

## REVOLUTION IN LATIN AMERICA

### C U B A THE FIRST STAGE

LATIN America has ceased, the European petty bourgeois, to be the exotic stage on which the "pronunciamentos" of comic opera colonels follow one after the other. With Cuba, it has entered the framework of world politics. From L'Express to Le Figaro are found comments on the deeds and gestures of these "bearded ones"; some go into ecstasies over the enthusiasm of these people in sombreros who gesticulate in a country where it is so hot, others become indignant about these thoughtless, excitable people who unloose "communism" in a continent hitherto so well protected. Europe, through television, the cinema and the press, does not lack pictures of Cuba, but it is terribly lacking in ideas. The left press shrinks neither from pompous articles nor discreet advice. However, militant workers need to know what is going on in Cuba. What is the prize in the struggle which makes this little country one of the centres of interest of world politics? What is it all about? Where have we got to? These are the questions which, with the information at our disposal, we will try to answer, though not confining ourselves within the borders of Cuba only. For, quite definitely, it concerns the whole of Latin America.

### LATIN AMERICA, A SEMI-COLONIAL CONTINENT:

Formerly Spanish and Portuguese colonies, these South American nations gained their formal political independence in the 19th century, only to fall under the domination of European imperialism; then, between 1914 and 1930, under North American imperialism, which made men curse the name "Yankee" from the Tropic of Cancer to Tierra del Fuego.

In all these different countries, it is large North American companies which hold the sources of power, of raw materials and foodstuffs, which today provide 35% of the value of United States imports. Moreover, the rule, in Latin America, is the exploitation of one single resource in each country; it is no distortion of the truth to state that Venezuela is the country of oil, Bolivia of tin, Costa Rica of coffee, and Cuba of Sugar. The continent also serves as a market for the manufactured goods of North American industry; exports to Latin America make 27% of the U.S. total. Imperialism has been able, behind the screen of the Monroe Doctrine, to keep this special preserve for itself. The slogan "America for the Americans" has had, for half a century, a very precise meaning: "America for the Yankees". No foreign firm is able to compete with the American monopoly; in the plantation countries, American firms have even gone as far as to buy or have assigned to them all the best land, even leaving it uncultivated, in order to control production and prevent a fall in prices.

North American imperialism has achieved this exclusive domination without much difficulty because of its weight in the economy of each country. In Cuba, 49% of the sugar-cane plantations used to belong to Yankee firms; in Guatemala, the United Fruit Company, Frutera, has for a long time been the sole owner; with its plantations and its uncultivated land, its railways, its roads and its ports, not to mention its own administration and police. It is not surprising if, in these circumstances, such powerful firms take on the appearance of giants beside the feeble Latin American states such as have developed from the profound social crisis unleashed on the continent by imperialist penetration.

### THE SOCIAL CRISIS PRODUCED BY THE PENETRATION OF IMPERIALISM:

With the exception of Argentina, the River Plate countries and the south of Brazil, the Latin American countries at the beginning of the 19th century presented the aspect of old colonial structures: the peasant mass, almost exclusively made up of Indians, reduced to a semi-servile state, was under the domination of a feudal class of Spanish and Portuguese conquerors. Then, while overthrowing the equilibrium of traditional society by its conquest of markets, imperialist penetration strengthened the dominant classes of the old social structure. Faced with a pauperised peasantry capable of impressive revolts, imperialism chose to support the feudal classes by sharing its profits with them to keep them in their role of policemen for the defence of its own interests. It is significant that Mexico, when it was invaded by foreign capital, experienced a rebirth of agrarian feudalism, with large estates to which the peasants found themselves attached like serfs. There were, at that time, 300 haciendas of more than 10,000 hectares, 11 of more than 100,000 and 7 of more than 250,000.

Thus, as in all other semi-colonial countries, imperialist penetration brought about in Latin America a development opposite to that resulting from the growth of capitalism in Europe. Not only were the feudalists and moneylenders its only serious political allies, kept in place by imperialism which made them its local "agents", but at the same time the ruin of the artisans in the towns and villages through competition from the products of U.S. large-scale industry, forced the mass of the native population to turn to the land for subsistence. With the exodus of the rural population to the towns experienced in Western Europe in the same period, we find contrasted the "return to the land" in the colonies, and semi-colonies.

In other words, imperialist penetration, far from creating the conditions for industrialisation, made it extremely difficult. On the one hand, the maintenance of high rates of interest and profit from exploitation of land deflected native capital from all other forms of investment, notably industrial. On the other hand, the lowering of the standard of living brought about by the destruction of the traditional supplementary means of livelihood, hindered the formation of a real market which could absorb the products of a native industry. There was no need at all for a "colonial pact" to prevent industrialisation: for 190 million inhabitants there were in 1955 less than 6 million ~~xxxxxxxx~~ radio sets, and a little more than 4 million cinema seats. Brazil, which every year produces a quarter as many pairs of shoes as its inhabitants, is desperately seeking a market in which to dispose of them.

dispose of them.

Further, in Latin American countries there will be no industrialisation except in certain definite circumstances. In order to exploit their riches more efficiently, the imperialists sometimes themselves create the necessary industries; thus in Cuba the American Sugar company, used to control 60% of the refineries. The two world wars, upsetting the pattern of trade and creating favourable conditions, ~~and leaving intact~~ have made possible a real wave of industrialisation, leaving intact, however, the general characteristics and relations between the main economic activities.

SOCIAL.....CLASSES

The social structure of the semi-colonial countries, is, then, very different from that which has grown up in the advanced countries. It is difficult to distinguish in this structure a genuine bourgeoisie. The dominant classes have nothing in common with the entrepreneurs class which in England, France and Germany launched the attack on the old world. It has arisen simultaneously from the old feudal ruling classes and imperialism. A thousand family and personal ties unite the group of men who hold at the same time vast estates and mining shares, petroleum shares, ranches and plantations; their incomes are derived as much from the surplus value produced by the proletariat as from super exploitation of the peasantry or the interest on loans at high interest. This ~~class~~ bears different names according to the country, but everywhere it shows this fundamental characteristic of the intertwined interests of landlordism and imperialism. While the European bourgeoisie strove to shatter the feudal state structure, the Latin American oligarchy cannot take even a single step forward towards agrarian reform, preliminary to establishing a market, without undermining one of the pillars of its own power, its landed property.

THE.....PEASANTS

The great mass of the population lives on the land. In Cuba, the census of 1953 showed that, out of a population of 1,972,266 persons 221,930, i.e., about 11% were the owners or occupiers of some sort and 568,799 (i.e., 28.8%) were agricultural workers. The great majority of the 100,000 owners were very small, hardly managing to scrape a living from the land. Owners of less than 100 hectares constituted 92% of the total number, and occupied only 30% of the acreage. As for the various tenants, they are made up of 46,000 genuine tenants enjoying oral or written leases, 7,000 sub-tenants with a still less secure legal position, 33,000 sharecroppers and 13,700 precarious ones, taxable and subject to labour at will (legal description of the medieval serf), since they enjoy no right to security of tenure and are compelled to make payments demanded by the all-powerful owner... If one adds that the Cuban farm worker was unemployed on the average 185 days per year, one can better grasp the reasons for the poverty in Cuba, that wonderful island where, in 1953 9.1 of the rural houses had electricity and 2.3% running water indoors, 54% having no sort of W.C. and 85% no water supply, neither tap, nor tank nor well.

