



Nahuel Moreno

**The Latin
American
Revolution**

Nahuel Moreno

The Latin American Revolution

First Spanish edition: Palabra Obrera, 1962

Second Spanish edition: Editorial *CEHus*, 2018

First English edition: Editorial *CEHus*, 2019

English translation: Daniel Iglesias

Cover and interior design: Daniel Iglesias

www.nahuelmoreno.org

www.uit-ci.org

www.izquierdasocialista.org.ar

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Buenos Aires, 2019

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Preface to the second Spanish edition

Why this republishing?¹

The Latin American Revolution is a booklet that brings together different writings by Nahuel Moreno edited by *Palabra Obrera* [Workers' Word] in 1962. Much of its content was present in the discussions and resolutions made by the Congress of this party the year before its publication, in April 1961.

Because of this, it is necessary to ask why to include as a documentary annexe a material published six years before the controversy reflected in this book. Fundamentally, the explanation lies in the fact that, in various analyses (political and historical) after the split of PRT, the importance of *The Latin American Revolution* was analysed as the most reliable representation of a supposed turn in the bosom of the Morenist current toward a communion with the Guevarist paradigm subsidiary of the Cuban revolution and its strategy of power. As it was analysed in the present book, it is evident it was a moment of approach by the tendency led by Nahuel Moreno toward certain elements coming from the theoretical input emanating from the Cuban process. However, as stated, their presence does not eliminate the important nuances and warnings the booklet made about its premises and the impossibility of its linear application to other realities.

The need to relaunch this document is even more important given that, at the time of the split of PRT in 1968, the tendency which would be framed by the Santucho brothers would vindicate this work, arguing the need to return to its central precepts and avoid a supposed moving away from the same that this current would make later to take a "spontaneist" path for the taking of power. As is clear from the above-mentioned development, this assertion is paradoxical if one takes into account that, prior to the merger of the two organisations that would give rise to PRT, the Morenist current had already produced several controversial and critical documents regarding the concept of guerrilla war that was promoted from Cuba and which were already mentioned in the brochure. In fact, the positions that distanced Moreno from the Guevarist paradigm were not an impediment to the formation of a brand new party in 1965.

On the other hand, it is even more remarkable that the historiography that dealt with the course of PRT (particularly, the one was taken by the post-split trajectory of the Santuchist current) has also taken this booklet as an explanatory factor of the rapprochement between the Morenist current and the northern group of the Santuchos. For example, the work of Weisz (2004) asserts that the rapprochement between Morenism and the *Frente Indoamericano Revolucionario y Popular* (Revolutionary and Popular Indoamericano Front, FRIP) took place at a time when the first of these two currents expressed their moment most prone toward the Cuban revolutionary scheme from which they would later distance themselves. Another type of essays, such as certain militant histories, pointed out that Moreno's analysis of the Cuban revolution corresponded to an incorrect application of the Trotskyist theory on this historical process (Werner and Aguirre, 2007), or that directly it was a revisionist writing that was at the antipodes of Marxism ascribing to the "foquist logic" (Coggiola, 2006).

In relation to these controversies and given that, in general, *The Latin American Revolution* was a document referenced or mentioned but scarcely disseminated or addressed in a complete and systematic manner, in this

1 The booklet has been republished [in Spanish] for the first time in 56 years as a documentary annex to the second corrected and enlarged edition of the book *El trotskismo y el debate en torno a la lucha armada; Moreno, Santucho y la ruptura del PRT* (Trotskyism and the debate on armed struggle; Moreno, Santucho and the split of the PRT), by Martín Mangiantini, Editorial Cehus, Buenos Aires, December 2018. This preface has been translated from this book.

second edition of *El trotskismo y el debate en torno a la lucha armada* [Trotskyism and the debate on armed struggle] it is pertinent to incorporate it as an annex in such a way as to make its contents known in a finished manner.

Of course, it is unavoidable to locate this booklet in the climate of effervescence that encompassed the initial course of the Cuban revolution and, at the same time, it would be erroneous to exclusively take on the reading of this document to revise what were the positions Morenism had around the Cuban revolution, Castroism and Guevarism. However, making this work available completely is also a way of deepening and of discussion with those positions mentioned above, that argued the presence of a radical theoretical turn in the characterisations this Trotskyist current made around the paradigms about political violence and the strategy to hold up as part of a revolutionary project.

Martin Mangiantini

Forewords

A Chilean trade union leader has the merit of having coined a phrase that may become historical because of its beauty and accuracy: “Since the Cuban revolution the world revolution has begun to speak in Spanish.”

This book is about the revolution that speaks our language. Its author has gathered his last works with others dated previously on Latin American history and politics to show the continuity of thought and action of his party. Of course, continuity means neither synthesis nor perfection. The reader will verify the deficiencies of the thought and how sometimes they are corrected to the step of the years and the pages. We take an example: the chapters on American colonisation were studied before those of emancipation and the formation of national organisations, with the foreseeable sequel of errors and gaps. This methodological lack is because of the fact the author, influenced by the traditional left in his early years, arrived much later at the specificity of the national than at the specificity of the international.

Perhaps a foreword intended to point out the errors of the book will surprise. But the pedantry and dogmatism of the left theorists are so great that the author wants to adopt an extremely self-critical attitude as a tribute to that example of the anti-dogmatic revolution that is Cuba. He believes that with this method he can be part of the magnificent revolutionary vanguard liberated by the Cuban revolution who — as Marx wanted — replaced the weapons of criticism by the criticism of weapons. Making it clear the author does not believe to be the owner of the truth, and therefore it is necessary to carefully verify his statements which must have many mistakes — because for some reason his comrades have not yet led any of the triumphant revolutions — it is necessary to state he does not self-criticise in the essentials of his attitudes, past and present. This is why this work, which is a call to anti-dogmatic study, is also continuity and consequence in revolutionary theory and practice.

Nahuel Moreno

Buenos Aires, March 1962

The extremely synthetic nature of this work, which attempts to formulate a general theory of the Latin American revolution, will draw attention. The conciseness which is a desirable and uncommon theoretical quality, in this case, can be a limitation, so we must explain its causes.

Let's say that, in this month of the Argentine military dictatorship and in this year of the Latin American revolution, no revolutionary militant can take off too many vital minutes from a daily activity separated by an abyss of the peace of cabinets. That has been the problem of Moreno and the editors and of the manuscripts that, accompanying the author, went through vicissitudes recently picked up by a journalistic chronicle of the continental revolution.

Anibal Moliere

Buenos Aires, October 1962

CHAPTER I

The first colonisation¹

Liberal and pseudo-Marxist mystification of the American conquest

A myth fabricated by liberal historians attributes the current backwardness of Latin America to Spanish and Portuguese colonisation and the advancement of the United States to English colonisation. But it would not be honest to blame this lie on the Liberals exclusively. There is also an intelligentsia tamed in imperialist penetration, and a methodology and interpretation shielded by pseudo-Marxism, which actively collaborate with liberal mystification.

Generally, Latin American Marxism, methodologically and interpretively, has not yet overcome the embryonic stage. It is, at most, an approximation to true Marxism. Mariategui² is a good example of this Latin American Marxism, worthy of admiration and respect, but he does not know how to rise to true revolutionary understanding and methodology. For them, being a Marxist was basically accepting the existence of the class struggle, the importance of the economic factor, and in some cases, the need for workers' revolution. After that, they limited themselves to applying the positivist method learned in the official university, being happy with making a mere formal improvement, in its terms, of it.

Where it is best shown as an appendix of bourgeois conceptions is in the field of historical research and interpretation. Jose Mariategui, Rodolfo Puiggrós,³ etc., endorse the liberal myth and transform the racial into economic categories by equating feudal Spanish colonisation, and English capitalist colonisation.

Puiggrós tells us: "The conquest of the American territory and its inhabitants, and their incorporation into the domains of the crown of Spain was a work of feudal conquerors, of those carrying on from those who had fought against the Moors and who previously had swelled the armies of the crusades. Every European feudal campaign, whether in the north against the Slavs, in the east against the Turks, in the west against the Saxons and the Germans, or in the south against the Arabs, has been carried forward under the sign of the cross of Christ.

"The conquest of America by Spain is part of the process and the expansion of feudalism is verified when it has already entered into decline. Spain turned to America the elements of its decomposed feudal regime. The power of the monarchy was strengthened by giving its vassals vast territories, large wealth and thousands of human beings subjected to the rudeness and cruelties of

1 Published as a thesis in typewritten copies in 1948. It was reproduced in the magazine *Estrategia* No 1, 1958, by *Palabra Obrera*.

2 **Jose Carlos Mariategui** (1894–1930), was a Peruvian journalist, political philosopher, and activist. A prolific writer before his early death at age 35, he is considered one of the most influential Latin American socialists of the 20th century. Mariategui's most famous work was *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality* (1928). An avowed, self-taught Marxist, he insisted that a socialist revolution should evolve organically in Latin America based on local conditions and practices, not the result of mechanically applying a European formula. [Translator]

3 **Rodolfo Jose Puiggrós** (1906–1980) was an Argentinian writer, historian, journalist and politician. His works included numerous books and articles on Argentinian and Latin American history and history of philosophy. [Translator]

servitude.” (*De la colonia a la revolución* [From the colony to the revolution], 2nd edition, Lautaro, p. 16.)

But we must discover in Puiggros the merit of having understood at least that “the discovery of America was an enterprise carried out by merchants and navigators of the Mediterranean”. Pity he later interprets that “the commercial capital had fulfilled its function to build a bridge by which Spanish feudalism was transplanted to America”. On English colonisation Puiggros is also categorical: “Saxon America was colonised a century later under different conditions. The Englishmen who arrived in the Mayflower and who continued arriving from 1620 to 1640 transplanted to the new continent the germs of capitalist development they brought from their native homeland. In opposition to that colonisation of the northeast of the United States, the immigration of the “cavaliers” verified after the bourgeois revolution of 1648 that overthrew the Stuarts, was made up, unlike the first, by feudal elements headed by the nobility displaced from the government and expropriated from their lands. This immigration was established in the south, in Virginia and introduced forms of production and habits of life which corresponded to their feudal origin. The exploitation of the work of Indians and blacks in a servile and slaver way made up their social base. While the bourgeois immigration current imposed the small property and the manufacturing development of the urban nuclei, the feudal immigration current was strengthened in the great property and in the domestic economy.” (Ibid, p. 23 and 24.)

So far the fable, the liberal myth adorned with Marxist phraseology. Let’s now see the reality.

The capitalist character of the American colonisation

The Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, and Dutch colonisation in the Americas was essentially capitalist for its objectives: to organise production and discoveries to make prodigious profits and to place goods on the world market. If it did not unveil a system of capitalist production, it was because there was no army of free workers in the market and the colonisers, in order to exploit America capitalistically, were forced to resort to non-capitalist production relations, slavery and semi-slavery of the indigenous people.

The pillars of colonisation are production and discoveries for capitalist objectives, slave or semi-slave relations and feudal forms and terminologies (as in Mediterranean capitalism).

Like so many liberal historians, Puiggros confuses the decadence of Mediterranean capitalism with the advance of feudalism. There is no Spanish feudalism colonising America but an extraordinary development of Spanish capitalism that has already begun its decline when it discovers the new continent. The discovery will only further accelerate its decline and develop the new north-western capitalism that was already displacing the Mediterranean capitalism before the discovery. (See next chapter).

Both the Mediterranean and the north-western are capitalist forms, although the former is impregnated with aristocratic and feudal features with a commercial, usurious, local and international character, and the second is manufacturing and national.

The entire colonisation of the Americas is capitalist except in one area: the northeast of the United States. To this region came the Europeans who wanted land, climate and production like those of Europe but who did not intend to trade with their native countries, and who, on the other hand, were self-sufficient in agricultural products. This colonisation had the objective of the land to implement a small self-feeding production and gave rise to a peasantry that placed on the market a small surplus, continuator, from a historical perspective, of the independent peasant coloniser of the European Middle Ages.

Paradoxically, the south of the United States and Latin America were colonised in capitalist form and they did not develop typical capitalist relations while the American northeast was developed in a feudal form, which did not originate feudal relations.

Contradictions and differences in the colonisation

Latin America and the south of the United States had a capitalist production specially organised for the world market, with pre-capitalist production relations. For its part, the north of America was a region colonised by waves of small peasants who did not support pre-capitalist production relations and consequently constituted themselves for centuries in an internal market of continuous growth. The Northeast of the United States inherited all the advantages of European feudalism, i.e., small agrarian production, without its tremendous disadvantages: the parasitic feudal landowning class of future bourgeois production.

Marx had already foreseen this contradiction of colonisation. In *Theories of Surplus Value*, he compares in passing the two types of colonisation, rebutting Puiggros in advance: “Firstly: There are the colonies proper, such as in the United States, Australia, etc. Here the mass of the farming colonists, although they bring with them a larger or smaller amount of capital from the motherland, is not a capitalist class, nor do they carry on capitalist production. They are MORE OR LESS SELF-WORKING PEASANTS whose main object, in the first place, is to produce their own livelihood, their MEANS OF SUBSISTENCE. Their main product, therefore, does not become a commodity and is not intended for TRADE. They sell or exchange the excess of their products over their own consumption for imported manufactured commodities, etc. The other, smaller section of the colonists who settled near the sea, navigable rivers, etc., form trading towns. There is no question of capitalist production here either. (...)”

“In the second type of colonies — PLANTATIONS — where commercial speculations figure from the start and production is intended for the world market, the capitalist production exists, although only in a formal sense, since the slavery of Negroes precludes free wage labour, which is the basis of capitalist production. But the business in which slaves are used is conducted by capitalists. The mode of production which they introduce has not arisen out of slavery but is grafted on to it. In this case, the same person is capitalist and landowner.” (“Theories of Surplus Value”, *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, Vol 31, Lawrence & Wishart, London, 2010, p. 515 and p. 516.)

A Spanish or Portuguese conqueror is the first cousin of the owner of the *yerbatales*⁴ of the turn of the century popularised by legends and novels. De facto and de jure, the work of the *mensues*⁵ was almost slave, but the production of these mills was capitalist. The colonisation of Latin America follows — viciously — commercial paths and objectives, and what in this regard did for the development of world capitalism was enormous. Latin America was the boiler of European capitalist development.⁶

Capitalist production originated from the beginning of colonisation a native capitalist class, the bourgeois landowners, apart from the merchants and the bureaucracy. Latin American history has not yet been studied based on this overall characterisation: the existence from the beginning of a native bourgeois class, linked to regional production, similar to that of the South of the United States (one of whose political representatives was George Washington). Liberal historians and their Marxist emulators have ignored the existence of this class because it was not an industrial bourgeoisie. They have classified it as “feudal landowner” when it was much more progressive than the comprador commercial bourgeoisie.

4 **Yerbatal**: yerba mate plantation. [Translator]

5 **Mensu** is a Guaraní word that designates the rural worker in the jungles of Paraguay and the Argentinian provinces of Corrientes and Misiones, in particular, the worker of the mate plantations. [Translator]

6 Someday we will need to study whether the techniques of mineral exploitation brought by the Spaniards were not the highest of its time, as some references suggest. This would confirm, in terms of the productive forces, its capitalist character. NM

The Argentine colonisation

If we take the trouble to check the character of the colonisation and the conquest of our country, we see the previous characterisation is correct. The fundamental concern of the colonisers and conquerors are the gold and silver mines for the world market — the desperate search for El Dorado — and not settling on land to cultivate it with feudal relations. This data alone would suffice to demonstrate the capitalist character of the conquest and colonisation but there are also other symptomatic facts:

a) The indigenous person does not have the character of the serf — agrarian worker attached to the land — but his labour is a labour force in the hands of Spanish owners hired to the highest bidder. There is an army of workers and a rudimentary *sui generis* work-market since it is freely contracted but between owners of companies and owners or semi-owners of men.

If we begin with Mendoza — region of which we know the relatively oldest antecedents — we find that “the ideal of Cuyo’s *encomendero*⁷ was leaving someone in charge of his trans-Andean interests and go to Santiago with his Indians for lease. In Chile, the Huarpes served in gold laundering, in the manufacture of *botijambre*⁸ and in urban and rural labours. In Mendoza, they planted vineyards, pruned them and harvested grapes and even guided carts taking wine to Buenos Aires, made by themselves” (Juan Draghi Lucero, *Documentary Revelations about the Cuyo Economy, Board of Mendoza’s Historical Studies*, 1940, Volume XVI, pp., 189-249).

“Hunting the Indian was perfectly organised in the early days of the colony. The villager needed *mitayos*⁹ for the extensive agricultural work that had to be dealt in these remote places” (*Chapter Acts of Mendoza*, Tome 1, 1945, p. LVII).

