurism is the principal danger in the ranks of the left revolutionaries.

The cult of guerrilla Cubanism does not represent simply a theoretical risk, but a practical method which attracts, dazzles and destroys a good number of militant youths who discover in guerrilla tactics a rapid and tragic road of escape for sincere aspirations to "make the revolution" by a "shorter" road. Since January 1959 (a date which we select as the departure point for so much Cuban fervor), an infinite number of practical and "theoretical" attempts have succumbed in the face of two unquestionable enemies: the bullets of the repressive forces and the quicksand of objective reality, both opposed by idealistic and fragile arms. Heroic activities and groups of revolutionaries have given up their lives for the revolution. Their blood has been sprinkled over the American countryside, their flesh is the fee extorted by the unsatiable enemy of the cause of the emancipation of Latin America.

A Self-Criticism

For several years we have kept silent and maintained a stoic patience without daring to pass judgment on the historical fact which brings about a particular type of struggle. The fear of anathema, of becoming the black sheep of the revolutionary movement, has put us in an unenviable position: that of consenting without approving, of respecting grudgingly the idealized version of the Cuban revolution, of tolerating, in the name of a discreet solidarity, that accident become converted into law; of accepting that a rarity become a Procrustean bed on which every step, method and action of revolutionists must be placed in the future to assure the success of the socialist revolution in Latin America. We have assumed the responsibility—self critically—for out complacency, our complicity: we chose to

swim with the current rather than run the risk of being called by the "infamous" name of "dogmatists," "safe" revolutionaries, "reformists," "verbal revolutionaries," and "Fabians of action." This was, we admit, an act of political cowardice. We did not have enough courage to go against the current, to delineate the field of struggle, to put historical facts in their true perspective, to weigh the conversion of a process which, undoubtedly, was predestined—by following its "normal" course—to miscarry into a new bourgeois-democratic experiment and which by a quirk of fate became something completely different which escaped the vision and mission of its protagonists. Lacking analytical rigor, and a critical spirit, we ended up acting like opportunists rather than revolutionaries. In our personal case the responsibility is much greater, since, ten years ago, and under the signature of Eusebio Priete, we severely criticized the disingenuous role of the guerrilla force. We did it on the basis of an exhaustive documentation and without concerning ourselves with the insults of the liberal left. We take the blame but are not going to belabor it: we will try by self criticism to rectify our mistakes.

It is never too late to make amends; we are aware, moreover of our limitations. We know that it is much easier and practical to submit to the opinion of the "majority" but we choose the more difficult and thorny path which questions the reason of the many.

We wish to get something out of the lesson, we wish to learn from the mistakes, we wish to place ourselves in the ranks of those who believe that the road to revolution does not begin with the fragments of the guerrilla force and the installation of "focos" but with the comprehension, diffusion and application of dialectical and historical materialism. By the long, monotonous, wearysome and not always glamorous task of linking revolutionary theory with the comprehension and action of the working and popular masses. No socialist revolution began with a contempt for theory: "power grows out of the barrel of a rifle" said Mao, but from a thinking, organized, scientific rifle. Before taking up the rifle it is necessary to make aware, to provide objectives and to win the active approval of the popular masses, the true protagonists of history. The former is political romanticism which develops into adventurism: it means to elevate the rifle and not its conscious carrier into the driving force of history. And this theory is no longer viable. We do not wish Latin America to be transformed into a vast cemetery where many of the best supporters of the new fighting generations will be buried. When one asserts, as did Che, that "the objective conditions for the struggle are given by virtue of the hunger of the people, their reaction

in the face of this hunger, the terror unleashed to pacify popular reaction and the wave of hatred that the repression creates,"—one falls victim to a simple voluntarism which is not in keeping with reality nor experience.

It appears that Che plays down certain changes operating in various countries of Latin America, the application of reformist remedies which, though they have not changed the lot of dependence and exploitation, have attenuated, and cloaked it. And he forgets or ignores, that hunger incites to struggle as well as submission. That hunger as a motivation lacks directed force, that the hungry masses (where they exist) are degraded to unimaginable limits if their hunger is not joined to that awareness which only revolutionary theory can bring them. Che, then, is an accomplished and perfect exponent of the revolutionary who bets everything on spontaneity, who ends up by elevating spontaneity to a cult. Here we must cite a passage from Lenin (who it is certain did not consider the guerrilla force as "the embryo of the national liberation army" has left us with one of the most formidable theoretical and practical legacies and an insignificant historical detail—the October Revolution.) when he stated that "capitalism develops, organizes, disciplines the workers but it also crushes, oppresses, causes degradation, misery, etc." But, in the last analysis, it is not a question of selecting quotations nor drawing comparisons but of seizing the essence of an extraordinary theoretical work which converts socialism from the utopia of well-intentioned liberals into a revolutionary science capable not only of understanding old relations of production but of destroying them in order to build a new world. In criticizing Che and the Cuban "leaders," we must deplore the enormous squandering of the time and talent of the founders of scientific socialism and their disciples; they could have spared humanity sorrow and suffering if, rather than theorizing, they had applied the formula "the duty of every revolutionary is to make revolution" for Cuban use.