U.N.O. statistics also give very significant examples of what the bourgeoisie economists call the 'undeveloped' under-development' of the Latin American countries. The consumption of milk and meat is from 6 to 10 times less than in the U.S. Bolivia with its 1,200 calories per day per person compared with the vital minimum of 2,300 is the most tragic example of undernourishment, permanent and general. For the continent as a whole the expectation of life is 30 years, comparable to that of India, while that of France is over 60 years. Tuberculosis is responsible for a third of all deaths, 95% are illiterate and there are 180 teachers to 100,000 inhabitants according to the country, 20% to 25% of the children of school age attending school, 25% to 35% of the inhabitants normally go bare-foot and 30% wear home-made clothes. A calculation based on the average (annual income" shows that 20 to 30 days work is necessary to buy garments which in the U.S. would need 2 1/2 days' wages.

THE.....WORKERS

The number of wage-workers has continuously increased, both absolutely and relatively. The working class today comprises from 10% to 25% of the total population in the different countries. It is far from being homogenous; its lower strata remains closely linked to the peasantry. The unemployed worker returns to the land. The manual worker moves from the mine to the factory to the plantations and back again. But if the regimented serf in the latifundia have no reasons to envy the miserable slaves of the tin mines, the oil and metal workers, with the social advantage which they have conquered 8 hours a day, holidays, social security, appear as a privileged layer with a standard of living far above that of the poverty-stricken masses. It has taken years of savage political struggle for the Bolivian miners to stop fighting other workers' unions, to build a united front between them and the starving masses of Indians, a "reserved army of labour" and potential strike-breakers.

The problem of the unity of workers and peasants against the oligarchy which exploits them is no. 1 problem. It is sometimes made easier by local circumstances. In Cuba, the 47,000 workers in the sugar refineries industries are distributed through a number of ultra-modern factories, each in contact with the agricultural workers on the sugar plantations who have, more than once, learned from them proletarian methods of organisation and struggle.

THE.....MIDDLE CLASSES

Imperialist penetration has destroyed the new-born urban petty-bourgeois, but it has at the same time created new middle layers, small traders, technicians, clerks, functionaries and professional men. 'This middle class by training', with the students as its nursery, constitute the most unstable elements in the society, both in its actions and political attitudes. Like the essentially bourgeois layers to which they are linked, the members of...

this are strictly dependent on the oligarchy, having in common with the manufacturers and big traders a social position which prevents them from getting to the top of the social pyramid, monopolized by the oligarchy, while they frequently know themselves to be superior in ability and merit. They try to get more money for their services, and particularly for the part they play in the exploitation of the workers. It is usually the army which provides them with the instrument to gain a political fortune and also a fortune in the ordinary sense.

But in recent decades, their aspirations have been expressed through "mass parties of a new type; the Venezuelan Democratic Action of Betancourt, the Bolivian National Revolutionary Movement of Paz Estensoro, the Argentine Justicialist Party of Juan Peron. In the struggle to obtain from imperialism a fair share of the profits, they are forced to rally the workers and peasants behind them, and they have succeeded on various occasions. Peron was the hero of the peons, agricultural workers for whom he won the right to wages, and the leader of the descamisados (urban poor), mostly of working-class origin. Paz Estensoro is today in the course of reconstructing the Bolivian bourgeois state, thanks to the support of the labour bureaucracy, around the trade union central committee led by the miners' leader, Juan Lechin. Individually, a number of people of middle-class origin have turned towards the urban or rural proletariat without trying to make use of them for their class interests. In the most backward sections, it is often the intellectuals who have become militants who have organized trade unions in a "professional" manner and founded the first socialist groups. More frequently, recently, it is student demonstrations which have been the signals for revolutions and for the entry of the workers and peasants into the struggle.

#### THE STATE:

For Latin America, like the rest of the world, has entered the era of revolutions: that of "pronunciamentos" is largely over. The different clans of the oligarchy had for a long time been able to settle accounts with each other by recourse to military coups d'etat or by faked elections. But with the awakening of the workers' movement and the appearance of peasants' movements, the "colonels" have been compelled to be more prudent if they are to avoid playing the part of the sorcerer's apprentice. Several experiences have effectively shown that the workers can seize the opportunity of an armed struggle between their class enemies to intervene on their own account. Also there has in the recent period been a tendency to the stiffening of repression with the ferocious dictatorships of Trujillo and Batista, supported by the dollar. The brutality of such regimes is the measure of their social parasitism, of their congenital feebleness and the fear which the masses inspire in them. It took the Cuban revolution to make known in Europe the police methods of Batista, the torture, mutilations and castrations. Such methods, small change in those countries, constitute the last defence of these oligarchic regimes threatened by the revolutions.

#### THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION:

It was Mexico which experienced the first real Latin American revolution. The organized workers' movement appeared under the influence of immigrants in the last quarter of the 19th century; the original "Work Workers' Congress" was replaced by secret revolutionary unions, inspired by the example of the American IWW. It was not until 1912, after years of bitter struggle, that the first Mexican workers' centre, the Casa del Obrero Mundial, was formed.

In the year 1910, a part of the army rose, with the support of a section of the middle class and the national bourgeoisie, against the dictatorship of the oligarch Porfirio Diaz. The peasant discontent which expressed itself in this war soon took revolutionary forms with the guerilla campaigns carried on in the north under Pancho Villa and in the south under Zapata. Villa and Zapata actually took over Mexico City in 1915. It is a remarkable fact that these rough peasants who had destroyed the fortified chateaux of the landowners, massacred the proprietors in a merciless struggle and collectively worked the land which they had seized, respected out of discipline a capital which any other army would have pillaged. This did not, however, prevent the Casa del Obrero Mundial from signing what amounted to a treaty of alliance with the liberal nationalist general Carranza; the "red battalions" controlled by the

workers' leaders fought alongside the army against Zapata's guerrillas.

Thus the workers' movement allied itself with the growing bourgeoisie and the oligarchy, who put aside their internal struggles, making common cause to crush the peasants' revolution. Its leaders hoped to get this policy accepted by their followers, they made use of the genuine distrust of the developed worker for the rural savage, the hostility of the anti-clerical town-dweller toward the local priests who played so great a role in the ranks of Zapata's army. It required, however, many years and much cunning to defeat the peasants' revolt. It was not until 1919 that Zapata was killed, and then by treachery. In 1923 Villa was assassinated, after having kept in suspense the American troops commanded by General Pershing. On the morrow of victory, the working-class ally was put in his place: the "red battalions" were dissolved.