So ingrained was the habit of extracting indigenous Cuyans to Chile, the Cabildo [Town Council] of Mendoza bluntly states in June 1604, that to deprive them of taking *mitayos* from San Luis “meant the total destruction of this city”, adding, “that it has been performing this removal for 40 years” (Ibid, p. LIX). And when the Indians begin to end, it resolved “to also ask His Majesty to grant us the mercy of thousand licenses for blacks for this city regarding the few and diminishing naturals there are in it”. Which is indirect evidence that Indians could be replaced by slaves and not by serf peasant tenants.

The case of Mendoza is illustrative to the extreme because the conquistadors met industrious Indians, who already practiced agriculture, and were very peaceful. Instead of using these exceptional conditions for establishing a feud, they took advantage of it to better utilise the indigenous people in companies producing for the market.

In Tucuman, to quote just one other example, the problem of the Indians who are taken by traders and cow herders who pass by is a serious problem, which shows that Indians are not tied to the land as serfs and are used for an important commercial traffic or to be taken out of their land to other farms, from Peru, Paraguay, and Buenos Aires (*Chapter Acts of San Miguel de Tucuman*, Vol. 1, National University of Tucuman, 1946, p. 37 et seq.).

b) From the outset, the production is destined to the world or viceregal market. What is characteristic is the intensive production of a few products and not the feudal self-sufficiency.

The testament of a neighbour in Mendoza of 29 December 1588 allows us to verify this good man was already a plain common winemaker who “declared to have a vineyard near this city next to the Videla’s mill and having five thousand plants, which is surrounded by adobe walls and I also have a parcel of land near this vineyard, also fenced, plus a block of land that is close to that street

7 The **encomienda** was a system of free labour used during the Spanish colonisation of the Americas. The Spanish monarch rewarded individual Spaniards, the **encomenderos**, for services rendered, by giving them control of the labour of a particular number of indigenous people. [Translator]

8 **Botijambre**, early Spanish colonial word designating leather vessels. [Translator]

9 **Mitayo**: An Indian in the Spanish colonies in America, who had to work on the socioeconomic institution known as **mita**, a system of compulsory labour directed to develop internally a market economy with products and services for European Spain. [Translator]

and between this block and the vineyard is the tile kiln that I have, and I also have a plot of land on San Juan Bautista Street” (*Judicial Archive of Mendoza*).

In the north of the country, the situation was not very different. In a paltry village of Tucuman, we found that the Attorney General, Don Galio de Villavicencio, poses to the *Cabildo* a program of 18 points on 4 May 1680, which is indisputably a program of a bourgeois hamlet without any feudal attachment. In point 3 he proposes it became compulsory to accept instead of currency, given its lack, “cotton yarn and wool wick” so the village can be supplied and “the poor succoured”. For point 4 he says “the great importance of recording all cow and mule herds, carts and wagons and pack trains that pass through this city and its jurisdiction and others who the residents of this city take”. For point 6, he proposes that drifting Spaniards and mestizos be forced to work or be expelled (like later bourgeois laws requiring work). By point 7 he reports: “It has come to my knowledge that in many houses and farms of this city have two kinds of measures of wheat, one for receiving and another for giving, all sealed against conscience and justice”. In this style, he continues, interspersing occasional requests to retain the Indians as already mentioned. In point 17 he complains that “most of the time chapter members are missing from this city in their farms, stations and busy traveling at their conveniences” showing thus that these settlers are much more like a vulgar capitalist in constant movement to defend his interests than a feudal lord worried about his amusement and hunting (*Chapter Acts of Tucuman* already mentioned, Vol 1, p. 37).

In 1588, in Corrientes, we find that there are no self-producing fiefdoms but dealers of specialised production: foals, mares, and cows. On 27 May of that year, the *Cabildo* of Corrientes meets to auction the care “of horses and mares of common at three heads by average weight” demanding two guarantors. On 7 November the same year, “Etor Rodríguez is appointed as guarantor of Asencio Gonzalez, guardian of beef cows”.

The colonisation of Brazil

The elements we find in the Argentine colonisation are common to Latin America and are also repeated in Brazil. Navarrete¹⁰ already informs us in his account of the voyages of Columbus that this had found in the lands discovered wood for dyeing fabrics. In 1505 the Portuguese sent a scouting expedition which returned to Portugal with a cargo of that wood, called “pau Brazil”. The king of Portugal hastened to lease the newly discovered lands to a merchant in Lisbon, Don Fernando de Noronha. Contract terms are not well known but according to indirect references, it is known Noronha agreed to annually send three ships to Brazil (lands of the Holy Cross), to discover 300 leagues of coastline and to pay one fifth of the value of the wood to the sovereign.

This compact is eminently capitalist.

In order to not bore the reader with other references, we will limit ourselves to quote Roberto Cochrane Simonsen. In his *Economic History of Brazil (1500-1820)* he states:

“It does not seem reasonable that almost all historians of our homeland will stress, far too much, the feudal aspect of donations with some even getting to classify them as a setback in relation to the gains of the era. [...]

“From the economic point of view, which does not fail to be basic in any colonial enterprise, I do not think it is reasonable to compare this system to feudalism.

“In feudal economy, there is no place for profit because the social classes are delimited and remuneration depends on the social status of each class. No matter how hard we study the historical elements, we cannot conclude that the regime of donations presents a great resemblance to the medieval economy. In the first place, they all came to the new land in search of fortune; they all wanted to improve their economic situation. Gaining profit was the primary cause of the arrival in Brazil. The miners, mechanics, carpenters, and other artisans sought to earn to form their

¹⁰ **Martin Fernández de Navarrete y Ximenez de Tejada** (1765–1844), was a Spanish sailor, writer and historian who rediscovered the logs of three of the voyages of Christopher Columbus. [Translator]

own private purse. Anyone who would embark could do so. There were no limits. On the contrary, the higher the number the better. By and large, those who came here did it with the intention of returning enriched. Whoever had capital could plead exploration of the land. The Grantees were only explorers in large scale. The concessions given by the King to those men were the means of stimulating them, facilitating their enterprise. In the following century, other European nations adopted similar processes of colonisation using, in preference, a private initiative through privileged colonising companies.

“Just as today some companies are granted tax exemptions along with high taxation on foreign products in competition with them, in the same way, using these characteristically capitalist procedures, the King of Portugal granted a series of favours to those who with their capitals or services could increase the colonisation of the lands discovered.

“Our historians have not addressed the case under this aspect. When referring to the grantee they regard him as if he were a representative of the old feudal regime. Don Manuel, with his navigation policy, with his system of international monopolies, with his economic manoeuvres of displacement of Venice’s species trade, is a true capitalist. His subjects are not far behind. They made no conquest like the knights of the Middle Ages; they sought to make greater their country, trying to transform Portugal into a power. They conquered the Indies with the same spirit in which, later, the British came to make up the great British Empire.

“The immense powers given to grantees do not mean feudalism either; those powers still exist today. The chief of a fleet on the high seas, the commanders of the armies, the governors in exceptional occasions, today have powers almost as big as the powers granted to those grantees. We are therefore confident that our donations, leaving aside its hereditary nature, only are feudal in terms, many of them still in use today.

“Regarding the concessions, it may be argued its legal aspect resembles feudal institutions. But this is also observed at present. The regime of our mines is characterised by the holder of the mine being but a concessionaire, who therefore works it, performing a social function.” (Tome 1, p.125, year 1937.)

We have given these examples and resorted to the preceding quotation to show that in Latin America there existed in its first colonisation a barbaric capitalism, based on the exchange of goods and in close connection with the world market. It was thus a regime different from the one born of English, Dutch, and French colonisation, but far from being feudal, it was an aberrant form of European capitalist development.

CHAPTER II

The first independence and national organisations¹

Historians of the Latin American independence from Spain and Portugal are divided into two camps: those who consider it a result of internal factors and those who believe it has been determined by external contingencies. Some speak of the emergence of a “national consciousness” of the Creoles or of certain native bourgeoisies, and others speak of the Iberian decline or of the influence of France and England.

The funny thing is that, with few exceptions, none of the two tendencies has delved into the differences, starting with the analysis of the relative importance of internal and external factors and then deciding on what they consider decisive. Nor have they posed the much more general problem of what should be the method to approach the study.

However, although no one remembers it, any attempt at scientific interpretation of our history must start from this previous question: what were the essential elements in the dynamics of our independence, those internal or external?

The internal and the external factors in our history

The discovery of America laid the foundation for the advent of the world market and capitalist rule. Since then, there has been a new combination of internal and external factors in the historical events of all the civilized countries of the world.

For thousands of years, the external influenced only the different areas and countries breaking into the lives of communities in the form of war, invasion, cataclysm, with sporadic characteristics. What determined events was the development of internal factors only altered by external factors from time to time. But with the advent of world capitalism, the incidence of external factors became constant in all countries.

Naturally, when this incidence becomes constant, it was not decisive, as the liberals assert, but rather the external constant happens to act on the internal forces, developing them or contradicting them. The internal dynamics unfolds its own life, altered, deformed, changed, completed, and integrated by external dynamics. There is no subordination of one to another but a dialectical relationship sometimes of contradiction and some other times of coordination. Therefore, when taking Latin American independence, we take the external to link it to the internal development of the productive forces, to the relations between the classes, and to the historical-cultural phenomenon.

¹ Version of the Argentine History course given at the Humanities Faculty, National University of La Plata, 1960.

Characteristics of the Spanish and Portuguese Empires

Starting from the external factors, the Latin American independence is a consequence of the crisis of the Spanish and Portuguese empires; Spain resembles the Austro-Hungarian and Russian empires for being essentially political domination of Asian or feudal characteristics and in a permanent military, economic, and political competition with the great north-western capitalist powers. Of those empires, Spain was the first to disintegrate (100 years before the others) and geographical reasons weighed in it; its internal communications were maritime through the “mare nostrum” of the British, Dutch, and French merchants. Russia and Austria-Hungary lasted another century because their internal communications were terrestrial.

To unite the different parts of its empire, Spain needed to develop the productive forces and compete with Great Britain, Holland, and France. Specifically, it had to promote the maritime industry but this was only possible by promoting capitalist development.

The relative decline of Spain and Portugal

It is already almost a slogan of historians to point out the Spanish and Portuguese decline and the British and French advance as causes of the independence. However, this decline is only relative. In truth, independence was not the result of the decline of the empire but of its attempts at development. Spain and Portugal, much more than Russia, needed to develop their productive forces for the reasons we pointed out and the competition with England caused numerous wars between both empires. The Iberian Empire adopted a series of industrial promotion measures, which led to important capitalist development. Catalonia, at the end of the eighteenth century, had over 100,000 textile workers and, in several industries, the technical revolution took place at the same time as in Great Britain. But this economic development, which in Russia strengthened the empire, in Spain served to the contrary because it created regional centrifugal tendencies, opposed to the political centralism of Madrid. Paradoxically, the economic progress of Catalonia, the Basque Country, Andalusia, Venezuela, and the River Plate — the regions most favoured by the Bourbon promotion — mortally weakened the empire.

So there are two combined factors which come together to cause the resounding failure of the Bourbon plans: development, which takes place regionally and centrifugally, and the victory of Great Britain in the economic, military, and political competition. In any case, the Hispanic “decadence” is only relative; it takes place despite the development of productive forces. And we will see the importance of this.

The regional bourgeoisies developed by Spain

The capitalist development of the Spanish empire is uneven and centrifugal. The Bourbon plan bears fruit but its consequences are the inverse of those projected. One of the causes is the difficulty in internal communications. Another reason, very important, is the lack of an internal market and a national bourgeoisie and the tremendous weight of the feudal past.

The kings of Spain tried to achieve capitalist development without destroying the semi-feudal obstacles and, with this retardant ballast, they found the empire suffered in all pores the pressure of Great Britain that controlled the world market. Virtually all regions of the empire bounded with Great Britain or were closer to London than Madrid, bathed by the Atlantic waters of the “mare nostrum”. Hence, the bourgeois development of the Spanish empire had this regional character and was linked to the division of labour imposed by Great Britain, which marked the rhythm of the world. The other consequence of interest to us is that Spanish, Latin American, and Brazilian regionalism, far from being a feudal reminiscence, is a product of the Bourbon development that — to the horror of the sectarians — did not centralise the empire as in the countries of the north and west of Europe.

The Latin American independence

Independence cannot be understood without the panorama we have described and which ultimately explains why, in Latin America, there were regional productions and bourgeoisies and not a single unifying national bourgeoisie. The developed regions were on the Atlantic coast: Venezuela, Río de la Plata, and San Pablo. They were the ones that drove the process of national disintegration caused by the relative decline of Spain and Portugal.

Spain had an economic axis in Latin America which was the mines of Upper Peru. When at the end of the 18th century they began to run out, the bourgeoisie linked to that production and interested in the unity of the continent lost strength. It was the only sector that could have achieved unification but when it was proposed at the Congress of Independence in Tucuman it was already impotent to achieve it.

This is how [Latin] America began its first independence war led by the strong regional bourgeoisies of the coast. This revolutionary leadership explains the lack of interest in Latin American unity and the secrecy hidden by the liberating armies of San Martín and Bolívar which could liquidate the Spanish yoke but not materialise continental political unity. The areas most linked to the Spanish monopoly, the ones furthest from the Atlantic border, as well as those that had an agrarian economy based on the exploitation of the Indians — Peru, Central America, Mexico — were the rearguard of independence. There, along with colonial control, was added the acute indigenous and agrarian problem that scared the owning classes. The problem still exists and it is one engine of the second Latin American liberation, led not by the bourgeoisie but by the exploited masses. These countries and regions are the last to free themselves from Spain and the first to initiate the anti-Yankee struggle.

The national organisation of the different Latin American countries

When independence takes place, the internal and external factors are combined in a new way. The concrete manifestation of the external element in the independence process was the crisis in Spain and Portugal. But since the liberation, it was the control of the world market by the capitalist powers. Internally, independence allows a great advance of the productive forces, highly contradictory since the world market makes a ruinous competition to the regional and handicraft production. In some countries, the productive forces progressed under the protection of distance and lack of communications or in the scarce development of world trade. Overall, above the contradictions, the stage reflected a great advance of the productive forces.

During the nineteenth century, the influence of England and France went through three clearly defined stages, which had enormous importance in the organisation of modern Latin American states. The first stage, which runs until about 1825, is characterised by the predominant influence of Britain in the financial field. British capitalism, which has the doors of Europe closed for its financial investments, makes them in Latin America anticipating the imperialist stage we would know later. At that time, national financial agents, banks, etc. emerged.

The second stage reaches until 1850 and in it, the trade of European empires develops progressively; the industrial revolution has not yet been completed nor are there large ships. This is a stage of an increasing exchange of luxury goods or high-priced raw materials and not of large industrial production.

And finally, the last stage which goes until the last war and that from 1880 is combined with the modern imperialism of cartels and monopolies; there is an impressive and spectacular development of the world market. The European countries, turned into industrial portents, launch fabulous quantities of manufactures to the world market, of which Latin America is an important part.

For its part, the development of productive forces has two periods delimited by the key of 1850. Until then there is an even struggle between the development of regional economies and the economies for export, which is combined or excluded in different ways: in some areas they complement and support each other; in others, the last one undoes the first one; and in others still, in which the exportable production has secondary importance, it does not succeed in crushing the regional manufacturing development. But until 1850, both economies developed with relative harmony on the continent.

But from 1850 the development of both productions is uneven. The branches linked to the world market reach, because of their own importance, a decisive level. The best example is Bolivian tin. And it is then, on unilateral and distorted progress, that the economic axis of the modern Latin American nations takes place.

Throughout the past century, the continental history revolves around the struggle between the comprador-importing bourgeoisie and the production bourgeoisie (mining or agriculture that works for the world market, and handicraft one, which works for the domestic market).

And in some countries, the picture is complicated by the peasant struggle, caused by the agrarian problem. The conflict is resolved in favour of the production bourgeoisie in the last decades of the last century, as a result of the development of the productive branches. This is how the landowner and exporter bourgeoisie achieves political domination, sweeping down the importing and free-trading merchants and the handicraft petty-bourgeoisie. During their rule, said bourgeoisie organised the countries in their image and likeness. The Mexican "*Porfiriato*"² is the most classic example of this stage of bonanza and national organisation.

When hearing the shrill sirens of the new century, Latin America lives the stage of stabilisation, national organisation and enlightened despotism. Culturally and economically, we are much closer to London, Paris, or New York than to the capital of the neighbouring country. We lose the memory of the common libertarian origin. Each regional bourgeoisie, chained to the world market, competes fiercely in export prices and makes up rival states.

Only one country, Cuba, does not become independent in the nineteenth century. When it succeeds, without solution of continuity, it falls into a much more powerful yoke, that of Yankee imperialism, which five years earlier had inaugurated its policy of world domination in Central America. But Cuba, the epilogue of the first Latin American liberation, is the prologue of the second.