Let us add a final point. We are indebted to the readers: in somewhat desultory notice born of urgency and necessity, we have made reference to the most obvious and vulnerable manifestations of Guerrilla Castroism. To polemicize against Fidel Castro, the example of a "practical" revolutionary, or against Che Guevara himself, self-anointed first "theoretician" of guerrilliam, is, if you will, a relatively easy task.

Recently, as a result of an accidental, notoriety, the revolutionary movement numbers among its ranks a new revolutionary theorist. We are referring to Regis Debray, who in his works especially his *Revolution in the Revolution* has attempted to raise guerrilla empiricism to the level of revolutionary theory. We can say

one thing to his credit—he has converted an elemental, and voluntarist scheme of struggle into a somewhat more complex methodology. It is our belief that the dialectical and speculative subtlety of Regis Debray does not succeed in setting up a truly scientific method, singularly adept at catalyzing the forces and the dreams of a new generation of revolutionaries. Venezuela, Guatemala, Peru, Argentina, and now Bolivia, tragically demonstrate, that insurrectional focus cannot be built on the margin and in opposition to “dogmatically” objective and subjective conditions: that what has been created, on the other hand, are “focos” of blood, sorrow and defeat to the extent that elemental political norms have been challenged and real historical conditions underestimated.

The neo-revisionist treason, the lack of a revolutionary political apparatus based on M-L, the lack of knowledge, real or presumed, of the real political, economical and social conditions of Latin America has provoked among revolutionaries a tendency to para-guerrilla conspiratorialism. Cuba, with its extraordinary untypical experience, constitutes the example

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true—you have no task so important and urgent as thoroughly documenting the charges and giving them widest possible distribution. But I want evidence consisting of all specific acts and omissions that support charge that Castro's policies are tending definitely toward restoration of capitalism. Until you have provided a list—no need to be a comprehensive pamphlet—containing specific facts (not just generalized opinions), you continue to neglect your principal present obligation.

Certainly you know Lenin—and all other important genuine Marxists—well enough to be aware that neither he, nor they, laid down any “blueprints” of universal and unalterable applications; but, on the contrary, every one of them repeatedly asserted that no such “blueprints” are feasible and repeatedly warned against any effort to dogmatically define a course not yet at least partially tested by historical process in the particular place and time concerned. Let the whores of the capitalist press and broadcasting typically reveal either their ignorance or cynical reliance on ignorance of readers when they frequently deride some

which, once and again, all adherents of guerrillism cite. But when the different guerrilla movements become aware of their existence in remote forests or in inaccessible mountains—especially suited for guerrilla warfare but very scarcely populated—they come forth with a political program which runs the gamut of national and social demands, a program which therefore differs from the liberal program put forth by the 26th of July Movement, or to say it without any kind of euphemisms—is its historical negation. Needless to say, in these cases there will be no invaluable aid, from the CIA, from any groups of the ruling classes and from the formidable propagandistic apparatus of imperialism.

As of today, the forces of the guerrilla struggles have not been transformed into the sepulcher of imperialism but the tomb of numerous revolutionaries. For this reason our response in the future will be more militant: neo-revisionism and neo-adventurism have now passed into the category of the principal factors of dispersal.

current condition as violation of “Marxist blueprints”

You say “it will take many articles plus life's experience to convince people that the Castro line is not only incorrect but extremely harmful.” It doesn't require anything of the sort. All I want to know: Does it threaten to restore capitalism? Just give me a single sheet with abridged listing of Castro's specific acts that threaten to restore capitalism. Let your readers take a hand at evaluating these specific acts. I'm not impressed by your summary definition: “Castroism (the essence of which is petty bourgeois revolutionarism).” But perhaps you can elucidate that with the list of charged violations I request. Then, if need of many articles is indicated, let them contain the alleged violations precisely defined with citation of ruling text from Lenin identified by works and page numbers.

Fraternally,
R.O.G.

Editor's note: Owing to their length, we have reprinted only the above few paragraphs from two letters by R.O.G.