But the revolution had shaken Mexico too deeply and for too long a time for a pure and simple restoration to be possible. In the south, Zapata's men had destroyed the great feudal holdings. The oligarchy had to make concessions, to pay the price necessary to prevent the alliance between the workers and peasants. Education was secularized. The workers obtained equal pay between Mexicans and foreigners (their oldest demand), the eight-hour day, the right of association and the right to strike. The Constitution of 1917 outlined an agrarian reform, the first on the continent. It envisaged the expropriation and distribution of large estates over 500 hectares. However, once arms had been laid down, this reform was realised only very slowly. Out of 196 million hectares, 3 millions, that is 1.5% were distributed to 300,000 families by 1926; 9 million, that is, 5.4% to 900,000 families by 1934, 17 years after the Constitution. In 1940, at the end of Cardenas' government, 18 million hectares, that is, 11% had been distributed to 1,800,000 families.

Under the Presidency of General Lazaro Cardena, Mexico was in fact profoundly transformed, pursuing in a way the revolution begun in 1910. The General, 100% Indian, a remarkable politician, wished to "modernise" Mexico. In realising this bourgeois-democratic revolution, he enjoyed the constant support of the Mexican working class movement, entirely controlled at this time by the Communist Party. Utilising the Zapatist tradition, and to prevent the division of the land from ending in the rapid ruin of the small peasants receiving it, he pushed co-operatives - the ejidos, the name of the old peasant communities - enabling the common use of equipment and government credits.

The Cardenas government also undertook the struggle to bring under its law the great American firms. It encouraged and protected the formation of unions against the oil companies, which were real states within the state, with their own police and their own armies on their concessions, enabling them to refuse to submit to Mexican law on social and tax matters. The obstinacy of the big firms who would give way neither to strikes, even violent ones, nor to the decisions of the Mexican courts, finally forced Cardenas to decree, in 1938, the nationalization of 18 American and British firms belonging to the oil cartel. But it was only thanks to the world war that Mexico finally obtained recognition of this measure: the oil cartel, in the wider interests of capitalism, resigned itself to accepting the indemnity offered by the Mexican government, rather than risk keeping a dangerous revolutionary agitation on the southern borders of the U.S. in war time. Besides, by the wish of the bourgeois leaders, the revolution stopped there: the Mexican bourgeoisie profited by the war to consolidate its conquests and to industrialise.

The Mexican revolution after 30 years of continuous but unequal development, has ended in a profound transformation: henceforth there exists a solid industrial and rural bourgeoisie. Mexican society in many ways recalls that of the developed countries. Foreign capital has to disguise itself as "national capital". The working class, organized in unions of a North American type, divested of all Stalinist influence, and tightly linked to the state apparatus, does not question the regime which it has helped to build. However, imperialism maintains firm positions, both economic and political, and conquers more of them; there exist in the north great estates of more than 200,000 hectares, and the poor peasant suffers from land hunger. After an interruption of 19 years, the agrarian reform was started again in 1959. Thus the Cuban Revolution awoke many echoes in the fatherland of the first Latin American peasant revolution. The Mexican possessing classes realised that the revolution had merely been interrupted: the essential problems remain.

#### THE GUATEMALAN REVOLUTION:

Guatemala, four times the size of Belgium, with  $3\frac{1}{2}$  million inhabitants, is at the other end of the scale of development of Latin American states. In 1900 an official Chilean mission searched in vain for a single school. In fact, this country was one great estate, the Frutera. Up to 1943, under successive dictators, Guatemala did not even have law: its courts knew only the death penalty, applied equally to oppositionists and robbers. It was with a student demonstration, turned into an insurrection by the intervention of some of the military, that, in 1944, the Guatemalan revolution began. For 10 years, under President Arevalo, this little country experienced the strongest revolutionary wave in Latin America since the time of Zapata.  
.....The workers

The workers organized, fought, won their demands. The peasants formed unions, the agricultural workers fought for their wages. Uncultivated land was occupied and cultivated, great estates threatened and attacked. Arevalo's successor, Colonel Arbenz promulgated an agrarian reform. It envisaged the expropriation of uncultivated land - with compensation - and its redistribution among poor or landless peasants. But the domains of the United Fruit Co., adjudged to be of "industrial use", were not touched. It was a matter, as Alba wrote, of a measure of sound capitalist economics, with the object of giving the land without hands to the hands without land.

However, the imperialists became anxious. The words "Agrarian Reform" are in themselves revolutionary. The victorious struggle of the workers and peasants overflowed the frontiers of Guatemala, and the contagion might be dangerous. The American ambassador, Patterson, uttered threats, and his successor, Peurifroy, organized armed counter-revolutionary action, with the practical support of the Dominican dictator Trujillo.

Against the intervention which was being openly prepared, Colonel Arbenz looked for arms. All the capitalist countries refused them. He bought them in Czechoslovakia the USSR supported him, and in exchange he lent on the Guatemalan Communists whose party developed rapidly, gaining many key positions, notably at the head of bodies applying the agrarian reform. Workers and peasants rallied to defend their revolution, formed militias, demanded arms. Arbenz gave them none: to resist the mercenaries of imperialism he relied on the national army, increased the officers' pay, multiplied his reassuring declarations on the maintenance of order and defence of property. When the Washington recruited commando of Colonel Castillo Armas, equipped with modern ~~xxx~~ weapons including airplanes, crossed the frontier, the army cadres rallied to it.

Arbenz was deposed by the chief of staff whom he himself had just nominated. The disarmed workers' and peasants' militias were crushed, machine-gunned without being able to defend themselves. A ferocious repression descended on the country: the world Socialist press produced a barrage of protests against American intervention: even Jacques Soustelle, in France, joined in. But there was total silence on the ignominious conditions of the fall of the Arbenz regime. The world working-class movement identified the revolution with the president-colonel who had delivered it unarmed, with the complicity of the Communist Party, to the soldiers of imperialism. Only a vanguard minority in Latin America gave consideration to the lesson.

#### FIDEL CASTRO:

It was Cuba's turn to take over, with the movement inspired by the action of a young man, universally known today, Fidel Castro. Born in 1926, son of a large landowner, educated by the Jesuits, Fidel Castro Ruz studied law at the same time as carrying on a precocious political activity. His marriage made him the son-in-law and brother-in-law of ministers of the dictator Batista. President of the Havana law students, he first of all fought in the ranks of the petty-bourgeois democratic party, the Authentic Party. At this stage his only objective was to obtain free elections in Cuba and to fight against the corruption of successive governments and of the administration. However, several electoral setbacks and Batista's preventive coup d'etat of 1952 convinced him that the cards were stacked against such methods and that violence was necessary. He then decided on a terrorist act in the tradition of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries. The attack on the Moncada barracks, July 26, carefully prepared for a year, led by a group of 200 students and intellectuals which he had won over and organized, would, he thought, procure him arms and radio transmitters with which to call all Cubans to rise against the dictatorship.