2 *Porfiriato* means the stage of Mexican history between 1876 and 1911, characterised by the governments of Porfirio Díaz. Díaz's economic policies greatly benefited his circle of allies, foreign investors, and a few landowners who were able to acquire large tracts of land leaving the peasants in extreme poverty. The outbreak in 1910 of the Mexican Revolution meant the end of his government.

CHAPTER III

Cuba, first workers' state in the Americas¹

Introduction: The colonisation plan of Yankee imperialism, our main enemy (January 1955)²

We will refer to the colonisation plan that Yankee imperialism has unleashed on Latin America. It is sad to note that, at a time when Asia and Africa are making tremendous efforts to achieve their independence, Latin America, which has been doing so for a century and a half, is losing it.

The colonisation of imperialism in the world become more noticeable in the countries of Asia and Africa and, instead, those of our continent were exempted for two main reasons: the inter-imperialist rivalry (which prevented, one, in particular, to take over Latin America) and also the relative strength of the Latin American native bourgeoisies (which allowed them to speculate among the different imperialisms). Only Central America, because of its economic weakness and the proximity of the United States, quickly felt into its sphere of influence.

World Wars I and, especially, II changed the situation in favour of Yankee imperialism, which remained as the only power with energy to undertake the colonisation of the sector that remained independent in the world.

To understand the process of colonisation that Yankee imperialism has unleashed on our continent, it is necessary to point out the previous stages that our countries have gone through, which are essentially three:

- a) Economic dependence,
- b) Economic semi-colonisation,
- c) Economic and political semi-colonisation.

The stage of dependency is characterised by the penetration being carried out in the economic sphere. The arriving financial capital, especially the British, damages the economic sovereignty in the sense it gets disproportionate returns and that, in general, deforms the economic structures. However, and except for Central America, political sovereignty remains unchanged. The great crisis of 1929 begins the semi-colonisation stage. The imperialist countries try to unload the crisis on the Latin American countries by imposing economic obligations not known to date. The general advance of our countries is curbed by the world crisis and the native bourgeoisies are forced, in order to maintain their positions, to sign semi-colonising economic pacts. The best example is the Roca-Runciman Treaty³ which tied the Argentine economy to British imperialism.

1 This chapter presents several articles of different dates shown in each one.

2 Summary of the conference pronounced by Nahuel Moreno in the Lanus branch of PSRN (*Partido Socialista de la Revolución Nacional*, Socialist Party of the National Revolution).

3 The **Roca–Runciman Treaty** was a commercial agreement signed on 1 May 1933 between Argentina and the United Kingdom signed in London by the Vice President of Argentina, Julio Argentino Roca, Jr., and the president of the British Board of Trade, Sir Walter Runciman. [Translator]

With the prolegomena of World War II begin the restrictions to the political sovereignty of Latin America. With the mechanism of the Pan American Union and its conferences, the instrument of political domination is articulated, altering the meaning of those organisations which, from 1889 to 1936, did not mean any political obligation for Latin America.

The Lima Conference of 1939 marks the new starting point for Yankee politics. For the first time, the obligation to intervene in the war in case of aggression against an American country is discussed. From then on, the pressure of Yankee imperialism intensifies with the purpose of aligning our countries around its foreign policy. The Rio de Janeiro Conference of 1942 recommends a break with the axis and declares the United States non-belligerent. Parallel and as a point of pressure, Yankee imperialism inhibits the export of capital goods to any country that does not abide by these agreements. What follows is already recent history. Yankee economic-political dominance keeps strengthening. At the Rio de Janeiro Conference in 1947 the issue of continental defence was raised, stating that for the purposes of an external attack on any area of the continent plus a contour of several miles around it, it would be considered aggression to all countries and, therefore, it would be repelled by all. A year later, the OAS (Organisation of American States) was created, which, although formally, is a continuation of the old and anodyne Pan American Union actually it will be a true supra-state body that will act politically on behalf of the continent. The OAS goes far beyond the Rio de Janeiro Conference; it does not limit the scope of aggression to the periphery of America but extends it to any part of the world and considers not only physical but also verbal aggression.

All these restrictions to the political sovereignty of the American countries are complemented by the bilateral pacts, the Inter-American Defence Board, etc. With its practical consequences: installation of Yankee military bases, entry of all kinds of missions, unification of armaments and strategic-tactical war plans, purchase of weapons from imperialism, etc.

We will not fall for the fallacy of the servants who hypocritically claim the pacts and agreements also put the US on an equal footing, with the same obligations. The only one that has extraterritorial interests in the whole world and the only one that is compromised by the needs of its foreign policy is Yankee imperialism and not the weak Latin American countries. The argument of “equality” reminds us of the famous anecdote of the fishing treaty between France and one of its colonies, which granted equal rights to the colony and the metropolis so they were mutually free to fish in respective territorial waters. Everything was irritating equality, except for one detail: the colony did not have a single fishing vessel ...

The Yankee plan of colonisation is part of the general strategy that imperialism has drawn before the advance of the world revolution. Within it, our continent is key, not only for the contribution of consumer goods but also — and fundamentally — for its strategic-military location. With control of the Panama Canal and the Strait of Magellan, imperialism ensures the dominance of the oceans and the possibility of access to East Asia and Africa.

Finally, the importance of Latin America is increased because it is the place where Yankee imperialism has greater investments and, therefore, any revolutionary movement in this continent shakes much more its economic structure than the Asian or African mobilisations.

The colonisation plan assumes a reality that the world lives. Imperialism no longer uses the club as the only means of subjugation. The pernicious example that anticolonial revolutions mean for our peoples forces the Yankees to adapt to the new situation and to cut off as much as possible the presence of dictatorial governments that exacerbate the anger of the masses. For example, what happened in Bolivia in 1952 is an example of how dangerous dictatorial governments are. The current ideal of imperialism is “democratic”, “representative” governments, which at the same time divert the interest of the masses toward the parliamentary game and serve to oppose the bosses parties among themselves, facilitating Yankee penetration.

This new tactic is complemented by the counter-revolutionary agreement signed by Yankee imperialism and the Vatican at the global level. The result of this is the tendency to create modern centrist petty-bourgeois parties that intend to introduce imperialist politics into broad popular strata. This is the role of the Christian Democratic parties in Latin America. Their more or less

democratic, more or less popular program is made to confuse and divide: to confuse popular sectors by diverting them from their specific problems, and to divide the country by facilitating Yankee penetration. In short, this modern “Holy Alliance”, that agrees with democratisation and tends toward the formation of Christian Democratic parties, is a new element of penetration at the disposal of imperialism.

The democratisation of Latin America, even under Yankee patronage, reflects distortedly the profound revolutionary process that is experienced in the world. It is preventive democratisation sponsored by the State Department to prevent the masses from achieving this political democracy by revolutionary methods. Thanks to this democratisation, imperialism can play with all the political and social sectors of our countries. And we must understand this is the new imperial policy of subjugation.

Even briefly, it is interesting to note the process followed by the anti-imperialist struggle in Latin America. Unlike India and China, which had large anti-imperialist movements, this phenomenon did not take place here and the explanation should be sought in the fact those countries endured for centuries the direct domination of imperialism while the Americas enjoyed relative freedom since it reached its political independence in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Naturally, Latin America has had friction with imperialism but they were all limited, circumstantial, for example, of the type the Argentine Confederation and the Anglo-French fleet had. The fact that until World War II there was not a dominant imperialism and that different powers disputed the continental hegemony, prevented the formation of homogeneous and permanent anti-imperialist fronts. Those that emerged had a circumstantial, unstable and even contradictory character.

The friction between the native ruling classes and imperialism had an episodic and concrete character, in relation to this or that aspect of economic penetration, or this or that difference of interests, also economic, which seldom became generalised to the political plane. And when this happened, it did not take the form of an anti-imperialist struggle with a program and defined objectives. Thus, the confrontations that took place at the end of the nineteenth century ([Leandro N.] Alem in Argentina, [Jose Manuel] Balmaceda in Chile, etc.), from the political point of view lacked a concrete, clear, and precise program and are rather demonstrations of different sectors led by the producing bourgeoisie — until then the most nationalist — which end in defeat and the subsequent agreement with imperialism.

The end of World War I shows a new variation in the anti-imperialist struggle: the struggle produced by university reform with the emergence of the petty bourgeoisie, confused in its ideology, heterogeneous.

It is a commonplace of the outdated left to glorify the industrial bourgeoisie as the champion of the anti-imperialist struggle for its supposed economic antagonism with imperialism. However, the frictions we observed after World War I took place in the tariff and customs fields and they have neither the breadth nor the national content sporadically given by the producing bourgeoisie.

The most serious confrontations between the countries of Latin America and imperialism will take place from World War II and later in the colonisation plan (OAS, bilateral pacts, etc.). The conjunction of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois sectors, supported by military nationalist factions, produces the most serious movements: Peron in Argentina, Vargas in Brazil, Ibañez in Chile, etc.

As far as the working class is concerned, the beholding of the Creole communist parties to the Kremlin’s bureaucracy makes the anti-imperialist struggle advocated by the latter conform to the vagaries of Soviet foreign policy, which could be clearly seen as of 1935. Before this date, it has empty content, stereotyped in cold formulas that do not consider at all the peculiarities of Latin America as a whole and even less the specific characteristics of each national problem. From this, we can conclude the participation of the working class in the anti-imperialist struggle of this period was of little importance.

World War II creates the change of opposing strong bourgeois and petty-bourgeois sectors to the policy of Yankee penetration and it also drags in this process the working class that marches like a caboose. The typical case is possibly Peronism, which fuses different classes in a solid front, but neither is the participation of the working class fully conscious, the bourgeoisie carefully avoids it, diverting it along the path of social demagoguery. In these conditions, the working class participates in the anti-imperialist struggle but as a plan of manoeuvres in the speculations of the bourgeoisie or the Peronist government.

Finally, we will point out the perspectives presented to the continent in its anti-imperialist struggle. The Yankee offensive will produce a reaction but with a new perspective: it will no longer be countries or isolated movements that will oppose it. Despite the inevitable setbacks, the peoples will gain consciousness of their necessary unity. The rich experience of recent years allows us to wait with confidence for the immediate future. The Latin American people in the short term will wake up to their great historical task, the fight against Yankee imperialism that, by far, is their main enemy.

The four stages of the Cuban revolution (June 1960)⁴

That Cuba is the vanguard of the Latin American revolution should not prevent us from analysing and criticising it carefully. It is a question of verifying its stages, its contradictions, and its dynamics to prevent it from going back or being crushed and to apply its experiences to other similar countries.

The Cuban and Bolivian revolutions have a characteristic that makes them unique in our continent: the destruction of the permanent army and the emergence of armed militias. In both countries, there was a dual power and a government precariously held by the armed people on the one hand, and on the other, by negotiations and agreements with bourgeois and imperialist sectors.

One important difference is that while the Bolivian revolution swept away the army in three days the Cuban revolution did it in a much longer and more complicated process.

In Cuba, what is most surprising is the lack of a program by the revolutionary leaders. The decrees of the government always respond to immediate needs and not to a plan outlined beforehand. This is a common character to all the nationalist leaders of the world but in Cuba, where the imperialist pressure is so strong, it manifests almost daily. What is tragic is that the deficiency of lacking a long-term known program is highlighted as a virtue by nationalist or bourgeois critics. With this same method, the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaders hide their true intentions and manoeuvres.

[Jean-Paul] Sartre, a keen observer of the Cuban revolution, points out: "In summary, I will say a movement which began in the form of a putsch saw its objectives disappear one after the other, discovering new and increasingly popular objectives, in a word, more revolutionary." We have nothing to object to this characterisation, except to complete it, specifying its stages, which until now are four, and venturing its future.

The first stage: the putsch

The first revolutionary stage was characterised by the putsch given [on 26 July 1953] by a group of young people from the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie, torn from the traditional parties. According to *Vision* magazine, Fidel was a young conservative leader who began a putsch with the complacency of important sectors of the oligarchy. Jules Dubois, the journalist agent of the monopolies, recounts the following anecdote:

⁴ Published in *Palabra Obrera's* magazine *Qué Hacer* [What's to be done] No 1 (13 June 1960). It was translated into English and published in *The Newsletter*, a newspaper on the left of the British Labour Party, edited by Gerry Healy of the International Committee of Orthodox Trotskyism.

“A representative group of citizens of Santiago honored me with a banquet at the Country Club. Besides Pepin Bosch there were Dr Manuel Urrutia, who was still a judge; Daniel Bucardo, the president of the Chamber of Commerce; the president of the University of Oriente; the Reverend Father Chavee, head of the Catholic Youth Movement; Fernando Ojeda, a leading coffee exporter; the presidents of the Rotary Club, Lions Club, medical association, bar association, civil institutions and other groups. We were the only people in the Club. Santiago had not celebrated any party, except those imposed by officialdom, since July 23, 1953. The table was oblong; at the end, there was an empty chair with a full place setting and a placard that had been carefully and intentionally placed there for my benefit. It said: ‘Reserved’. The toastmaster, Fernando de Ojeda, arose and addressed me: ‘One of our compatriots had planned to attend this dinner in his honor tonight’, he said, ‘but he sent his regrets that he could not make it. We can understand that and accept his excuses because he is engaged in an important mission for Cuba. His name is Fidel Castro.’” (Jules Dubois, *Fidel Castro: Rebel, Liberator, or Dictator?*, The New Merrill Company, Indianapolis-New York, 1959, p. 163-164.)

This semi-oligarchic formation of the revolutionary movement in its origins, and the fact the axis of its activity had been the province of Oriente, has the social explanation that the Batista regime relied more and more on the bourgeoisie of Havana (industrialists, smugglers, hotel and cabaret owners) in contrast to the big sugar and landowner bourgeoisie settled in the interior (the province of Santiago produces 60 percent of the sugar).

To this must be added the chronic crisis of the petty-bourgeoisie, given the lack of important industrial development.

During the first stage [after the landing with the Granma in December 1956], Fidel took refuge in the mountains and limited himself to provoking the regime to win popular support. During the first year, he did not succeed and ended with the failed attempt to unleash a general strike.

The putsch becomes a revolution

When during the early months of 1958 growing sectors of the urban petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry joined the Castro movement the situation changed qualitatively. It is important to point out that a large part of the masses that joined the anti-Batista movement created their own independent guerrillas. It is generally ignored that Batista fell by the action of several guerrilla fronts that Castro managed to coordinate only at the last moment. While Fidel in Las Villas had only 150 men, the Revolutionary Directorate had 1000 guerrillas and the Second Front of Escambray, 5000.

The violent and massive emergence of the guerrilla struggle has a final explanation in the worsening economic situation coupled with the chronic crisis of structure. The rise of the masses allowed Castro to resist, first, Batista’s offensive, and later to launch the counter-offensive through a single front of the guerrilla groups, which culminated in the revolution’s triumph.

Imperialism and the bosses divert the revolution

The stage limited between the defeat of Batista and the fall of President Urrutia is characterised by the offensive of the bourgeoisie that, having supported Castro, tries to stop the revolution and channel it into the moulds of a formal democracy that would allow it to wear down the mass movement. It is the stage of “National Democratic Unity”, in which the bourgeoisie and imperialism —represented by President Urrutia — and the working class march on the same bus; the first struggling to keep positions and the second, which had played a secondary role in the defeat of Batista, organising and advancing. Fidel was the balancing arbiter of the situation, supported, among the revolutionary classes, in the petty bourgeoisie.

The crisis is caused by the resignation of Urrutia [in July 1959] that forces Castro to appeal to the mass movement and especially to the workers' movement, which is already a powerful force, the main force of the revolutionary movement.

The revolution broadens

The logical splitting of the revolutionary national front inaugurated a new stage that has not yet been closed. The tone is given by the progressively revolutionary course and the class polarisation. While the entire bourgeoisie aligned against Castro, the government, pressured by the workers' movement and the international situation, adopts a series of progressive measures: they officially establish armed militias, deepen agrarian reform, resolutely confront Yankee imperialism within the framework of the Pan-American system, and denounce the Rio de Janeiro Pact; it comes to exercise control over the large foreign industrial companies and begin preparations for expropriations; the workers' union organises a congress in which an extraordinarily advanced program is announced, and so on and so forth.

But the stage has not yet been closed and imperialism prepares its counter-offensive. On the one hand, it isolates the revolution, using the puppet governments for that purpose, and on the other hand, it tries to start, as soon as possible, a civil war in Cuba.

The revolution and the world workers' movement

For its commercial importance, Cuba was one of the main countries in Latin America. This is the key to the magnitude and transcendence the Cuban revolutionary movement has, in this respect, contrary to the Bolivian revolution that passed almost unnoticed.

Embedded in the bosom of imperialism, Cuba has opened a gap for the world revolution to strike a mortal blow to the mould of world capitalism. The revolutionary spotlight shines a light, on the other hand, to the entire continent and the United States, on the defensive, resorts to any means to divert or restrain the masses.

Regarding the Latin American nationalist movements, Cuba has clearly divided them into two stages by accelerating the crisis of their traditional bourgeois and landowning leaderships, and by accelerating the emergence of new petty-bourgeois leaderships. These two stages are summarised in the figure of the two contemporary mass leaders: Peron and Fidel, the first, head of a movement of bourgeois ideology and leadership; the second representative of a leadership of petty-bourgeois extraction.

Different interpretations of the revolution

In general, the different interpretations of the Cuban revolution carried out in the media that support it reflect the social extraction of their authors. Nationalism, including Catholic nationalism, uses the Cuban experience as an example of the role played by the man-myth and the man-driver. For this sector, the people believe in Fidel and Fidel believes in the people, establishing an intuitive reaction between them. Castro must interpret popular sentiments with no previous scheme and modify his policy day by day, guided only by an intuitive "nationalist realism". This interpretation reflects a bourgeois conception of the revolution and the pyramidal organisation, with an undisputed head at the apex, is the political replica of the organisation of a capitalist enterprise headed by the boss.

In reality, this position serves to prevent the initiative and the independent, democratic and dynamic organisation of the workers.

The "leftist" conception — communist, socialist, liberal, the Cooke⁵ current of Peronism, etc., etc. — is as varied as the nuances of the social sectors of the modern middle class and the communist

⁵ **John William Cooke** (1919–1968) was a Peronist leader who, after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, became the ideologist for the filo-Castroist wing of Peronism. [Translator]

bureaucracy. All the leftists join to say the revolution should not be criticised and are for the “unity of all revolutionary sectors”, meaning the unity of the bosses, the middle class, the peasants, and the workers. However, they make formal objections to the revolution when it affects some of their particular interests. The communists, for example, criticise any attitude of friction with the USSR.

Another interpretation is what Trotskyism has done. We share the view and synthesise the opinion of the American newspaper *The Militant*, based on the ideology of permanent revolution:

a) Without a direct government of the working class, there is no permanent solution to the problems of any country. To achieve this government, a process of intransigent, anti-imperialist, and anti-bosses revolutionary struggle is indispensable.

b) The revolutionary process, once begun, cannot be stopped in the face of any exploitative economic or social structure.

These positions have been fully confirmed. Cuba and Bolivia are living examples of this revolutionary process that cannot stagnate, which advances or retreats, but cannot stop. In Cuba the revolution advances, in Bolivia it stopped and for the same reason it retreats; in Guatemala, the retreat led to disaster.

The future of the revolution

The world revolutionary experience compels us to be clear-cut: either the revolution extends permanently inside and outside or it dies. Internally, it must impose a true working-class government, supported by the peasantry and the urban middle class. For this, it is necessary to overcome the petty-bourgeois ambiguity of the current government and to hand over all the land to the peasants, to nationalise, and to plan the industry.

The external extension of the revolution will be achieved by making it understood, supported and developed by the Latin American workers’ movement, which for now only feels an intuitive admiration and sympathy toward it. The stage in which Cuba is “understood” by doctors and distinguished personalities without real influence in the mass movement must be overcome.

These objectives will be achieved if the revolution quickly surpasses its leadership full of doubts, hesitant and based on the unappealable leadership of Fidel Castro’s team, which oscillates between the pressures of the different sectors and lacks a revolutionary program.

The fifth stage of the Cuban revolution (August 1961)⁶

We said in our article [June 1960] that the revolution either extends or it dies. Fortunately, the revolution has followed an uninterrupted course and has excelled in the way we noted. When the revolutionary government nationalised without hesitation practically all the industry, the foreign trade, the land, and the banking system, at the end of 1960, Cuba was transformed into a new workers’ state, the first one of the Americas and the western world. With these measures, the Cuban government rose to an authentic revolutionary government, following the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky in Russia, and Durruti⁷ in Spain.

From then on, the definition of Fidel’s government must change, not only for the new stage but for the entire revolutionary process. The only fundamental deficiency in our previous article is found in the characterisation of the leadership of the Cuban revolution.

Buenos Aires, December 1961

Cuba, first socialist state?

The imperialist press systematically denounces Cuba as a “satellite of Russian imperialism”. Fidel himself and his press define themselves as “socialists”, or state that Cuba is a “popular

⁶ Published in the magazine *Que Hacer* No 3, August 1961.

⁷ **Buenaventura Durruti** (1896–1936) was an anarcho-syndicalist who played an influential role during Spanish Civil War. Durruti is remembered as a hero in the Anarchist movement. [Translator]

democracy”, i.e., with the same name as Russia and the countries of Eastern Europe define themselves. Everything seems to show that Cuba had the same structure as the regimes of Eastern Europe and Asia.

But together with the formal differences and coincidences noted, we must remember and explain that no country in the world, starting with Russia, is socialist. Many will wonder how important it is for the revolutionary struggle to make a careful analysis of countries and societies. For some, it is enough to know the main enemy of all peoples is imperialism and the Cuban revolution must be defended. Without being pedantic, we believe it is necessary to know with certainty where we are to know where we are going or should go.

Words, like all human events, have a dynamic and, consequently, a curious history. With use, words change their meaning; some of them from being scientific become popular, others which start by explaining or expressing noble situations or feelings prostitute themselves, or vice versa. A good example is the Brazilian word “quilombo” which at the beginning indicated a jungle community of freed slaves and, over time, its meaning in our country changed to a popular synonym of brothel. Another example, of our direct interest, is the term “socialism” which has changed its noble and scientific character and has been degraded with use. Therefore, before making a sociological assessment, we must begin by pointing out that the socialism to which we refer has nothing to do with the socialist scum of Repetto, Ghioldi, Frugoni,⁸ and their fellows, nor with Stalinist governments or states, which define themselves as socialists and are the negation of it. Marxists have called socialism the social regime without classes, without government, without bureaucracy, without police, without an army, where everyone works and enjoys a formidable level of life. This regime must be organised on a world scale, abolishing borders. Its citizens — there would be no classes — should have a standard of living two or three times higher than the best paid Yankee or Swiss worker. In figures, this means that each family ought to have two or more new cars, television, refrigerator, motorcycles, a magnificent house, etc. working at the most three hours, for four or five days a week.

This was the regime foreseen by the founders of the workers’ movement and Marxism, based on an organisation of the national and global economy without exploiters, transferring the means of production to the workers. Marx and Engels believed once the capitalists were eliminated from the management of the economy, making the factories go to the community, the material conditions for socialism would take place, thanks to the formidable advance of technology.

The facts, indirectly, have proven Marx and Engels right because if the economy of the advanced countries were organised scientifically, eliminating the unproductive bureaucracy, the capitalists, landowners and military, the standard of living of the workers would be the one dreamed by the teachers of Marxism. But just as the cold statistics show Marx was right and was not a crazy dreamer who posed the impossible, history has taken a detour: the peoples and countries that swept aside the capitalists are not the most advanced but the most backward, or are those which do not have the possibilities of achieving socialism in the short term because they still have to reach the economic-technological-cultural level of the advanced countries.

These backward peoples, by sweeping aside imperialism and the exploiters, begin the path toward socialism but have not reached the goal. It is something similar to building the most beautiful neighbourhood where a shanty town is located, lacking skilled labour, architects, and engineers. We can begin by demolishing the shanties, then laying the foundations, and later on building the skeletons but we will have to wait for the technicians to arrive to have the proper completion.

The backward peoples that have overthrown the capitalist regime are demolishing the shanties, laying the foundations and, exceptionally, beginning to structure the skeleton of the new socialist society. But it is still necessary to finish the foundations and the construction stage, unfortunately, it is far away.

⁸ **Nicolas Repetto** (1871–1965) and **Americo Ghioldi** (1899–1984) were leaders of the Argentine Social Democratic Party. **Emilio Frugoni** (1880–1969) was a founder and main leader of the Socialist Party of Uruguay. [Translator]

What goes from destroying the capitalist shanty town to finishing the beautiful socialist building, we call it “transitional stage” or “construction of socialism”. Modern Marxists, orthodox Trotskyists, we have called workers’ states — not socialist — those which are in the transitional stage. No country has yet achieved socialism and the USSR, which because of its economic-technological structure could be close, has a political and economic regime closer to capitalism than to socialism.

For these reasons, we must be aware Cuba is not a socialist country and has no chance of being so in the short term.

Of course, Cuba has ceased to be a colony or a capitalist state. That is the fabulous leap that Fidel’s revolution has imprinted on the country: it has swept politically, and economically, imperialism and capitalism.

The government and the economy are controlled by the people in arms, and thus a workers’ state has emerged, with the addition it is the first in the world not controlled by the communists and that has a government which, far from being formed by a clique or caste of bureaucrats living at the expense of the people, is composed of a self-sacrificing team which is the first in effort. It is a revolutionary leadership which may or may not make many mistakes but which has not been bureaucratised or has formed a caste that earns 30 or 40 times more than the workers as in the countries led by the Stalinist communists.

The liquidation of the old leaderships

The mass, workers’ and semi-colonial movements began their postwar revolutionary rise within the straitjacket of the old apparatuses and traditional leaders, established during the global revolutionary retreat. The English, Yankee, French, or Italian workers continue to support their old leaders or their disciples; and the national movements developed with the control of the bourgeois parties or armies, or of the old bureaucratic leadership of Mao Tse Tung. Nehru, Ferhat Abbas, Peron, Ibañez, and Vargas, were outstanding examples of this phenomenon.

The extreme youth of the Cuban leadership, or the youth of Lumumba, is the expression of a new world process; old bureaucratic or bourgeois leaderships are being replaced, running the same fate as Prio Socarras⁹ and Grau San Martin¹⁰ in Cuba.

This is the reason the Stalinist communists, who defend Cuba so much, have refused so far to define it as a workers’ or socialist state. This definition would give great prestige, among the communist militants themselves, to the leadership of Fidel. The cadres of the Communist Party would have a new reason to believe less and less in the Russian government as a solution to all the problems and to trust more and more in the revolutionary possibilities of the masses of each country.

The same is true in all Latin American mass movements, which begin to overcome their old leaderships and seek new leaders and organisations. The Cuban revolution has contributed to this world process.

Cuba is no one’s satellite but is the vanguard of our Latin American revolution. Because of its economic and military weakness, it accepts and seeks the support of the Eastern bloc of the workers’ countries, but this does not indicate a political subordination to the Stalinist directives. The Cuban leadership has repeated it to the point of exhaustion: our real solution will be “to transform the Andes into the Sierra Maestra”. When this begins to happen, the best communist and nationalist militants, as in Cuba, will disobey their old leaderships to join the new Latin American movement that, consciously or unconsciously — to a large extent this will depend on us —, will apply the theory and the program of the permanent revolution, enriched by the great Cuban revolution.

9 **Carlos Prio Socarras** (1903–1977) was President of Cuba from 1948 until he was deposed by a military coup led by Fulgencio Batista on 10 March 1952. [Translator]

10 **Ramon Grau San Martin** (1881–1969) was a Cuban physician and President of Cuba (1933–1934, 1944–1948). He was succeeded by his protégé, Carlos Prio Socarras. [Translator]

The need to specify the definition of the Cuban state (April 1961)¹¹

Does the Cuban workers' state have its own characteristics, or is it a mere replication of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe and Asia? The left gives us two types of answers. Official Stalinism, mired in a sea of doubt, tends to hide the socialist working-class character of Cuba. One of the forms of this concealment is its refusal to theoretically study the character of the Cuban revolution. The attitude is understandable, since Castroism, and previously the Hungarian revolution, dealt a rough blow to the theoretical shelf of Stalinism, sweeping away the program of peaceful coexistence, the bourgeois-democratic stage, and the parliamentary ways to arrive at socialism. They act as deaf-mutes and we can only settle the fact of the theoretical, political, and organisational crisis the Cuban revolution has caused in Stalinism,

Much more interesting is the theoretical position that Cuba is a "deformed workers state", structurally similar to China and other communist countries in Europe. Trotskyism has defined three classes of workers' states: the classic one of the party and Soviet democracy of Lenin and Trotsky; the degenerate Stalinist state with a totalitarian organisation, and the deformed state that, since its emergence, has all the characteristics of the Stalinist state without having gone through the democratic stage. In other words, it is born deformed. In this last category are included with certain reservations countries such as Yugoslavia and China that came to the revolution driven by the mass movement, unlike those that did it with the support of the Red Army and the USSR. According to some theorists, Cuba should be included, with the same reservations, in the group of deformed workers' states.

We believe the definition of Cuba has to start from the fact it is not ruled by a bureaucratic caste and its leadership is revolutionary and has liquidated the old apparatuses and the old leadership, as a national expression of a global process. But the issue is complicated because, obviously, in Cuba, there is no classic workers' and popular democracy but a revolutionary dictatorship that relies on the army and the agrarian communes of INRA [National Institute for Agrarian Reform] and on the permanent mobilisation of the peasants and workers. This is a consequence of the specific character of the Cuban revolution, which lives through the stage of primitive socialist accumulation with the constant danger of armed counter-revolution and imperialist intervention. On the other hand, the industrial proletariat is just emerging and it is very difficult now for it to rise to the political level of its own dictatorship. Added to this is a subjective fact: the Stalinist treachery prevented the emergence, before the revolution, of a revolutionary Marxist party. The democratic and workers' dictatorship is then replaced by the dictatorship of the single party, as a prior political stage.

We believe as long as a privileged ruling caste does not emerge in Cuba, and while the government relies on the constant mobilisation of the working people to defeat the counter-revolution and to rise in the path of socialism, the conquering of the dictatorship of the proletariat is an inevitable and natural process that will not mean any struggle, since the revolutionary government itself is a guarantee of it. Frustrations and obstacles may come, not from the revolutionary government but from the bureaucracy that can be formed, from the economic situation, from the degree of maturity and development of the proletariat, and from the situation of the counter-revolutionary revolution in Cuba, in Latin America and the world. As these factors are combined favourably, the process toward workers' democracy will be unstoppable. Meanwhile, Cuba is a workers' state in transition, fluid and dynamic, which tends toward workers' democracy it has not yet been able to reach because there are no objective and subjective conditions.

The importance of the definition lies in the fact it allows us to help fulfil the stages that lead to workers' democracy in Cuba. It would be a crime not to understand, in the name of workers' democracy, that stages are necessary to reach it. It would be tantamount to attacking the magnificent, honest, and revolutionary trade union leadership of an industrial branch in formation with rural workers and newly unionised, accusing it of failing to get the union to immediately incorporate the newly arrived workers into its democratic life and who, on the other hand, are very

¹¹ Summary of the transcription of a recording of the speech by the author in the Third National Congress of *Palabra Obrera*, in April 1961, debating the position of the deformation of the Cuban workers' state.

happy with their new situation. Time to time! These workers can only be actively incorporated into union life when they are assimilated to their new class and customs. But if on top, the bosses and imperialism mercilessly attack the union and its young leadership, the incorporation should be done quadrupling the care and precautions.

The most important step to facilitate the objective conditions for workers' democracy is to develop the revolution in Latin America, which will accelerate the economic-cultural process of primitive socialist accumulation and the danger of long-term armed intervention will be removed (not the immediate danger, it is understood).

CHAPTER IV

The revolution shakes the foundations of Latin America

With the Cuban revolution, Latin America went over the threshold of a revolutionary process that will probably culminate with the establishment of peasant and popular workers' governments in the short term. In exact terms, this overall process is at a pre-revolutionary level, with the masses on the rise and the sepyo governments in crisis. Although the next task is to liquidate those governments, in certain countries this cannot be achieved right now.

The Cuban revolution, as the vanguard of this process, has shaken the foundations of the continent, to such an extent that, from now on, it will be an obligatory reference for those who study history, politics, class struggle, culture, or Latin American art. In any case, it will be necessary to say "before and after the Cuban revolution", just as Asians say "before and after the Chinese revolution" or the history of the world is divided into the period before and after the Russian revolution.

An unsuspecting observer of the Latin American revolution can deviate from its central axis by observing the multitude of sub-phenomena that emerge and acquire their own dynamics. Future historians will have to trace these ramifications. Instead, the mission of the current revolutionaries is to get to the bottom of it and find the decisive factors for our work. Thus, we dare to distinguish five phenomena derived from the revolutionary process opened by Cuba, and which, following their own dynamics, react to it.

1) A change in the relationship of forces between imperialism, the masses and Latin American countries

The new relationship of forces has become so favourable to the masses that the immediate historical perspective of achieving Latin American unity, through a federation of workers' states, is on the agenda.

The new situation is reflected, distortedly, in the cracks opened in the colonial bloc dominated by the United States and in the outlines of independent positions adopted by some sepyo governments.