But the adventure ended badly: those who were not killed in the attack were captured and tortured and beaten. Thanks both to the delay in his arrest and to the intervention of his family and the clergy, Fidel Castro was not tortured, but tried. A brilliant orator, and speaking simultaneously as accused and advocate, he reached an audience outside the walls of the court room. The Minister of the Interior had to declare that he was ill in order to prevent his having a public trial. Behind closed doors, in the presence of the judges, of six journalists sworn to secrecy, and of a hundred armed guards, he made his celebrated five-hour indictment in the guise of a defence: "History will absolve me and condemn Batista". On October 16, 1953, he was condemned to 16 years in prison. But from that day on he was known throughout Cuba.

He came out of the Pines prison 2 years later, amnestied with the others on May, 15, 1955, having studied and reflected. After July he took refuge in Mexico; then, in the U.S. he made the rounds of the "enlightened" capitalists and rich enigmes, collecting 50,000 dollars. He then prepared a new attack. Under the direction of Alberto Bayo, an ex-service officer of the Spanish war, 80 Cuban enigmes received guerrilla training. The most brilliant pupil was to become Fidel Castro's indispensable lieutenant; he was the Argentinian Ernesto "Che" Guevara, a doctor, who had fled from the Peronist police, reached Guatemala, lived through the revolution and been present at its final defeat. ....On December, 5,

On December, 5, 1956, having announced from the rooftops the attack he was preparing, Castro disembarked in Cuba with 82 companions, lightly armed. Storm and bombardment had forced them to abandon their heavy arms, ammunition and food supplies. They set out to reach the mountains, but only 12 men reached the Sierra Maestra, 12 men armed with machine guns and with no contact with the local population, but who were soon to put to flight the 50,000 perfectly armed and equipped men of Batista.

#### THE CONQUEST:

Scarcely two years later the 12 men had carried it off: their army, the Rebel Army, entered the capital. These men, thenceforward known as the "barbudos" (bearded ones), had learnt much and changed quite a bit. Buevara witnesses: "The men who arrived in Havana after two years of bitter struggle were not the same from an ideological point of view as those who took part in the first phase of the struggle. Their distrust of the peasant had been transformed into affection and respect for his qualities. Their complete ignorance of rural life had been transformed into a knowledge of the poor peasantry.

Fidel Castro and his companions would have been condemned to death if they had not been able to win over to themselves the peasants of the mountains, and then those of the entire Cuban countryside. They achieved this by struggling with them against their enemies, the great landowners, and the private and state police, offering them a programme of agrarian reform and a start in realising it in the "liberated territories". As Huberman and Sweezy wrote: "At first the peasants merely hid the rebels: before many months had passed the peasants as a class supported the rebels: from passive assistants they developed into active participants." The students, technicians, lawyers, doctors, teachers who fled from the towns, organized the mass of poor peasants and agricultural workers whose ~~confidence~~ confidence had been won by the first rebels. It can be stated that the "Rebel Army" was a genuine peasant army. Those who led it, certainly, like Castro himself, were sons of middle-class families or of members of the oligarchy, in general intellectuals or politicians. But one must note, with Theodore Draper, correspondent of the Report, that "while the intellectuals and Bolshevik revolutionaries were closely linked politically and psychologically to the Russian working class, the intellectuals and revolutionary politicians who follow Castro identify themselves emotionally with the peasants. Let us also note that it is the peasant detachments whose role the leaders praise most willingly. After the victory, Castro hailed them as the "the flower and the heart of the most effective and the most solid sections of our revolutionary army."

The peasants supported the Rebel Army because they had confidence in it and in its programme. Other social groups, in the towns, supported it only because, very soon, its victory began to appear to them the quickest and most effective way of getting rid of Batista: here the programme was of less importance than the immediate effect. The workers took part in the resistance, in workshops, in print shops and in secret arsenals. The middle classes, the bourgeoisie and even some of the oligarchs financed the civil resistance of the Castro partisans, often from fear, certainly, but also from an opportunistic attitude to a growing movement, and because the Batista dictatorship, as it lost ground, became continuously more brutal, more ferocious. The Cuban Communist Party, almost alone, stood aside for many months. True, it no longer carried on a policy of support for Batista, but thought that to overthrow Batista, it is necessary to have a coalition which goes beyond the bounds of anti-imperialism and includes of necessity forces which are not anti-imperialist. Criticising Castro, who did not bring into the leadership of his movement the bourgeois and oligarchs who provided money, the Communist Party took no part in the general strike called by Castro's rebels on April 9, 1958, but joined the movement some months later when it became obvious that the days of the Batista regime were numbered, and that no one but Castro was capable of taking power.

The last campaign, in the last months of 1958, was a triumphal march: Batista's army crumbled, the rats left the sinking ship, the more prudent rallied round with enthusiasm. One after the other the towns gave themselves up to the "bearded ones." By January 1, 1959, they were masters of the country.

On December, 5, 1956, having announced from the rooftops the attack he was preparing, Castro disembarked in Cuba with 82 companions, lightly armed. Storm and bombardment had forced them to abandon their heavy arms, ammunition and food supplies. They set out to reach the mountains, but only 12 men reached the Sierra Maestra, 12 men armed with machine guns and with no contact with the local population, but who were soon to put to flight the 50,000 perfectly armed and equipped men of Batista.

#### THE CONQUEST:

Scarcely two years later the 12 men had carried it off: their army, the Rebel Army, entered the capital. These men, thenceforward known as the "barbudos" (bearded ones), had learnt much and changed quite a bit. Buevara witnesses: "The men who arrived in Havana after two years of bitter struggle were not the same from an ideological point of view as those who took part in the first phase of the struggle. Their distrust of the peasant had been transformed into affection and respect for his qualities. Their complete ignorance of rural life had been transformed into a knowledge of the poor peasantry.

Fidel Castro and his companions would have been condemned to death if they had not been able to win over to themselves the peasants of the mountains, and then those of the entire Cuban countryside. They achieved this by struggling with them against their enemies, the great landowners, and the private and state police, offering them a programme of agrarian reform and a start in realising it in the "liberated territories". As Huberman and Sweezy wrote: "At first the peasants merely hid the rebels; before many months had passed the peasants as a class supported the rebels: from passive assistants they developed into active participants." The students, technicians, lawyers, doctors, teachers who fled from the towns, organized the mass of poor peasants and agricultural workers whose ~~confidence~~ confidence had been won by the first rebels. It can be stated that the "Rebel Army" was a genuine peasant army. Those who led it, certainly, like Castro himself, were sons of middle-class families or of members of the oligarchy, in general intellectuals or politicians. But one must note, with Theodore Draper, correspondent of the Report, that "while the intellectuals and Bolshevik revolutionaries were closely linked politically and psychologically to the Russian working class, the intellectuals and revolutionary politicians who follow Castro identify themselves emotionally with the peasants. Let us also note that it is the peasant detachments whose role the leaders praise most willingly. After the victory, Castro hailed them as the "the flower and the heart of the most effective and the most solid sections of our revolutionary army."

The peasants supported the Rebel Army because they had confidence in it and in its programme. Other social groups, in the towns, supported it only because, very soon, its victory began to appear to them the quickest and most effective way of getting rid of Batista: here the programme was of less importance than the immediate effect. The workers took part in the resistance, in workshops, in print shops and in secret arsenals. The middle classes, the bourgeoisie and even some of the oligarchs financed the civil resistance of the Castro partisans, often from fear, certainly, but also from an opportunistic attitude to a growing movement, and because the Batista dictatorship, as it lost ground, became continuously more brutal, more ferocious. The Cuban Communist Party, almost alone, stood aside for many months. True, it no longer carried on a policy of support for Batista, but thought that to overthrow Batista, it is necessary to have a coalition which goes beyond the bounds of anti-imperialism and includes of necessity forces which are not anti-imperialist. Criticising Castro, who did not bring into the leadership of his movement the bourgeois and oligarchs who provided money, the Communist Party took no part in the general strike called by Castro's rebels on April 9, 1958, but joined the movement some months later when it became obvious that the days of the Batista regime were numbered, and that no one but Castro was capable of taking power.

The last campaign, in the last months of 1958, was a triumphal march: Batista's army crumbled, the rats left the sinking ship, the more prudent rallied round with enthusiasm. One after the other the towns gave themselves up to the "bearded ones." By January 1, 1959, they were masters of the country.



THE FIRST STAGE:

For many observers, it was hardly necessary to expect any very new developments. Castro the victor, master of the State apparatus, proceeded to organize elections from which he emerged completely victorious to put into operation a few minor reforms, finally to make Imperialism pay a price - a limited one - for its support of Batista. Fundamentally nothing was changed: Batista himself had begun his career with popular support. However, right from the beginning, the American press unleashed a violent campaign against the new regime on the question of the anti-Batista repression. Must one see in this, as many commentators have done, a sign of the complete hostility of Imperialism, made apparent from the very beginning? This repression, which affected only the principal torturers and those responsible for them, displayed, to the eyes of Imperialism, the disquieting characteristics of taking place in broad daylight, real mass meetings accompanying the sessions of the military tribunals: 20,000 people were present, not in silence, at the televised trial of Sosa Blanco (Commandant) in the Palace of Sport in Havana. It seems, however, that the press campaign was above all intended to frighten the Cuban leaders and to recall them to a more correct idea of their state of dependence. At the same time, 6 great American firms extended to the new government a credit of 1 1/2 million dollars: For its part, United Fruit, mistress of the "Green Empire" which had just overthrown the Arbenz regime, advanced 500,000 dollars to that of Castro.

In fact, the measures which followed the victory of the rebels were not in any way really revolutionary. Fidel, commandant of the Rebel Army, kept apart from the government. It was a moderate bourgeois, a judge with a reputation for integrity, Manuel Urrutia, who became the new President of the Republic. Miro Cardona, Prime Minister, and Agramonte, Minister of Foreign Affairs, were liberal politicians, and the Minister of the Interior was the owner of a large daily. As Huberman and Sweezy wrote, "The face which the Cuban revolution first showed to the world was that of a quite respectable middle-class regime."

Certainly, there were important measures. The army, some 50,000 officers, N.C.Os and men, was officially dissolved; this was certainly a powerful blow against the forces of the oligarchy which, in all Latin American countries, has always used the army as a sort of Super-Police for repressive purposes. A few days later the police force was dissolved, and this, too, was an important measure. It must, however, be emphasized that the new Cuban leaders hardly had any choice and that the legislation only confirmed the actual state of affairs, Army and police had, in fact, been completely dissolved in the preceding weeks by the action of the masses: To make them rise from their ashes would have been an impossible task in view of the hatred of them which had grown up under the Batista regime. However, the navy, less involved in repressive tasks and which at the last minute had rallied to Castro, was not touched. Besides, the new government immediately began to rebuild a police force with men enjoying the confidence of Castro: thus he created a specialised repressive body, on the bourgeois model like the preceding ones, but benefiting from the "revolutionary" prestige of those who led and composed it. In addition, the Castro army, which preserved officially its name of "Rebel Army" was ostensibly used for peaceful tasks, public works, building of roads and houses. The barracks were changed into educational centres. The rest of the State apparatus remained intact.

High officials were naturally purged when they were too compromised with the dictatorship. But the structure of the administrative machine was preserved, although a closer supervision resulted in some prosecutions for corruption, which gave it a "new look". The wave of purification did not even touch the administration of justice, and an apologist for the Castro regime as zealous as George Soria is compelled to write: "As for the judiciary, whose attitude during the black years had hardly been a model of courage, it was strangely enough completely spared: the magistrates who had given judgment under Batista continued to give it under Castro." The whole of the diplomatic personnel remained at its posts, which made counter-revolutionary activities much easier for quite a long time. Finally, the powerful newspapers, controlled by foreign enterprises and the oligarchy, continued to appear freely.

Consequently, there was nothing in the initial measures of the new regime, not even the 5% reductions in rents which contributed enormously to its popularity, which transgressed the framework of bourgeois democracy further, in April 1959, Fidel Castro went to the USA in the hope of obtaining comprehensive support, and everywhere he made reassuring declarations. Thus, on April 25: "We are against all forms of dictatorship..

That is why we are against communism... The communist state with its totalitarian conception sacrifices the rights of man... Our revolution applies democratic principles to carry out a humanist revolution."

Was the Cuban revolution, thus begun under the banner of the petty bourgeois, anti-capitalist and anti-communist ideology of the "humanist revolution" blessed by the Church (since the almoner of Catholic Action saw in it the victory of the "Christian Spirit" over "pagan materialism") going to undertake a limited "modernisation", canalizing the masses and reassuring Imperialism? Many still thought so. But very soon its rhythm was going to quicken. The first internal measures brought counterthrusts from Imperialism, and each blow given by the U.S. led to further acceleration. There can be no doubt as to the way in which the Cuban leaders were directed along this road, since in 1959 they did not conceal the moderate character of their programme. Che Guevara, very honestly, acknowledges the empirical nature of the Castro policy, which allowed itself to be led by events and to abandon its earlier programme, when he writes: "With the exception of our agrarian reform, which the people of Cuba wanted and set on foot themselves, all our revolutionary measures were a direct reaction against the aggression of the monopolists... U.S. pressure on Cuba made necessary a radicalization of the revolution."

#### AGRARIAN REFORM:

Agrarian reform was definitely the first objective of the peasant army which had carried on the guerrilla war against Batista. The National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA), created to carry out the reform and to organize the powerful peasant movement which had developed in the course of the struggle, was, in fact, the child of the army, which already, without waiting for legal sanction, had started on "reform" by attacking the large estates of the leaders and friends of the regime, as well as others, designated for the occasion "properties badly acquired".