The economic conference of Punta del Este [in March of 1961] showed not only that Che Guevara is a magnificent speaker but that the diplomatic position of the four great powers of the south is no longer of absolute servility toward the Department of State. An Argentine or Chilean observer of this new reality risks not seeing it or not valuing it because their angle of vision is marred by the fact these countries were traditionally bastions of the anti-Yankee struggle and today have inverted their positions after their own "liberating revolutions". Whoever puts on Argentine or Chilean glasses would not understand that the overall process points to the collapse of the United States colonial bloc, even though those two countries are more tied to the Yankee truck than before.

Historically, the pillars of US diplomacy were Brazil and Uruguay to the south and Mexico and Cuba to the centre. Through these four countries, the United States totally dominated the Pan-American conferences since 1940 despite sporadic resistance offered by Guatemala, Argentina, and Chile. Reality now is that, of those four spearheads handled by the State Department, Cuba freed itself by turning against it; Uruguay has its edge significantly dented and demands conditions for its servitude and Mexico and Brazil have escaped direct control, outlining neutralist positions, especially Brazil which managed to set a foot on the neutral countries bloc.

Peru is now the springboard through which the Yankee policy is projected toward the continent. But the unity of the empire has been weakened and broken, as demonstrated by the fact the United States does not achieve joint Latin American support to implement aggressive measures against Cuba.

These phenomena are a consequence — direct or indirect — of the Cuban revolution. Our countries through the prostituted way of the sepyo governments, that blackmail and negotiate but ultimately serve imperialism, are much more independent of the Department of State than before. The relationship of forces has become much more favourable to the masses and the Latin American countries. If we are still tightly dominated economically, politically and militarily — although not completely —, it is because the governments are in the hands of the Latin American oligarchy, encrusted to imperialism.

2) A change in the relationship of forces between the masses and the native oligarchies

The relationship of forces has become so favourable to the masses against the oligarchies and their governments that it has suggested, as the immediate current task, the overthrow of the same and their revolutionary replacement by workers'-peasants' or workers'-popular governments.

The mass movement has leapt from the stage of economic gains, within the regime, to the stage of conquering of governments. This leap, in activity and in consciousness, is one of the most important Cuban consequences.

The advance of the masses is undoing the imperialist manoeuvre to channel the revolutionary rise toward “democratic” regimes like Frondizi, Prado, Betancourt, and Velasco Ibarra.¹ The wind and the tide of the revolutionary rise are defeating the tactics of propping up democratic fictions and those governments are falling into a situation with no economic-political exit. The best example is two key countries in the Central and South American revolutions: Santo Domingo and Brazil. Brazil, with the resignation of Quadros,² has entered a quagmire and Santo Domingo, where the class struggle is being fought on a tightrope from which anyone can fall, is the culmination of a process that also crossed Guatemala, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Paraguay, Venezuela, and Argentina.

Argentina, Venezuela, Guatemala, and Chile live in crisis with a mass movement, which, defeated, retakes the offensive with new vigour and methods against the governments, which are discredited to the limit. And this is the panorama of the most stable countries...

Mexico — which in the last two decades was, along with Uruguay, a model of pro-imperialist order — begins to stir around the great problems the masses endure. And in the remaining countries, the situation is even more critical. In Colombia and Paraguay, there are ready guerrillas, which in the first case begin to be led by intellectuals, which gives them a much more explosive character and more precise and national objectives. Brazil and Peru are shaken by an impressive process of peasant unionisation, guerrilla attempts and perspectives, and a great strengthening of

1 **Arturo Frondizi** (1908–1995) was President of Argentina in 1958-1962. **Manuel Prado** (1889–1967) was President of Peru in 1956-1962. **Romulo Betancourt** (1908-1981) was President of Venezuela, for the second time, in 1959–1964. **Jose Maria Velasco Ibarra** (1893–1979) was five times President of Ecuador, including 1960–1961. [Translator]

2 **Jânio Quadros** (1917–1992) was President of Brazil from January to August 1961. [Translator]

the workers' movement, circumstances that transform them into the meridian of the revolutionary process.

This panoramic view of the continent shows us the intensity of the revolutionary rise — unprecedented in the postwar period — that confronts sepy governments in crisis riding on the backs of an oligarchy also in crisis.

3) Acceleration of Yankee imperialism's crisis

The crisis of imperialism is a fact admitted by the own imperialists. Started before the Cuban Revolution by the impact of the colonial revolutions and the prodigious technological-military advances of the USSR, it has now become considerably sharper. Cuba explodes in the midst of the imperialist crisis, accelerating it and moving it to a higher phase and entering the American revolutionary process as a stage in which the Latin American countries — direct colonies of the United States — begin their second independence.

The American revolution rides on two main events: the rise of the black movement as a direct reflection of the revolution in Africa, with its tendency to take a petty-bourgeois, more plebeian leadership (arising from the intelligentsia and the student body) in replacement of the black bourgeoisie of the north that controlled the movement; and on a process of clarification and regrouping of the student and intellectual vanguard, which are not decisive but which matter as a superstructural symptom of the workers' and peasants' process, especially black.

4) The crisis of the old nationalist parties and the emergence of a new Latin American movement

Before the Cuban revolution, the mass nationalist movements had a program and a method, either putschist or electoral bourgeois, narrowly nationalist, and at best petty-bourgeois propagandist. Peronism, Vargasism,³ MNR,⁴ the Cuban Orthodox Party, etc., arrived at government through military coups or elections, through an intense propaganda campaign, and the nationalist demands they raised were limited to the borders of the country. At the most, in the case of the most progressive, they attempted a united front of several countries to blackmail imperialism.

The Cuban revolution has definitively eliminated the programmatic and methodological characteristics of the old movements, overcoming them before the eyes of the masses. It has swept with putschism and bourgeois electoralism, petty-bourgeois propagandism, and provincial nationalism.

Today, the nationalist movement is Latin American and is aware it is a joint movement. The Cuban leadership is clairvoyant about it and behaves as a member of a process rather continental than Cuban. The reaction has also understood this, baptising the new movement with the appropriate name of Fidelism. This implies a great step forward, although, of course, it is not exempt from its leadership to commit opportunistic or adventurous errors, or that important bourgeois sectors flirt with it and try to use it against imperialism. But in its bosom, all the conditions are provided so that, in the course of its structuring and development, opportunist, petty-bourgeois, and bourgeois tendencies may be swept away.

3 Followers of *Getulio Vargas* (1882–1954), President of Brazil, first as a dictator, from 1930 to 1945, and in a democratically elected term from 1951 until his suicide in 1954. He favoured nationalism, industrialisation, centralisation of the economy, measures which would improve the popular standard of living, and class conciliation. For the latter, Vargas won the nickname “The Father of the Poor”. [Translator]

4 MNR: Nationalist Revolutionary Movement, Bolivian bourgeois party. [Translator]

5) Acceleration of the crisis of the communist parties

The Cuban revolution has broken the propaganda-emotional monopoly the communist parties and Stalinism had of the different world revolutionary victories. They had controlled the revolutions and this circumstance weighed more than all the political and historical argumentative demonstrations that these parties were a brake that prevented, diverted, or postponed the majority of the world revolutionary processes at the service of a conservative caste mounted on the Soviet state.

Cuba is the first victory of the masses that Stalinism cannot usufruct, and its methods, that led it to victory, have dealt a harsh blow to parliamentary methods to reach socialism, proposed by Stalinism worldwide and especially in Latin America and Cuba.

Currently no honest communist militant can avoid considering the following question, which by its very formulation casts doubt on the Stalinist (i.e., Soviet bureaucratic) conception of the revolution: what is more important, the development of Latin American processes, with the Cuban methods, or the strengthening of the USSR through the official policy applied in Latin America of coexistence with imperialism? Even those militants who try to synthesise both tasks cannot help wondering which of the two is essential, and the best pronounce themselves for the development of the Latin American revolution, by which they stop being disciplined militants of Stalinism to begin to be militants of the world revolution.

The historical crisis of Stalinism has a new content, which many do not yet notice, believing the Cuban revolution has strengthened it or will strengthen it. Far from this, it has dealt Stalinism a brutal blow, proposing, in practice, the need to execute revolutionary tasks and not those dictated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR. It is a true crisis process, with ups and downs, but with the shown orientation, and which is easy to notice in the controversy that exists between the communist parties, and internally in each one of them. There is a radical division between the communist parties of South America and those of Central America. The latter are close to revolutionary positions in their cadres and leading sectors (among them is the Cuban Popular Socialist Party) and differ from the South American parties, which are much more bureaucratic (and have felt considerably less the impact of the Cuban revolution). This is the case of the parties in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. It is common to find in international conferences the militants and delegates of the different communist parties publicly argue about the iron question posed by the revolution.

The current stage of the revolution

We have described the most important changes which have taken place because of the revolution. We need to synthesise them to project the movie of the new continental situation, i.e., to set the revolutionary and historical stage in which we have entered.

Even before Fidel's victory, a new stage had opened in the continent: the stage of representative democracy and formal democratic freedoms. This stage has been a consequence of found phenomena, the main one of which is a change in the policy of the State Department, trying to promote a democratic revolution from above, to appease the masses and at the same time guarantee their interests.

The change of Yankee policy, which had begun before the Cuban victory, is a product of the imperialist fear of the advance of the world revolution. It tries to give to the masses the cheapest demands, which do not affect their economic and political interests, before the masses take over them as it happened in Cuba, liquidating imperialism. In this, the US has learned from its teacher, British imperialism. Let's recall that when the colonial revolution in Asia began, Britain hastened to negotiate concessions to the nationalist movement and to grant independence before the same were taken with revolutionary methods. In this way, it was able to preserve its economic influence

and ensure that important bourgeois and petty-bourgeois sectors collaborated with the new democratic formulas of imperialist domination.

The Yankees try to apply a similar policy in Latin America. Instead of the political independence granted by the British, they grant representative democracy by combining it with colonial political-economic demands at the same time. We need to understand this attitude of American imperialism in order to establish the current stage of the Latin American revolution, and in consequence, the tasks to be carried out.

But before establishing this characterisation, we need to make a brief methodological consideration. The Russian revolutionaries studied the stages of contemporary revolutionary processes, applying the pattern of the stages of the Russian revolution. Those stages (democratic revolution of February, dual power, days of July, October revolution, agrarian and urban revolution, civil war) can be grouped into three major periods:

1) **POLITICAL**: including the February revolution, the dual power and the days of July, up to the October revolution.

2) **ECONOMIC**: including the agrarian revolution and the socialist revolution of the urban economy.

3) **MILITARY**: including the civil war.

Trotsky, based on this Russian scheme, and carefully analysing the specific characteristics, studied the German, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, and French revolutions. In all of them, he noted a stage of democratic initiation (February revolution), predicted the inevitability of the July days and the October revolution, as a subsequent consequence.

With this method (comparison and specific analysis) the stage of a revolutionary process can be set correctly; the tasks depend on this stage. Thus, from a mischaracterisation of the stage, tasks can arise that frustrate or abort the revolution. Trotsky, with this method, taught how to fight against sectarians and opportunists. The sectarians, who hysterically and regardless of the current stage, proposed “all power to the Soviets”, Trotsky refuted by clarifying about the needs and possibilities of the stage. Thus, for example, the Spanish masses, before the fall of the king, did not have the possibility or the need to create soviets or to develop revolutionary class tasks but had a much more modest and effective task: to demolish the monarchy and call a constituent assembly, i.e., to carry out the February revolution. As we can see, the revolutionary victory in Russia did not exempt the Spanish masses from making their democratic revolution but rather it raised it with imperative urgency. And from the same theoretical trench, Trotsky fought opportunism: understanding the stage of the revolutionary process. Once this was established, and any opportunistic or sectarian deviation prevented, his method was to promote a revolutionary mobilisation of the masses to fulfil it, knowing that once done, the process would not be interrupted there, but it continued in permanence until the socialist revolution.

Today and here, we can see how valuable these teachings of the Russian revolutionaries are, whose method must also be applied in our situation.

The stages of the Cuban revolution must be studied carefully since in each country of the continent the process will be carried out very similarly. In this sense, we can say the 26th of July Movement gives the pattern of a Latin American stage of the mass movement and its tasks. It is the western version of the February revolution. The 26th of July [Movement] and its guerrilla method is a revolutionary democratic movement in a struggle against the sepyo government of its country. And the fact in Cuba this movement has triumphed and surpassed the stage initiating the socialist accumulation does not make the other countries of the continent skip the democratic stage, but — as in the Spanish example — it poses it with peremptory character and in distorted form.

In all countries, the stage of the 26th of July Movement is already being lived, the struggle against the selling out governments and armies and of democratic gains, but with special characteristics since formal democracy and democratic bourgeois governments are not only achievements of the masses that want to start with revolutionary methods, but are also goals to

achieve by the new policy of imperialism. This is the specific way in which the democratic stage (or February, or 26th of July) takes place in Latin America. If the Cuban revolution had to face a brutal dictatorship like Batista's, elsewhere on the continent the revolutionary process confronts governments that, because of demands of imperialism, try to be democratic-representative. We can say Latin America lives the revolutionary stage of February but started and controlled from above by imperialism. Cuba, instead, began the democratic revolution from below and deepened the process from the seizure of power and the formal conquests to the realisation of the substantive democratic gains: the agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution. Latin America is also already living this stage of a substantive democratic revolution, which in some countries is manifested with outlines of dual power in the struggle for the agrarian revolution, which has begun in Peru, Colombia and Brazil, not only with peasant unions and guerrillas but with the occupation of land ignoring government power.

With these two concepts, we can finish defining the current stage: we live a combined process of formal democratic freedoms granted from above, and another process, much more revolutionary and profound, substantively democratic, the agrarian revolution and the outbreaks of dual power (land occupation). Both processes are highly positive and revolutionary, not opposed but combined although the oligarchy and imperialism try to stop one using the other.

We had written about this concept over a year ago, when now events have confirmed it. Brazil, Ecuador, and Colombia show the revolutionary rise is part of the democratic stage of the revolution. Besides Peru, these three countries are the ones that live in a more acute revolutionary situation. Precisely, in them, the peasant and democratic mobilisation is more intense. In Brazil and Ecuador, the formal democratic mobilisation by the government regime was one step away from causing a civil war. In Peru, the slogans that are leading us to the revolution are "land and vote for the peasant", which has nothing of working-class and everything of bourgeois-democratic.

Once the stage is set, we must alert against the danger of making a fetish, tending to remain indefinitely in it. Cuba and its magnificent revolutionary leadership made a leap from the democratic to the socialist revolution and this is of great importance for the dynamics of the democratic stage of the continent, which can be abbreviated by two combined reasons: the experience of the masses whose Cuban vanguard has already gone to a higher level, and the experience of the Latin American revolutionary vanguard. Neither the hysteria of the sectarians nor the easy optimism of many will make the democratic stage be dodged or avoided. On the contrary, the Cuban revolution has placed on the agenda the tasks of February of the Russian calendar or the objectives of 26th of July of the Latin American calendar. If we understand it, we will accelerate its compliance.

CHAPTER V

The experience of Cuba and the Latin American masses

It is now a matter of establishing by what paths, through what slogans and methods, the Latin American revolution will come to power.

In this regard, the world revolutionary history is an inexhaustible source of teachings and suggestions. Our best source of experiences to elaborate the revolutionary program of the Latin American masses, Cuba — we must not forget it — is part of the process started by the Russian revolution. So the experiences of all revolutions are of fundamental importance. That is our goal: to base ourselves on previous experiences to solve the problem that today concerns us Latin American revolutionists.

The theory and the program of the Permanent Revolution

In his attack on Stalin, the voice of Khrushchev has acted, timidly, as an agent of history; timidly, because the Russian ruler has gone halfway there. He cannot, as a representative of the Soviet bureaucracy, reach the end. And the end cannot be other than to recognise that Trotsky was right with his theory and program of permanent revolution.

For decades the world movement has argued about the permanent revolution, which holds the revolutionary process is global and cannot stop in a country and, besides, it is permanent, even if it begins by fulfilling minimal, democratic, or workers' tasks. Stalinism, instead, asserts the revolution is national and only national and the democratic revolution is a long-term stage in the backward countries, which must be fulfilled before moving on to the socialist stage. In the polemic, Stalinism came to assert the Trotskyist position ignores the agrarian, democratic, or nationalist revolution and only aspires to a single socialist world revolution. This is a deformation since the permanent revolution supports something much simpler: revolutions are combined between different countries, and within a country, from stage to stage so that there are no internal or external borders. Inside, they combine the agrarian and democratic revolution with the nationalist and socialist revolution. Outside, they combine from country to country and region to region, so there is no revolution in isolated China but a revolution that opens a process in Asia, triumphs in half Indochina and Korea, and causes the rise of the Japanese masses; there is no Egyptian nationalist revolution but an Arab revolution, whose apex, today, is Algeria; etc., etc., And the opposite example is no less symptomatic: there is no retreat of the French masses but throughout Western Europe.