The law itself was promulgated on May 17, 1959. One cannot but agree with the analysis of it made by René Dunont, who judged it "lacking in all revolutionary character, often recalling the Italian laws of 1949 - 1950, inspired by the Christian Democrats". It provided for the expropriation of all estates of more than 400 hectares, allowing for the preservation of areas of "progressive" cultivation up to 1340 hectares, of sugar plantations and those whose yield was 50% above the national average. All the rented land, in whatever form, was also expropriated. All the owners were in principle compensated. The distributed lands were inalienable.

The reality was quite different. The armed peasants, as we have seen, have not always waited for the passing of the law. Even after, they kept to its provisions only very approximately. The peasant army, either directly or in the INRA, speeded things up, did not burden itself with formalities or precise measures, and, quite rightly, regarded all the large estates as "properties badly acquired".

Moreover, one article of the law provided for the sequestration of any land whatever if it were "in the interests of agriculture": this article was often to serve to cover up actions taken outside the law, or the wide interpretation of a document which those appointed to apply it had not read. The result was that in two years, three-fifths of the agricultural land of the island had passed under the control of INRA and that less than a tenth of the expropriated land had been paid for in money or in goods.

In addition, consequent upon an article of the law imposed, it is said, by Fidel Castro himself, against the advice of experts, INRA had as its object the organization, "wherever it is possible", of collective cultivation of the expropriated land. The old traditions of the agricultural worker "first of all a proletarian, demanding higher wages and better conditions of employment, but not always wanting to cultivate on his own account", as they were expressed in the Zapata movement, were here joined to the economic problem which had also faced Cardenas, that of avoiding the division of the land into holdings so small as to be prejudicial to the productivity and the final return to vast estates. Thus INRA organizes cooperatives which enjoy State aid in capital and equipment, which are administered by its appointed officials and which compete among themselves. For they are integrated into a market which obeys the laws of capitalism and also coexists with independent peasants, about one-third, owning less than 400 hectares and consequently untouched by the reform. The nature of the regime is not in the least changed by "collectivization" which introduces cooperatives into a capitalist framework, opening up a perspective of the enrichment of some and the ruin of others through competition. Moreover, it does not solve the problem of the agricultural workers who did not receive land during the reform.

#### THE "ECONOMIC WAR" AND NATIONALIZATION:

The agrarian law did not constitute a serious attack on the international financial interests of imperialism. Protests began in the U.S. only with the non-payment of compensation. But it is the political implications of the reform which caused anxiety; the very words "agrarian reform" have an enormous power of attraction for the millions of starving peasants throughout Latin America. The Cuban reform is dangerous above all because of the risks of contagion, and it is probably for this reason that the leaders of the U.S. decided to call a halt on the first excuse, after having accepted agrarian reform in principle.

Batista had pillaged the Treasury, and in spite of the initial loans from large American firms, the Cuban government faced a catastrophic financial situation. This necessity explains such measures as the compulsory reduction of electricity rates, imposed up to then by American firms, the introduction of new automatic methods in the telephone service, and the "mineral law" which imposed on firms a tax of 25% of the value of their exports of minerals. In the spring of 1960, the conflict between Cuba and the U.S. opened the way for intervention by the USSR, which put the Cuban problem at the centre of the world rivalry between the two great powers. It was in fact to reduce the export of currency and to make wholesale economics that the Cuban government agreed to buy the oil offered by Moscow at a lower price than that of Venezuela; this was to be paid for in deliveries of sugar instead of money. The masters of the island's refineries, Texaco, Standard Oil, Shell, refused to refine the Russian oil (refining itself was carried on at a loss, so that the companies were interested in it only if it were a question of refining oil extracted by themselves, such as that from Venezuela). As in Mexico just over 20 years earlier, the government replied in the only way which would allow it to maintain its authority and to ensure the continued working of the economy: in reply to their blackmail, the government nationalized the oil companies. The U.S. replied by cutting its sugar purchases by 700,000 tons, a heavy blow at the Cuban economy.

One thing led to another, attack provoked counter-attack, the "economic war" got worse: capital took flight, firms closed down, and in order to keep the wheels turning, nationalizations multiplied. By the autumn, all large American undertakings, in effect all the large undertakings in Cuba, some 80% of the industrial enterprises, oil, coffee, tobacco, the mines, were nationalized. The American Government put an embargo on exports to Cuba. In order to fill the gap thus created in the provision of essential goods, up to then supplied by American industry, the Cuban leaders imported from the USSR and the people's democracies. In the year 1960, imports from the East rose to 40% of the total although before the revolution they had been insignificant. The foreign trade of Cuba was profoundly changed, and with it, the political forces within the country.

#### THE "RADICALIZATION" OF THE REVOLUTION:

One cannot deny that the radicalization of the Cuban regime has been partially the work of the leadership. The decision to resist imperialism compelled it to take ~~xxx~~ measures which would broaden its popular support. It would be interesting to have information as to what went on at that time in the leading circles. Viewed from outside, the process was relatively simple: one after the other, the "bearded ones" of the early days, following the petty-bourgeois politicians installed in the government in 1959, abandoned Castro: they meant to remain faithful to the "humanist and neutralist revolution" which they believed he was deserting. However, how did this differentiation develop? Were there real discussions in which different theses were put forward, were possibilities envisaged of development by different roads: limited mobilization of the masses in order to stand fast; the use, against the pressure of the U.S. of the counter-pressure of the USSR, or a trading of the Russian alliance for a compromise with imperialism? In the absence of precise information, the knowledge which we have of the behaviour of Castro and his friends suggests a different hypothesis: it was doubtless empirically, as ~~it~~ in the earlier stages, that the Cuban leaders, strengthened by their initial successes, pushed forward by the masses whom they had aroused, sure of their prestige and their ascendancy, chose a policy of resistance which has dragged them farther than they wished and which one would not normally have expected from men of their social origin and ~~it~~ ideology. One can also imagine that the experience of Arbenz, which Guevara shared, contributed to this choice, all the time emphasizing that this course was possible for the Cuban leaders only because they had carried on the struggle at the side of the peasants in the mountains during the guerrilla stage.

Urban reform constituted a step forward: by fixing a ceiling on rents and allowing all tenants to become owners, it dealt a serious blow at certain elements of the oligarchy, like those of Havana who owned and rented out 5,000 apartments, but above all it served to gain the support of the urban masses hitherto standing aside from a revolution which was essentially peasant. The same anxiety led to the setting up of state farms in the countryside, the Granjas del Pueblo, which gradually took the place of the co-operatives. The profits of the Granjas go to the state, and their introduction has limited the risk of the development of a "co-operative capitalism".

However it is in the measures of direct resistance that are found the most important elements of radicalization. The nationalization of enterprises, in the absence of the necessary personnel, inevitably constituted an appeal to the initiative and responsibility of the workers: it was the workers' militias which undertook the task of guarding the factories. Their extension, in a few months, on the basis of voluntary recruitment, training and serving outside working hours, marked a turning point in the history of the Cuban revolution: the working class, from being a beneficiary, became a participant. A rapid increase in its role was promoted by the American menace, the fear of intervention, the open activities of the counter-revolution. The government accepted this: in the event of a full-scale offensive the Cuban people, once having resisted the disembarkation so as to make it as costly as possible, could have counted only on popular guerrilla action and civil resistance, for which militias are more effective than a regular army.