When the Chinese revolution overthrows Chang Kai-shek, it is satisfied with a timid agrarian reform but five years later expropriates landowners and industrialists and begins an experience of agrarian communes. And the same happens in Cuba, in the short span of a year: from a democratic revolution, almost pure, to agrarian and socialist revolution. And also in Indochina and Korea ... in all cases there is a permanent, uninterrupted progression of the stages.

Unfortunately, the leaderships of the mass movements have not, yet, risen to the understanding of this theory and program, which, synthesising the revolutionary experiences of classical Marxism, correctly predicted the general course of contemporary revolutions. But this ignorance is as unfortunate as the frequent sectarian prostitution of the permanent revolution of those who try to “simplify” the revolutions, believing there is a single program, a single stage and a single revolution directly international and socialist, everywhere. Those who do so ignore the fact the revolution is permanent but it starts from the most general and primary tasks felt by the masses.

Of course, life has brought to light the gaps, omissions, and mistakes of the program of permanent revolution. In the next chapter, we will stop on this. Now we want to study the detail of the application of the permanent revolution in the continent, i.e., the general and primary tasks from which the revolutionary process starts, which, as we know, will not stop.

The Cuban revolution demands to make the democratic revolution

The most important tasks faced by the masses since the Cuban revolution are democratic. This revolution did not prevent these tasks for the continent but transformed them from historical, in immediate and pedestrian. We affirm it categorically because there is a risk of believing that because Cuba, following the logic of permanent revolution, is engaged in socialist tasks, in the rest of the countries the same thing happens. None of that. Cuba lowered democratic tasks from the shelf of history and placed them around the corner for its immediate political solution, in all Latin American countries.

But we need to clarify what we mean by democratic tasks because there are different interpretations of them. Thus, the communist parties have been the most conspicuous exponents of democratic unions, with which we have disagreed almost constantly. The communist parties, under the mantle of a formally correct approach — “we must make the democratic revolution” —, made the same mistake as the sectarians who ignore these tasks but for inverse reasons. The sectarians ignore the democratic stage in the name of the revolutionary mobilisation of the proletariat, and the Stalinists hinder the revolutionary mobilisation in the name of the democratic stage. The correction must be found in the synthesis: to fulfil the democratic tasks through the method of the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses.

But not only do we differentiate ourselves from the communist parties by differences of the method to address the democratic tasks but, under this label, we understand different things. They consider democratic a government or a movement that wants to trade with the Soviet Union and grants legality to the communist party, as a commercial representative of the former. We understand by the democratic revolution a complex economic-political-social process, which revolves around a simple social axis: they are the mobilisations and tasks that concern the majority of the people (and not a section of the same as the working class). Therefore, the great democratic tasks are of two types: political and economic. The first refers to the freedoms and democratic demands (right to vote, legality to parties and candidates, political independence in the colonies and semi-colonies, constituent assembly, etc.) and the second has to do with the agrarian problem, the economic independence in the subjugated countries, and with urban reform. National independence, therefore, is an economic-political problem.

Reformist or bourgeois tendencies attach importance to political problems, ignoring those that relate to the economic structure of society. The revolutionaries, on the other hand, give principal importance to the structural democratic tasks (agrarian revolution, urban reform, national independence) without ignoring the political tasks, given the fulfilment of these makes possible the achievement of the others.

In summary, under the common denomination of the democratic revolution we understand four major general tasks for Latin America:

- 1) Political-democratic tasks.
- 2) Agrarian revolution.
- 3) Urban reform.
- 4) National independence.

If we study the Cuban revolution, we see that urban reform was achieved (solution of the housing problem) only after the victory. We believe this will be the general dynamic, so urban reform will be an important engine, but not the main one, in the first stage of the permanent revolution. If we also eliminate the political problems — which are fundamental in the formal development of the democratic revolution, and possibly the main axis in all countries — we have two major tasks left: the agrarian revolution and national independence. We can say the first one is the engine toward the north of South America. On the other hand, in the extreme south, (Sao Paulo, Rio Grande, Uruguay, Argentina, and Chile) the agrarian problem has less importance and is combined in another way with the struggle for national independence and other democratic tasks.

Classes and regions in the revolutionary process

The democratic tasks, as we have said, involve all the people. This means that three fundamental classes take part in it: workers, peasants, and urban middle class (modern and pre-capitalist). The first question to tempt us is: which of them will head the fight?

The Cuban revolution confirmed in our continent something that had already been shown by the Asian revolutions: the dogma the only class that can fulfil the democratic tasks is the working class is false. Sectors of the urban middle class and the peasantry are, at times, the revolutionary leaders. For now, we just settle this and, in the next chapter, we will analyse it in its theoretical derivations.

But just as those revolutions broke a false schema, because of interpretive errors, they can impose another, also wrong: that the peasantry is the only leader of the revolution. In Latin America, there is a definite example against this erroneous generalisation: the fabulous Bolivian revolution, led by the proletariat. History, which has given a denial to the theory that the proletariat is the revolutionary leadership in the backward countries, has confirmed that on an international and historical scale (within the own national framework) the working class remains the only leader of the permanent revolution. Only the working class can fulfil the transition to socialism and, therefore, the transitional tasks, although initially may be carried by other classes, remain tasks of the working class.

This complicates the issues of any revolutionary tendency since it cannot fail to be working class or revolutionary in its program and methods, even if circumstances force it to work essentially on non-working classes. We have posed two correlative issues: the first is the combination of the three popular classes in the revolution; the other, is the policy and strategy of the revolutionary organisations to defend the general interests of the working class in the immediate process of the revolution. Regarding the first, we can say in the countries and regions of the south the working class gains greater importance. Greater and not decisive because the urban middle class (or the more backward regions instead of the cities) at a given moment can be the vanguard. In any case, the tendency in these countries points toward the working class. The opposite happens in the north. Regarding the second issue, the general outcome is clear: every revolutionary organisation must continue to work on the working class and not even for a moment should break its links with it but neither should worship it nor give it its essential work. The situation of each country will indicate the distribution of forces in each stage. The important thing is that in the combination of tasks we have a broad vision, as a whole, of the situation of the country. The most serious mistake would be to have a limited workerist vision of the perspectives and work. The example is the Cuban revolution, in whose collection of anecdotes there is a well-known discussion between a union

leader and several revolutionary militants who asked him about his position when he arrived in Cuba on 26 July. The union leader, without much hesitation, replied: “I continued to fight for the political independence of the workers’ movement”. The revolutionaries laughed and responded categorically: “We had to have turned our best to help the 26th of July Movement.” That leader teaches us with his tragic error not to make a fetish of the workers’ movement.

Overthrow sepyo governments by imposing workers’, peasants’ and popular governments

The rise of the Latin American masses puts on the agenda a fundamental, basic slogan, axis of the revolutionary process in each country: to overthrow the governments devoted to imperialism and replace them with revolutionary governments. It can be a mediate or immediate task — it depends on the country — but it is raised now. In this sense, mediate means one, two or three years. The main difficulties lie in the fact imperialism and the governments know of the danger they are facing and have changed their tactics. They will no longer repeat Batista’s policy, nor will imperialism adopt a semi-abstentionist position, as at the beginning of the Cuban revolution. With Eisenhower a campaign of formal democratisation began in the Latin American colonies, abandoning the policy of the dictators and fostering the emergence of “democratic” parliamentary governments. The personal dictatorial regimes had facilitated the colonial revolutions and the State Department concluded it was preferable an agreement with the parties of the parliamentary majorities and not with the personal dictatorships, which, when they fell, dragged their pacts with the United States. The change was evidenced by the aforementioned semi-abstentionist tactic between Fidel and Batista but always from a narrow margin: when a country wanted to use republican institutions to achieve national independence, it was massacred: e.g., Guatemala.

Kennedy advanced further in this diplomatic line, trying to extend it to the economic field and in parallel reinforcing the real guarantees of Yankee domination, transforming the national armies into mere appendices of the Pentagon. He has applied the system of the large enterprise with branches in all spheres: not only are there General Motors or King Ranch branches but also of the Pentagon, which gathers its local managers in the command of the Inter-American Defense Board.

Currently, the Latin American masses are facing the formally democratic governments and the high commands of the armed forces, dependent on the Pentagon. It is important to underline this new role of the armed forces (mainly army and navy) because for many years they were a bourgeois-nationalist factor, which aspired to the aggrandizement of the country at the expense of imperialism or neighbouring countries. With the armed forces has happened something similar to the Catholic Church, which, from an old enemy, has become a diligent Celestina¹ and a most important political agent at the service of the State Department; and it fulfils its new servitude with its proverbial astuteness and intelligence.

Despite their frequent friction, the two enemies of the masses, governments and armed forces, are closely linked. The ones who truly hold up the regime are the high commands of the armed forces, which is why they are the main enemy. Combating them by propaganda, agitation, and action is the main revolutionary task of this moment and the one task which leads us hand in hand to the defeat of the sepyo governments.

We point so insistently to the main task, the fight against the armed forces, because the Castroist press and organisations do not give it permanent importance, other than in the countries where there are guerrillas. And the armed forces are fought not only with guerrillas but by unmasking them and using the contradictions of the country to undermine their strength. These

1 The *Comedy of Calisto and Melibea*, known in Spain as *La Celestina*, is a work by Fernando de Rojas published in 1499. The story tells of a bachelor, Calisto, who uses the old procuress Celestina to start an affair with Melibea, an unmarried girl kept in seclusion by her parents. The name Celestina has become synonymous with “procuress” in Spanish, especially an older woman used to further an illicit affair. [Translator]

contradictions are those of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois sectors, replicated in the clashes between governments and the armed forces and in the internal crisis of the armed institution. All these contradictions show the magnitude of the crisis experienced by the countries. Our revolutionary duty is to accelerate them to the maximum while preparing the frontal attack against the central commands of the armed forces.

A more complex and subtle struggle must be waged against institutional governments, given their formally democratic nature. The best way to defeat them is to liquidate the current structure of the armed forces. For this, if needed, we must defend those governments against the pressure or attack of the armed forces, developing at the same time the democratic tasks and slogans of substance and form to sharpen the contradiction between the false formal structures and the true democratic revolution. The slogans “land right now”, “right to vote for all the people”, “constituent assembly”, and “legality for all the parties” will show the real role of the governments and the armed forces.

Oppose the plan of Alliance for Progress with the Federation of Latin American states

Our countries are legally dominated by the sepyo institutional governments and, in fact, by the armed forces. On a continental scale by the OAS and, in addition, imperialism prepares its plan to perpetuate domination through the regional market and the Alliance for Progress.

The regional market would provide Yankee companies and their national satellites with a huge market that would justify their investments. And for its part, the Alliance tries some structural modifications to expand the domestic market and develop a stable middle class, the political clientele of the sepyo governments.

The plan, which should not be underestimated, runs up against some drawbacks: the internal contradictions of imperialism and the dynamics of financial capital (which invests to suck up our economies) and the existence of important native bourgeois sectors, who live off from the current narrowness of the markets (what would be of the Argentine and Brazilian vintners, of the Chilean cattle ranchers or of the Argentine sugar producers with a regional market?).

Pulled and pushed by these contradictions, the regional market and the Alliance for Progress walk worse than a pilgrim. Meanwhile, the masses remain submerged in illiteracy, hunger, unemployment, lack of housing...

To the Yankee plan, we must oppose the old unfulfilled dream of Martí, San Martín, and Bolívar: Latin American unity.

Each of our countries, after more than 100 years of independent life, has acquired its own physiognomy, which we cannot ignore. It's not about losing it. Therefore the road to unity is the Federation of Latin American states, which, at a minimum, should have a structure and a government similar to those of Cuba because only governments with the courage to expropriate landowners will meet the conditions to promote Latin American unity. And as long as this is achieved, we have an immediate goal: each country that overthrows its sepyo government and starts the revolutionary path must unite federatively with Cuba.

The minimum and maximum tasks

The revolutionary rise is manifested in the fact there are increasing numbers of population groups that join the general struggle for their minimal demands. Every revolution underway has been characterised by this and is normal in a rising revolutionary process, in which traditionally more neglected sectors are awakened to pay tribute to history, demanding, for the first time, their small primary claim.

But this situation can lead us to a wrong conclusion. When we see the forgotten peasant commune demanding, for the first time, a channel for irrigation, we can deduce there are posed minimum, economic, union tasks of a general nature; and nothing further from reality. The multitude of small claims made by the most submerged sectors once added together are impossible to solve by the regime and they put at stake the political power of the bourgeoisie. We are seeing this because together with the multitude of demands the dual power experience is developing: the peasants take land led by their unions, disobeying the bourgeois power. This shows a qualitatively new situation where the seizure of power is posed, developing the sprouts of dual power until the country is controlled.

But another serious danger is stalking us: that, convinced the problem of power is raised, we dissolve the immediate problems in a correct but general and abstract conclusion. Not for a minute should we abandon the peasant who demands water because with this insignificant request, added to similar thousands, the problem of power is being raised concretely, which some peasants have already overcome, by occupying the land.

This backward peasant, who only knows about the problem of his irrigation, will be convinced of the need to change the government and take the land (develop dual power) to the beat of the concrete experience and the exchange of experiences with other communes that come from a similar problem.

From the multiplicity of minimal struggles and outbreaks of peasant power to the great task of the conquest of power there is a ladder of successive experiences (transitional program) that range from the intransigent and loyal struggle for the minimum demands to the defeat of the armies and sepo government.

The armed struggle, the guerrillas, and the insurrection

The peasantry is leading the revolutionary struggle, occupies the land, and confronts the military forces of the oligarchy. On the other hand, the Cuban revolution triumphed through guerrilla warfare. These two facts have led a part of the revolutionary vanguard to believe the only correct strategy is to develop guerrilla warfare.

The concept is doubly wrong; first because guerrilla warfare is not a strategy (the strategy is the popular insurrection to overthrow the regime and establish democratic-revolutionary governments), and because the guerrilla is not the only method of armed struggle and there are others, that in certain places and circumstances of Latin America are much more useful.

Let's try to locate the guerrilla in its just terms, i.e., as a tactic within the strategy of defeating the regime and as a method within the arsenal of armed struggle. Guerrilla is not synonymous with insurrection. Insurrection is the art of bringing the masses to power and guerrilla is a form of struggle that can allow the insurrection in its final stage but in no way poses it from the outset. Therefore, the guerrillas mean tremendous attrition of revolutionary forces before taking power. Before an insurrection, the relationship between the working people and the geographical place they inhabit and imperialism and the oligarchy must be carefully measured. Within the people, the relationship between the peasantry, the working class, and the middle class must be considered. The optimum is the three popular classes coordinate their action and do not move at the wrong time. Any disagreement will cause wear on the vanguard class and even the possibility of defeat. Only then can guerrilla warfare, terrorism, sabotage, the occupation of factories or land, etc. be considered viable.

Guerrilla warfare taken as a strategy is the opposite of insurrection, precisely because it does not rely on the organisation and massive activity of the peasantry or the working class to liberate an area or take power but only in their sympathy and support to survive. It is a defensive strategy. Mao and Fidel turned to it when the blackest defeat had crushed the masses of their countries. Faced with this situation, capitulating to semi fascism or defending itself in any way, the guerrilla

strategy was born. (When we say strategy we mean the essential, primordial task). When the first important victories took place, they could liberate an area and start a civil war, the revolutionary war, which is already very different from the initial guerrilla strategy.

As a tactic, guerrilla warfare can be part of different strategies: the civil or revolutionary war, a defensive or offensive method of the agrarian revolution, or the preparation of the peasants' or workers' insurrection. In this case, like all tactics, it is subordinated to the strategy, and this one, to the analysis of the relations between the classes.

The great art of revolutionary leadership is to achieve victory with the least possible losses, for this reason, we oppose to consider guerrilla warfare as a "universal revolutionary panacea", although we consider it a formidable weapon of struggle, which requires careful use.

On the other hand, imperialism and national governments are warned of the danger of the guerrillas and prepare to counteract them. We must respond to them with an extremely careful attitude. This does not mean just careful technical preparation but, rather, we must make a correct assessment of the relations between the classes and know how to make the most of all the forms of struggle of the masses.

It is an indisputable fact that the armed struggle is posed. But it must be faced in different ways: it must take one shape when there are general strikes or factory occupations, another when there are peasant unions or land occupations, and still another when nothing of that happens. Quickly we must clear the mistake of confusing guerrilla warfare with armed struggle and we must perfect the application of all forms of the latter. Terrorism, forms of urban struggle, defence of occupied factories, defence of lands, attacks on reactionaries, strikebreakers, and bourgeois politicians, etc., etc. These are some of the methods that must be applied in Latin America, accompanying the struggles and the organisation of the masses.

Agrarian revolution: unions and armed militias to defend it

We have said that in the current Latin American revolutionary process is invested the front of the peasantry, the urban middle class, and the proletariat and that at present the peasantry is the vanguard in most countries.