Thus the relationship between political forces modified both itself and the course of the revolution. The counter-revolutionary oligarchy found accomplices at all levels in the State apparatus: its activities provoked a repression which delivered blows at the traditional state a thousand times more powerful than those which it received in 1959. The diplomatic corps was thoroughly purged, the navy partly so; at all levels officials were affected, and the sacrosanct judiciary was dismantled after having been decapitated by the dissolution of the Supreme Court in the middle of 1960.

At the same time the importance of the organizations linked to the masses grew: after the sabotage of an arms factory in Havana, it was the workers' militia which undertook counter-measures; it was the vigilance committees which increased during the days of April 1961, taking the place of the police in carrying out the repressive tasks which daily became more numerous. The Cuban Revolution had ceased to be solely a peasant revolution: it was becoming a workers' revolution, and the growth of workers' militias, to the detriment of the army - a peasant army - is the clearest illustration of this change in the internal relationship of forces of the revolution.

#### WHERE DOES THE CUBAN REVOLUTION STAND?

On several occasions, discussing in public speeches the criticisms of his ferociously attacked parliamentary democracy and extolled "direct democracy". But the "General Assembly of the Cuban People" at Havana is simply an immense mobilization of the masses, which would take a great deal of imagination to equate with a direct democracy in which each worker is involved in the direction of the state. Direct contact between the Cuban workers and peasants and their "lider máximo" (great leader), thanks to the television screen, is a one-way process, and cannot be equivalent to the conscious activity of the workers deciding their own fate through their own class organizations.

The Cuban state is not the ancient type of direct democracy described by Castro's propaganda and some European intellectuals. Nor is it the direct democracy of the workers and peasants as in the soviets of Russia, the committees of Spain, the workers' councils of Hungary, such as were thrown up by the revolutions in those countries. It is not, however, by chance that direct democracy is spoken of so much in Cuba: the revolution, a conscious activity of the widest masses, brings to the forefront their most fundamental demands, notably that of exercising their power through direct democracy.

In reality, the island today presents an original form of dual power. On the one hand, a bourgeois state, purged and reformed by the creation of new organs like the Rebel Army and INRA, their aim to curb the Cuban masses: directors and administrators of the factories, granjas and co-operatives, are appointed from above. But at the same time there have developed the characteristic forms of workers' power, where the initiative comes from below: the 400,000 militiamen organized on the basis of their place of work, the vigilance committees, are competing with the old forces, "reformed", of the army and police. They are the true channel for the ever more conscious mobilization of the masses. Such as they are, they represent - as shown in the events in Poland and Hungary in 1956 - the beginning of the workers' consciousness of their own striving for power. The institution in the factories of "Technical Assessing Councils" (Consejos Técnicos Asesores, or C.T.A.), reflects this duality. Consultative bodies appointed by the management from a list of workers elected in a general meeting, they are not organs of the workers' will, but at this stage represent concessions to that will which the later evolution of the workers' struggle can transform, under the pressure of the vanguard, into instruments of power and workers' control.

A correct definition of the nature of the Cuban government and state is an indispensable step in understanding the present situation and the future perspectives. But for this it is necessary to be on guard against rigid terms which, by transfixing a moving reality, may prevent us from grasping the dynamism and transitory character of a situation.

The Cuban government is a petty bourgeois government, in its original social basis, in its social composition and in its ideology. The section of the Cuban petty bourgeois personified by Fidel Castro has, as much by its own empiricism as by the absence of a working class leadership, found itself drawn beyond its own class objectives, and has been able, in a genuine though distorted manner, to express the revolutionary drive of the workers and peasants. But it has not a true revolutionary perspective, and it is once more Guevara who reveals this when he declares: "In order to know where Cuba is going, the best thing is to ask the government of the U.S. just how far it intends to go." The two powers which face each other are in a position which may take various forms but in which the alternatives are unavoidable: either the "reformed" traditional State will evolve towards bureaucratization and a bourgeois victory and will destroy the elements of workers' power (militia, committees and C.T.A.) or else the militias and councils will become the organs and the basis of a workers' state. Many factors interact to decide their future. We lack a great deal of information necessary for evaluating them: what is actually the structure of political life in Cuba? how and where does it appear in the trade unions, the militia, the army, the cooperatives? How can a conscious leadership emerge to deal with the dangers which threaten the revolution, and, above all, the influence of the Communist Party?

The "Popular Socialist Party", the Cuban Stalinist party, has never in the past played any real role, certainly not that of leadership: long ago the Latin American Stalinist parties abandoned all revolutionary or even reformist ambitions, being content to play the part of agents of the Krenlin bureaucracy. We have seen that for a long time they supported Batista, and that at a time when Castro's programme was merely an advanced bourgeois-democratic one, they reproached him both for his adventurism and his radicalism. Rallying to him at the last moment, they began to play a real role only with the economic war and the reorientation of Cuba's foreign trade.

As Claude Julien writes, "To each attack from the U.S., to each gesture from the USSR, corresponds a defection of the moderates and a reinforcement of the Cuban C.P." Official propaganda on the friendship of Russia or the deliveries of arms, raised the prestige of the party in this threatened country. Its bureaucratic apparatus and its organization enabled it to benefit from this popularity to a much greater extent because the July 26 movement, created by Fidel Castro, has never developed a real organization, a real apparatus. In 1959 and 1960 it was, as Claude Julien emphasizes, "too late to enter the Movement of the 26 July, but there was still time to join the Communist Party." Also the PSP includes many "11th-hour recruits" recruited especially from the petty bourgeoisie: these well-disciplined and firmly controlled "militants" have set out to gain the key posts in the trade unions and cooperatives. More "Fidelists" than Fidel, powerful from the prestige of the great "ally", the Stalinists are taking up in Cuba a method which has so often succeeded for them elsewhere, denouncing as "counter-revolutionary" in the name of "unity" all those who will not play their political game: "Fear and suspicion have reappeared on the Cuban scene".

The banning of the journal of the Cuban Trotskyist organization, the Revolutionary Workers' Party, the silence which has fallen on the fate of the leaders, the destruction of the presses on which was printed Trotsky's PERMANENT REVOLUTION, show the influence which the Stalinist apparatus wields in Cuba today, and its determination to use it against the revolutionaries. It is significant that Castro and the other July 26 Movement upholders of the "Anti-Totalitarian and humanist revolution" have agreed to the proscription of a working-class tendency which the Stalinist bureaucracy, now their main supplier, has pursued for decades with implacable hatred. These measures throw a clear light on the proposal for prohibition of the right to strike and the formation of a "United Party" which the Stalinists will no doubt control right from the beginning and which they will use to subdue the mass movement.