For the rising peasantry, there is no other program than the immediate taking of the landlords' lands and the confrontation with the armed forces that defend it.

The three most important revolutionary focuses, Colombia, Peru, and Brazil, have as their axis the peasant rise, which in the last two countries follows similar patterns. It manifests first in a legal and economist stage, which is unionisation. The workers of the countryside wake up to the revolution, trying to use the legal democratic loopholes, led by lawyers and politicians from the cities and by the leaders of the countryside. The second stage opens when the peasants, tired of the legal negotiations, begin to do justice on their own and occupy the land. The legal peasant rise becomes downright revolutionary.

The occupation of lands means dual power because it breaks with bourgeoisie legality and establishes in the occupied lands the mandate of the masses, with its unwritten laws.

So far, the description of how the agrarian revolution has taken place at this stage of the Latin American revolution. From this reality, two policies emerge — one reformist and the other revolutionary.

The reformism of the bosses and imperialism tries to avert the second stage of the agrarian revolution with some concessions to the peasant masses and trying to legally channel their land cravings voting some agrarian reform laws. This is tried by the Alliance for Progress, which expropriates and pays a few lands and distributes other uncultivated or distant lands to prevent or divert occupation or dual power. This lukewarm bourgeois policy finds a bitter resistance in the affected landowners, who want their land to be paid at the price of gold.

For revolutionists, on the other hand, the perspective offers no doubts: we must oppose the bourgeois reform with the mobilisation of the agrarian masses. This means, to fulfil, through the experience of the masses, the first legal stage and as soon as possible to pass to the stage of occupation and dual power. Therefore, peasant unionisation and land occupation are the two fundamental slogans. These slogans should not lead us to ignore the legal procedures or the relationship of forces with the landowners. Like with all slogans, it is a matter of distinguishing their propaganda, agitative, and action levels. In other words, in order to execute them, the possibilities of success must be considered, which depends on achieving peasant militias to defend the union and the occupied lands. These militias must be organised knowing the armed struggle is inevitable and they must apply different tactics, one of them, the guerrilla warfare tactics. But here we must distinguish the peasant militia from a guerrilla group: the militia is the vanguard of the class struggle; the guerrilla group isolates itself, in its organisation and preparation, from the mass struggle.

The new democratic nationalist fronts and our participation as revolutionaries

We have already analysed thoroughly the breakdown of the old mass nationalist movements, led by the bourgeoisie. Except for Peronism and the Bolivian MNR, there is nothing left of them in the continent: Varguism, Aprismo, Accion Democratica, Herrerism, Ibañism,² liberalism are studied by historians and not by politicians. They all have a death certificate. They will live a more or less acute agony but with the fixed term that the Cuban revolution extended them.

This is how new nationalist, democratic, or revolutionary movements have emerged, which we must study to adopt a revolutionary policy. The general characteristic of the new nationalist movements is their fluid, amorphous, yet unstructured organisational character. It is even difficult to specify the limits and contours of these fronts but they do exist. Brazil is the best example: there a nationalist parliamentary front exists; a national liberation front has emerged, led by governors from the south and the north, headed by Rio Grande. Janismo (for the return of the former president who resigned, Janio Quadros, without parliament) is another strong movement; also the left of the nationalist parliamentary front, the Julião³ form, which in turn has a student left that raises the guerrilla. The same diffuse situation arises in all countries. The social diagnosis of this phenomenon is simple: the Cuban revolution has caused the emergence of a Latin American nationalist movement; the first one with overall continental characteristics since the time of the first independence. This movement is characterised by resisting, with different methods, the Yankee colonisation and by its connection or sympathy with the Cuban revolution. We say movement and not party because precisely these currents do not yet have organisations or political leaders recognised by the masses, except for the leadership of Fidel. The socialist measures and the process of permanent revolution in Cuba can lead the revolutionists to a sectarian attitude toward Latin American nationalism and even ignore it, refusing to act in it. This trend may be strengthened given the fact that some nationalist leaders of the previous period (Peron, Janio Quadros, Allende, etc.) enter it. It is true, the entrance or flirtation of these leaders show their intention to divert it from its revolutionary aims. But for us, it means something more important —the movement exists and is of fundamental importance because in its bosom the battle for the leadership of huge sectors of the masses will be resolved. The revolutionists must be the champions of work toward the new Latin American nationalist movement and, at the same time, we must be the most important factor in

2 **Aprismo**: the movement and policies advocated by APRA (American Popular Revolutionary Alliance), a Peruvian centre-left bourgeois party. **Accion Democratica** (Democratic Action): Venezuelan social democratic party. **Herrerism**: the movement and policies advocated by Enrique Olaya Herrera (1880–1937), President of Colombia in 1930–1934. **Ibañism**: movement and policies advocated by General Carlos Ibáñez del Campo (1877–1960), twice President of Chile, in 1927-1931, and then in 1952-1958. [Translator]

3 **Francisco Julião** (1915-1999) was a peasant leader of the mobilisation that gave birth to the “peasant leagues” and occupation of lands in the early 1960’s in Pernambuco State, in Brazil’s north-east. In 1964 they were repressed by the dictatorship and Julião was gaoled and later on exiled. [Translator]

defeating the old nationalist, bourgeois, or opportunist methods. There is no other way to achieve the leadership of the masses than taking part in these movements and raising our program there in opposition, taking the democratic proposals to their ultimate consequences: deepening of the agrarian and anti-imperialist revolution, liquidation of the sepyo governments, federative unity with Cuba, and federation of Latin American workers' states; all this, within the framework of the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses.

Of course, we must do it starting from the stage lived by the new mass movement, in each country. It would have been ridiculous, for example, when the resignation of Janio Quadros, to have proposed the federative unity with Cuba as the main slogan.

From the revolutionary united front to revolutionary single parties

If the Latin American mass movement seeks since the Cuban revolution new methods, organisations, and leaders, the same applies to the vanguard of these masses. With a pronounced difference: this vanguard feels politically and sentimentally linked to the leadership of Fidel and Che. Thus, under the influence of Cuba, a new movement or tendency has emerged in the workers', students', and peasants' vanguard: Castroism or Fidelism. This current, frankly revolutionary, manifests itself in multiple factions, tendencies, or groups; there is practically no movement or mass party that does not have its revolutionary Castroist tendency. It is an urgent task to unite these Latin American currents in action.

The Castroist currents carry to the last extremes the guerrilla warfare experience. We have to look for the front that allows us to group all of them according to the class struggle and not in a mere technical-guerrilla proposal. On the other hand, the failure of the most important guerrilla attempts lends itself to call these tendencies to revolutionary reflection. What gives the conditions for a revolutionary united front is the explosive objective situation of each country. Reality demands a single revolutionary organism in each country. In this sense, the single party of Cuba points the way. And not just because the Cuban ORI (Integrated Revolutionary Organisations) has been structured after the revolution will the same be repeated on the continent. On the contrary, this experience must be applied before the revolution. The unified party does not mean leaving aside the theoretical and programmatic differences between the revolutionary tendencies.

The formation of the revolutionary front for concrete tasks and of the single party will greatly strengthen the formation of a unified Latin American movement around the axis of the strongest: the Cuban.

In this regard, we must point out the Cuban leadership has done little to help this process. They do not make pronouncements nor take concrete measures. The best way to help Fidel's heroic and magnificent leadership to understand this need for national and Latin American unity is with the national or regional example.

CHAPTER VI

The theoretical issues posed by the Cuban Revolution

One of the few serious theorists of contemporary Marxism, the well-known American Trotskyist Joseph Hansen, has just pointed out that Cuba's "is a revolution in a small country, which raises several theoretical issues". We agree and, although it is not our goal to dwell on those problems, we must, at least, fit the analysis of the Latin American situation in a certain theoretical framework.

We are not afraid of theoretical analysis. The times demand audacity, not only in action but also in revolutionary theorisation. If we dedicate so little space to the subject, it is because we have not yet sufficiently deepened our studies, which will see the light in a forthcoming book. In this chapter, we will limit ourselves to consider some of the major issues and outline their possible solutions. These problems, fundamentally, have derived from the latest revolutions that have reopened the polemics of Marxism of the last 60 years, giving them new life and greater depth.

Today the revolutionary vanguard asks: who were right, Lenin and Trotsky or Mao and Fidel? Stalin or Trotsky? Classic Marxism or the intellectual currents like those of Wright Mills and Thompson that claim their outdoing? Has the Castroist or Maoist theory been confirmed, which holds a revolutionary group must rely on the peasantry, on geography suitable for the guerrillas, and initiate revolutionary warfare starting from simple organisational forms and broad slogans? Or perhaps has classical proletarian Marxism, whose synthesis is given in the theory of permanent revolution, been confirmed?

We believe that to respond to these burning issues, and the others we raise later (the guerrilla, the role of the revolutionary party, the role of the working class, definition of a revolutionary government, democratic and nationalist movements, etc. etc.), it is necessary to briefly review the history of the world revolutionary and Marxist movement.

Marxism emerged in the nineteenth century and was the most advanced expression, in all fields, of the European revolution — mainly of the North — begun in France in 1789 and culminated by the Russian masses in 1917. As a theory, program, ideology, method, and analysis, Marxism is a typical product of the European revolution that never rose again to the fullness of the Russian revolution, to the extent that the last post-war mass revolutionary upsurge was only a pale reflection of the revolutionary wave that hit Europe at the end of World War I. Meanwhile, from 1933 to 1942, the reactionary offensive engendered fascism and, in the USSR and the world workers' movement, Stalinism.

Stalinism, which was the painful internal consequence of the world proletarian retreat, in turn, distorted the process of world revolution. And this is proven when the masses begin their revolutionary revenge after 20 years of reactionary offensive, we find the vanguard of the world revolution is no longer Europe or Russia but has moved to the periphery of the planet, to the backward countries. Then a series of new phenomena which had not been known by classical European Marxism originated.

It was Trotskyism which, continuing the revolutionary Marxist traditions, studied the typical phenomena of the defensive stage and the reactionary advance. This movement has left us correct and confirmed characterisations about Stalinism, fascism, the degeneration of the workers' states, etc. But Trotskyism did not manage to study the phenomena derived from the new offensive of the masses headed by the colonial countries. Here Trotskyism and all classical Marxism, we believe because of their European nature, have many gaps and respond with walls of silence to the current problems of the vanguard of the world revolution.

Marxism is faced with a new objective situation that forces it to remove its old European veil. From Marx to Lenin and Trotsky, this veil was correct because the revolution was European. But since the last postwar period, the veil makes it difficult for us and hinders the situation.

Of course, the new situation cancels none of the fundamental achievements of the revolutionaries of the European period — let's call it that — but rather it gives them an extraordinary relevance. Without the slightest blush, we can assert that all the revolutions of the last 20 years have confirmed a theory and only one: the theory of permanent revolution, which brilliantly synthesises classical revolutionary Marxism. And in another direction, they have annihilated the Stalinist theory of socialism in a single country which, useless in addressing and understanding the revolutionary processes, has been totally overcome and forgotten.

However, the exciting confirmation of revolutionary Marxism in its theory and in the essence of its program often go unnoticed because the concrete formulation of this program has been revealed, given the objective reality, of Franciscan poverty. For example, the Transitional Program summarises the European revolutionary experience to the last detail and is a model of the concretions of classical Marxism. This program has been fully confirmed in its essence: the transitional character of the revolutionary struggle... but, just to point out the Transitional Program, which has a pinpoint accuracy for workers' slogans, does not even mention guerrilla warfare and hardly speaks, in passing, on agrarian, nationalist, and democratic slogans say it all...

The visible contradiction between the essential strength and the weakness in the fundamental details of revolutionary Marxism must have various causes and it is an urgent task to find and overcome them. We will go on now to the possible causes of theoretical nature which make this contradiction.

In general terms, our theoretical weakness has been not to understand in time that reality is more Marxian than Marxists suspected. Because the latest revolutions confirm the Leninist and Trotskyist analyses to limits unsuspected by their authors and, at the same time they uncover their gaps, they enrich and develop those analyses. For its part, Maoism, or theory of guerrilla warfare, is the particular refraction in the theoretical arena of the current stage of the world revolution. Just as Stalinism at the time was the unfortunate reflection of the advance of reaction, Maoism and Castroism reflect, in the theoretical field, the revolutionary reality of which they are protagonists. And they do it with successes, enormous contributions, great findings, and also with terrible limitations; facts that derive from being triumphant revolutions in the most backward countries and with a single method, guerrilla warfare.

Trotskyism, which inherited the revolutionary traditions to save them from the shipwreck of the reactionary and fascist offensive, could pulverise in theory the Stalinist conceptions, showing they were something specific to the retreat of the masses. But now Trotskyism is reluctant to integrate into the program and the theory of permanent revolution the contributions of the advance and the practice of guerrilla warfare, which is specific to the advance of the masses in the backward countries. For this, some Trotskyists are entrenched in the comfortable general statement that history has confirmed the permanent revolution but do not understand the specific and do not overcome the gaps in that theory, also confirmed by history. When reality hits them very hard, they respond with another generalisation: "The Stalinist betrayal left the proletariat without leadership and therefore the heading of the last revolts fell into the hands of the peasantry and the students." But the problem arises when we check the categorical assertions of Trotskyism about the total impossibility that these variations could take place. This is the theoretical premise which

is later proven in the Transitional Program that ignores, as mentioned above, the agrarian and democratic slogans and guerrilla warfare. Thus, those who try this answer take away much of the question. To put it another way, we will say: it is correct that the Stalinist betrayal forced a detour to the revolution and allowed its vanguard to move to the backward countries and non-working classes. But that is only the subjective half of the problem, and it is a matter of finding out for what objective reasons the world revolution continued to advance despite the betrayal and the lack of revolutionary proletarian leadership.

In what follows, we will try to fulfil the revolutionary obligation to give our answer to those problems and to synthesise the correct general theory and program (Trotskyist) with the correct particular theory and program (Maoist or Castroist).

The theory of combined development and the revolutionary stages

We owe the Russian revolutionaries the application of the theory of uneven and combined development to historical interpretation. This conception explains, in the last analysis, the Russian revolution itself. Its essence cannot be simpler and more dialectical. It opposes the theory of gradual historical development, with inevitable stages such as slavery, feudalism, capitalism, and socialism and asserts instead that historical development is made by leaps and by a combination of stages. A country can combine primitive communism or feudalism in the countryside and important industrial development. The same combination takes place on the economic-cultural level: an economically backward country may be the most culturally advanced. This theory explained the combinations of historical stages, breaking the evolutionary and mechanistic schema. The Russian revolution proved the correctness of this theory since the first triumphant workers' state happened in the most backward country in Europe.

Lenin and Trotsky reserved the theory of combined development for the analysis of countries and societies and did not need to apply it to the analysis of revolutionary stages. They studied the German, Chinese, Hungarian, Spanish, and French revolutions, with the same schema, built ad hoc for the Russian revolution, which, in turn, was the prototype for the European revolution. This confirmed schema included the following revolutionary stages:

- 1) Subjective preparation, theoretical, programmatic, ideological, and organisational accumulation.
- 2) Preparation and unleashing of a great popular and democratic revolution, led by the working class, known as the "February revolution".
- 3) Period of dual power between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.
- 4) The proletariat begins a semi-insurrection isolated from the peasantry. The Bolsheviks stop the insurrection to avoid a revolutionary abortion ("July days").
- 5) The proletariat led by the Bolsheviks avoids the semi-fascist coup by Kornilov.
- 6) The proletariat and the peasantry take power: "October revolution".
- 7) The deep democratic revolution begins, with the agrarian revolution and peace, overcoming the formal democracy whose limited objectives were to get public freedoms and the republic.
- 8) Combined with the previous one, the workers' revolution begins with the nationalisation of industry, banks, and foreign trade.
- 9) Civil war: the class struggle becomes regional and military. There is cooperation with military and bourgeois technicians and the Red Army is created.
- 10) Economic reconstruction, New Economic Policy, cooperation with technicians and bureaucrats.

In summary, we can say these 10 revolutionary stages mark five eras of the class struggle:

- 1) Ideological, organisational, of the creation of programs, leaders, and parties.

- 2) Political, from February to October.
- 3) Economic, from October to the civil war.
- 4) Military, civil war and organisation of the Red Army.
- 5) Structural and superstructural construction and reconstruction, primitive socialist accumulation.

Trotsky analysed the revolutions correctly, applying the preceding scheme. He observed mainly the political stages and the possibilities of taking power. Unfortunately, he could not apply it to the economic, military, and constructive stages because Stalinism frustrated the “Octobers”.

The creator of the Red Army never needed to apply the theory of combined development to the revolutionary stages, since the revolutions of his time followed, in general terms, the Russian scheme.

But the Stalinist betrayal and the decay of the European revolution and the current process of world revolution have enhanced the magnitude of the theory of combined development, which no longer applies only to the historical interpretation of a country or society but that we must use to understand the intimacy of contemporary revolutionary processes. The Yugoslav, Chinese, Italian, French, Asian, and Cuban revolutions have combined the stages of the European revolution studied by classical Marxism. They started with one of the last stages of the Russian revolution, the military one. The civil war took them to an earlier stage of the Soviet calendar: the February revolution. But before this taking place, the revolutionary armies were created and socialist construction measures were taken and agrarian reform was launched. From the beginning, there was a collaboration with bourgeois technicians for economic-military tasks. It would seem that we were facing the projection of the Russian revolution in reverse since the last chapter is the formulation of the general theory and the formation of the party, i.e., the ideological stage.

The theory of combined development and guerrilla warfare

Honest Marxist theorists argue that guerrilla warfare is an antiquated, “Blanquist”¹ method of class struggle. “Not because it has worked it is the best”, they say.

Indeed, we believe, at a given moment, there may be better revolutionary methods than guerrilla warfare. But we are completely sure this is an extraordinary theoretical and programmatic acquisition and it is far from being a circumstantial and distorted reminiscence of old revolutionary methods.

Blanquism was developed under two conditions that make it totally different from guerrilla warfare: without the surrounding frame of the world (or European) revolution and without appealing to geographical conditions. Instead, the revolutionary guerrilla, based on the crisis of imperialism and the bourgeoisie, incorporates a new factor into the class struggle, something that is specifically original: geography. This makes guerrilla warfare a new, richer and more imaginative method that transforms the theory of combined development from a theory for interpretation into a theory of action.

Until the Chinese or Cuban revolutions, the revolutionists, in their analysis of the objective situation, limited themselves to taking into account the relations between classes, and of these with the economy and politics. Now we have learned to consider a new factor, the geographical one. Guerrilla warfare theorists have often overvalued this factor, inflating it into almost the only element of objective reality, together with the peasantry or the population. That we point out this

1 **Blanquism** refers to a conception of revolution generally attributed to Louis Auguste Blanqui (1805–1881) which holds that socialist revolution should be carried out by a relatively small group of highly organised and secretive conspirators. Having seized power, the revolutionaries would then use the power of the state to introduce socialism. It is considered a particular sort of “putschism” — i.e., the view that political revolution should take the form of a putsch or *coup d'état*. [Translator]

one-sidedness cannot lead us to ignore the fabulous theoretical-programmatic contribution of the creators of the practice and the theory of guerrilla warfare.

Geography was an implicit factor in historical or economic analysis. For the revolutionary action, it was only considered after the seizure of power, when the civil war began. Now we must consider it before taking power and precisely to take it. The guerrilla war raises the possibility of using not only propaganda, agitation, street struggles, economic and political crises of imperialism, and weapons and soldiers of the bourgeois army but also the geography. Not to understand this is an application of the combined development in the linking of the revolutionary stages is to stay halfway in the understanding of the Cuban revolution and its theory of guerrilla warfare.

On the other hand, it is not necessary to recall that Western Marxism, led by objective circumstances, forgot the armed struggle. This was transformed into a fetish to be used on an uncertain date of a distant future, in the last part of the revolutionary rise. The weapons of Western Marxism were purely intellectual: propaganda, agitation, theory, and, exceptionally, a call to class actions. The critique of the weapons preached by Marx had been left aside. And the guerrilla theory has had the historical value of rethinking the need for armed struggle. It has been an essential life-giving breath. We have understood the armed struggle is a permanent method of the masses and the revolutionaries and that, being the most complex and important technique of the class struggle, we must master it and apply it as much or better than the other conventional techniques: agitation, propaganda, etc. Doing so, it enriches the revolutionary movement, the party, and the masses. Although this should not lead us to make an indiscriminate application since, like any technique at the service of the class struggle, it is linked to it, its study and development.

The theory of the Permanent Revolution and guerrilla warfare

a) In relation to the revolutionary regions

At the beginning of the 20th century, Trotsky formulated his famous theory of the permanent revolution. It was fully confirmed in the point that states the backward countries could start the revolution before the advanced ones. And that the revolution, beginning with national tasks of a democratic type, becomes international, workers' and socialist.

The theory of permanent revolution meant a qualitative leap for Marxism because until then the revolutionaries thought only the advanced countries were ripe for the workers' revolution. The aforementioned theory ended with the revolutionary cult of the advanced countries. But the author of the same did not develop his audacious premises to its ultimate consequences and considered that, within each country, the city or advanced zone would drag the countryside, in a process led by the proletariat.

The theorists of guerrilla warfare, on the other hand, argue that the backward regions of a country are potentially the most revolutionary and that we should not wait for the advanced cities or regions. They give two reasons: one, social, they are populated by the most miserable inhabitants, and another geographical, they are the regions least controlled militarily and economically by the bourgeoisie and imperialism.

In this formulation, as in all those carried out by guerrilla theorists, we need to distinguish the one-sidedness of the contributions. Making a fetish of the backward regions seems to us as serious as at the time it was making a fetish of the advanced countries or regions. Just as the theory of permanent revolution swept away the classification of mature and immature countries for the revolution, the new contribution should serve to sweep away the classification of mature and immature regions. Any country and any region are suitable for permanent revolution.

b) In relation to the vanguard class

The theses of the permanent revolution insist on the role of second fiddle played by the peasantry, which, according to the theses, must inevitably follow the proletariat in the same way the backward regions follow the advanced ones. As we see, Trotsky was very cautious in the sociological analysis of the peasantry, assigning it a petty and secondary role. He continued, in this, the tradition of Marx himself and Trotsky's analyses and conclusions come from the European reality. But here all Marxism, with the possible exception of Lenin, committed a serious methodological error when studying the factors that drive a social class to start the revolution. Marx gives the revolutionary attribute to the proletariat for two reasons that, although closely linked, differ: its alienation and its location in the relations of production.

The word and the subject of alienation deserve a closer inspection. Hegel, without clarifying it, used two terms: to alienate oneself (from the verb *Entäußerung*) and to become estranged or alien (from *Entfremdung*). The modern analysis of the problem forces us to distinguish clearly these two meanings that can be derived from the traditional term. The alienation Marx studied, and to which we refer, is that of the proletariat or the people, brutally exploited by alien powers. This concept has nothing to do, for example, with that described by Erich Fromm, for whom all modern social classes are alienated because they have been domesticated through reflexes conditioned by the capitalist market. One thing is brutal and inhuman exploitation, and another, very different, domestication or American way of life. We refer to alienation as inhumane exploitation and consider it a revolutionary factor.

Although Marx considered the economic factor and alienation as the two revolutionary incentives, western Marxism, which developed the economic aspects of Marxism, gave fundamental importance to this factor. Lenin was very careful about it and left the doors open so history would speak for itself. Trotsky, a typical European Marxist, did not even mention the problem of alienation. The differences, however, were unimportant because in Europe the working class was the most exploited and the peasantry was relatively privileged. But the problem now appears in countries with the reverse situation, where the peasantry suffers the greatest burden of exploitation. What is the prime factor, then, to encourage a class to start the permanent revolution?

We believe in this problem we must return to the sources and take alienation as a decisive factor. In this regard, the philosophers of the nineteenth century, when spinning and twisting around the subject and the meaning of alienation, anticipated the serious theoretical issue that now urgently needs to be resolved.

Anyhow, we must establish that the impotence of the peasantry to lead the revolution has been transformed into its opposite by the impact of the world revolution, the alienation to which imperialism and the oligarchies submit it, the modern means of communication and organisation (including military), and the momentary failure of the working class — for the Stalinist and bureaucratic betrayal — to fulfil its role as leader of the world revolution.

Possibilities of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the backward countries, before and after the revolution

Another of the great theoretical problems presented to us is the definition of the governments of Mao in China, Ho Chi Min in North Vietnam, and Castro in Cuba. Are they a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat? If so, from what moment do they deserve this qualification and what differences do they have with the classic workers' dictatorships like the Paris Commune, the first years of the Bolshevik revolution, and the Spanish revolution?

Let it be understood, we are not referring to a problem of terms but of concepts. There are pending historical and theoretical problems. Historically, it is a matter of comparing the new revolutionary governments with the revolutionary democratic dictatorship — advocated by Lenin — and with the dictatorship of the proletariat — required by Trotsky — in the old controversies

of the early 20th century. And theoretically, it is about solving the following problem: what social composition should have the government capable of carrying out the bourgeois-democratic revolution... and the first steps of the primitive socialist accumulation?

Faced with Lenin and discussing the character of a government capable of carrying out the bourgeois-democratic revolution, Trotsky supported the dictatorship of the proletariat against the democratic-revolutionary government. He resisted Lenin's formula with two arguments of great weight: the character of the state and the peasantry. The creator of the Red Army appealed to the best Marxist traditions that defined the state as the dictatorship of a social class, and only one.

However, more careful investigations of Marxism have confirmed that for the classics the state is not an appendage of a class in all historical stages but has some autonomy in its emergence and existence. Although born with the class struggle, the state becomes an instrument and is supported by a class; it is not synonymous with the dictatorship of a class. It retains relative autonomy and can play between different social classes. It is a direct product of society as a whole and only in special circumstances, it acts as a class dictatorship.

This is one of the interpretations given by Marx and Engels and we believe it is confirmed by life.

On the other hand, we have already seen that the "minority of age" of the peasantry for the revolution is not such. In it, all classes have an identity card and vote to conduct the process. Moreover, the proletariat is not always the most revolutionary class: it can be satisfied, tired, bureaucratized, or in formation. The government may or may not rely on it. It is a fact that Lenin and Trotsky suppressed democracy in the Soviets and the party and that Stalin proletarianised it, to better corrupt and bureaucratise it...

In this way, the two pillars of the Trotskyist analysis of the revolutionary government in the backward countries have fallen.

These facts lead us to the following conclusion: the revolutionary government may be relatively autonomous at one stage and must be defined by the tasks it carries out and the classes which support it. It means there are revolutionary democratic dictatorships (supported by the peasantry, the people and the proletariat) that are leading the democratic and socialist revolution, i.e., permanent. These governments, historically, are justified if they carry out the permanent revolution and if they tend to be supported democratically in the masses, even if the lack of maturity of the proletariat prevents it from rising to its dictatorship.

The historical dynamic, which is weakening the bureaucratic apparatuses, brings closer the time when the Trotskyist variation of the dictatorship of the proletariat can take place, meanwhile the governments are revolutionaries, according to the Leninist variation, leaning on the masses and carrying out the tasks of the permanent revolution.

The relationship between objective and subjective factors

The Cuban and Chinese revolutions began in circumstances that the Marxist classics characterise as "unfavourable objective": there are no great social struggles and a handful of men start an armed struggle. However, this group transforms the conditions into favourable. In Cuba, this is much clearer because the leadership was always at the forefront and the voluntarist intervention was maximised. This common feature of the two revolutions poses, on a much broader scale, the theoretical problem of specifying the relationship between objective and subjective factors in the revolutionary process.

On the other hand, it updates the discussions of the Russian revolutionaries and it evidences traditional gaps in Marxism, which never clearly defined the relations between the structure and the superstructure of a class or a society. These gaps and silences today affect the revolutionary activity. Russian Marxism was the one that gave greater importance to the discussion of these problems in relation to the practical activity. This is the content of the polemics between the Bolsheviks and

the Mensheviks. The first emphasises the preponderant importance of the subjective factors (party and leadership) in the revolutionary process. Lenin's famous statement that the working class alone does not surpass the framework of the economic struggle thus attests. Trotsky interprets that Lenin, in his later years, modified his point of view, but this is circumstantial and secondary since Bolshevism was founded and developed from the premises "without a party, there is no revolution" and "the party is everything, the masses are a tool in their hands".

Menshevism, instead, started from the opposite premise: "The classes and their dynamics are fundamental, the party is secondary, a passive tool of the classes."

The current of social revolutionaries also suckled from the first Bolshevik premise and distorted it to the point of not considering the objective conditions at all. And from the Menshevik premise came off the opportunism of Bernstein, and the revolutionary position of Rosa Luxemburg and Trotsky.

In our days, the Cuban and Chinese revolution would seem to confirm the Bolshevik thesis that the subjective factors are the fundamental ones but with very important modifications with respect to the definition of revolutionary parties and organisations. Because today, this question is posed: what is a revolutionary organisation? According to traditional Marxism, the Chinese Communist Party or the Cuban 26th of July Movement are not because, classically, the character of class prevailed in that definition and the revolutionary-workers' parties were defined as revolutionary. A petty bourgeois, peasant, or bureaucratic leadership could not be revolutionary. We, here again, will repeat the criterion we hold throughout the book: the fundamental thing is not the passive location in the relations of production but the aims and the activity to achieve them, i.e., the praxis. As long as by praxis we understand what goes from the subjective to the objective and from the aims and projects to their execution. That this praxis has its roots in objective reality, which ultimately explains it, enables its success and determines it, we have no doubts. But this praxis is the essential factor to define a social or political group and not the objective situation.

If this analysis is correct, we must consider a revolutionary tendency the one which because of its objectives and action is, at a given moment, revolutionary although, by its location, may not be workers'. We also need to consider that revolutionary action, for its dynamics, can elevate it to a theoretical-programmatic understanding of its own action: the permanent revolution.

We have said the emergence and triumph of the revolutionary praxis have their explanation in the objective reality. Let us see the reasons for the emergence of this praxis: it has its reason for being in the relationships between classes and countries because of the brutal alienation provoked by imperialism. (And in this sense we must expand the classic concept of the objective revolutionary situation: it is enough that there is a series of unbearable social alienations and social groups willing to fight them relying on the masses that suffer them.) From here on, the development of this situation is made possible by the global and regional reality, i.e., by the degree reached by global technology and culture and by the crisis of imperialism. We mean that the world situation allows a national revolutionary action in any country, although its economic development and its proletariat may be very backward. Any country, any class brutally exploited can, by the program and method of permanent revolution, consider primitive socialist accumulation and acquire a modern economic, cultural, and technological development. This praxis — objective and action — defines the country, the working class, and the party and it is possible by the contemporary world reality. I.e., by the objective process of the socialist world revolution.

The democratic, nationalist and peasant movements

Finally, the revolutions we are discussing present us with a series of problems regarding the democratic, nationalist, and peasant movements in their relationship with the revolutionary party and with the workers' movement. Leninism and Trotskyism correctly characterised that the revolutionary dynamics in the backward countries goes through democratic tasks and slogans. To this characterisation, the theory of permanent revolution added a class analysis: only the working

class can lead and carry out the democratic revolution, and a historical analysis: the revolution does not stop at its democratic stage and continues with socialist tasks.

In China and Cuba, the proletariat did not lead or carry out the democratic revolution or began the socialist revolution. In the previous points, we have tried to explain the reasons. Now we want to raise the strategic problem: how should revolutionists work in the face of nationalist and democratic movements?

The Third and the Fourth International are very frugal about it. On the other hand, the Stalinist bureaucracy frustrated the possibilities of developing a strategy. The second and fourth congresses of the Communist International [the Third] give us some indications, which are contradictory. They begin by being obscure in the definition of nationalist movements, by dividing them into bourgeois and revolutionary without specifying their differences. On the other hand, the famous anti-imperialist united front tactic has a lot of fame and little of precision. We know it is a tactic parallel to the tactic of the workers' united front, of mere defensive agreement between nationalist and communist organisations before imperialism and a replica of the agreement between different organisations to defend themselves against the bourgeoisie or imperialism, used in the West. The agreement, in all cases, is limited, episodic, and circumstantial. According to the resolutions of the mentioned congresses, the communist party must keep jealous and uncompromisingly its independence against the nationalist movements, which must be supported against imperialism by signing agreements.

Under Lenin, and with the lukewarm opposition of Trotsky, the Third International decided to practise entryism in the Chinese Kuomintang. The one in charge of doing it was a Dutch Communist who had made the same experience, and with great success, in an Indonesian religious nationalist movement, since World War I.

With the panorama of these data, we want to show the weakness of the resolutions of the Third International on the national problem.

Currently, we believe the problem must be posed in the following terms: can it be for the revolutionaries a working front as important as the workers' movement, the nationalist, peasant, or democratic movements?

In our opinion, reality has given its answer: indeed, in certain countries and circumstances, the main place of work is the national or agrarian movement. Practising entryism in them is as fundamental as doing it in unions, Soviets, or in the English Labour Party. This activity is an exact replica of what takes place in the organisations and workers' movements of the West.

The political and organisational independence of Marxists within that movement is an indispensable requirement and, in addition, work must be combined with work on the workers' movement, the revolutionary future of the nationalist movement.

Specifically, just as we have discovered that not only the working class can lead the permanent revolution, we can say the same of the political movements: not only the workers can organise and lead the first revolutionary stages but the democratic and agrarian movements and organisations also can. It is an obligation to be there and to give a conscious tonic to this revolutionary possibility. §