## WHERE IS THE CUBAN REVOLUTION GOING :

A discussion on the Cuban revolution is going on amongst the advanced workers. Certain positions taken up are hardly reassuring as regards cohesion of thought on the part of comrades who claim to be revolutionary Marxists. It is impossible to make an analysis of what is going on in Cuba by collecting facts and pigeon-holing them. It is impossible to analyse the revolution of Cuba while leaving out the foreign policy of American Imperialism and the Soviet Bureaucracy, or, unless one accepts that the Kremlin bureaucracy is a revolutionary force, to consider the help given by Moscow as disinterested and without political strings.

In similar conditions - almost by armed struggle -, the Stalinist bureaucracy strangled the Spanish Revolution. In 1936, the anti-Franco camp presented similar forms of dual power: a crumbling bourgeois state, with a government led by petty bourgeois; local and regional workers' power with committees and militias. The Spanish bourgeois state was a thousand times more shaken than that of Cuba. The organs of workers' power were more numerous, more differentiated, more stiffened by a conscious leadership than their Cuban equivalents have hitherto been. As soon as the Spanish Republican bourgeois state had been "reformed" and rebaptised "popular", the organs of workers' power were destroyed, the committees dissolved, the militias integrated into the bourgeois army and the masses subjugated. It was finally the oligarchy and the troops of Franco which won the war, crushing for more than 20 years the Spanish working-class movement.

The feeble Spanish bourgeoisie was able, in the first stage, to defeat the workers and peasants and subordinate them because the anti-Franco camp, faced with what was in effect an imperialist coalition - intervention of Rome and Berlin, non-intervention of London and Paris - obtained from the USSR the supplies of arms necessary for the war. Russian aid was the starting point for the influence of the Stalinist Party, but this party, because of its counter-revolutionary policy, was definitely the expression of the Spanish petty bourgeoisie at the same time as being the transmission line of the double pressure, against the workers' and peasants' revolution, of Imperialism and the bureaucracy. The same events can recur in Cuba, arising from similar relations between the USA, the USSR and the Revolution.

What perspectives open up today for Cuba? Theoretically there are 3. First, that which Imperialist propaganda declares daily has already taken place, the transformation of Cuba into a "People's Democracy", for Marxists a "deformed workers' state". All the internal conditions exist: a much-purged bourgeois state in which the Stalinists, thanks to the support of the USSR, hold the key positions, and economy in which the large capitalists have been expropriated, but whose backwardness, like its cultural level, is favourable to the formation of a state bureaucracy based on advantages in kind and higher salaries for officials and technicians, finally a genuine movement of the masses, but one capable of being controlled within narrow limits by a bureaucracy. But the international situation which allowed the creation of the people's democracies in Europe is absent, for they are what they are because Imperialism agreed to allow USSR buffer states. Geographically, Cuba is part of the American "buffer", and it would need an at present unforeseeable reversal of the international situation for a people's democracy to be established 95 miles from the American coast.

The second hypothesis is that of a Thermidor, a halting of the Cuban revolution, and the negotiation of a compromise with Imperialism. Khrushchev showed in April 1961 that he was not prepared to go to war for Cuba. On the contrary, Cuba is more and more a hostage in his hands, something which can be traded in an eventual summit agreement. Whether Khrushchev, dealing with Kennedy, will agree to dictate Wall Street's conditions to Cuba by refusing to continue his "aid", or whether Castro, to escape Moscow's black-mail, will agree to discuss a "modus vivendi" with Kennedy, in either case, this capitulation of the Cuban revolution can only take place through the repression of the mass movement, that is, if the way is prepared by the joint policy of Castro and the Stalinists, the construction of a strong state, which is beginning today through the formation of the United Party and the proposals for the suppression of the right to strike. This orientation of the Cuban leaders implies the abandonment of their appeal to "make the Andes into new Sierras Maestras", of the search for support among the workers and peasants of Latin America, to the benefit of the alliance of bourgeois states of the "third force", Brazil and Argentina, in other words, the renunciation of a revolutionary foreign policy, even purely verbal, in favour of a policy of peaceful co-existence.

This hypothesis, which agrees perfectly with the facts of the international situation, unfortunately appears today as the most probable, for it corresponds both to the empiricism of the Castro leadership and to the objectives of Russian policy. It is probably taken seriously by the State Department, forced to revise its policy after the setback of the April landing and anxious to put a stop, if necessary by a sharing out of the cake, to the fire which Cuba is in danger of spreading. Finally, it is the policy recommended by the bourgeois governments of Brazil and Argentina, anxious to "reintegrate Cuba into the American community", and conscious of the price they can exact from imperialism for their mediation.

The Cuban workers know all this, as does Che Guevara, who said "We are attacked certainly for what we are, but we are attacked far more because we show the road to follow. What upsets imperialism is not so much the nickel mines and the sugar refineries which it has just lost in Cuba, but the fate of Venezuelan oil, Mexican cotton, Chilean copper, Argentinian herds and Brazilian coffee, which swell the riches of the American monopolists."

Either Cuba will be brought back into the sphere of influence of North American imperialism or it will open the way to the Latin American revolution. Either way, the key to the future of Cuba is not to be found in Cuba alone, and the defenders of the slogan "Cuba socialist and independent" will have some difficulty in constructing a theory of "socialism in a single island", which nonetheless represents the logical - and absurd - development of "socialism in a single country." To this new "surpassing" of Marxism can rally only a few left-wing intellectuals in search of a saviour, ready to cling to Castro after having been let down by Tito or Mao - those who substitute magic for policy and incantation for analysis.

The perspective which inspires fear in Washington, that which the policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy is designed to prevent, is a revolutionary explosion in Latin America, in the countries where the organized proletariat already plays or will soon play a leading role, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico.

If the Cuban revolution is of such great importance, it is because, beyond the Latin American revolution, it opens the way ultimately to the decisive revolution, without which no conquest will be definitive, that of the proletariat of the U.S. The fact of humanity is not decided in the sierra but in the industrial metropolis. It is not decided in one island, not even for the islanders themselves, but for everyone and on a world scale. The workers, in order to win this prolonged battle, need to know where they are going and along what road: they need a leadership organized internationally, of which the common denominator will be that of being the party of the workers' councils. To forget this in an analysis is to forget the unity of the world market, the unity of the workers' struggle against capitalism, the interdependence of all parts of the world. Unless one believes that the revolution in North America can be started by 12 farmers in Minnesota taking to the bush and growing beards, one must admit that so long as the revolution is confined to Cuba it must inevitably be defeated, and that a workers' state cannot arise without the conscious action of the working masses and the formation - in Cuba as in Mexico or Detroit or Essen - of workers' councils like those spontaneously formed by Polish and Hungarian workers in 1956. The "Cuban" revolution will grasp at victory on the day the workers in Ford and elsewhere in the United States form their committees and their militias. More than ever, revolutionary action in any country poses the problem of the building of the revolutionary workers' party on a world scale. That is the great lesson of Cuba, where the masses and the world forces of counter-revolution face each other, and whose immediate future largely depends upon the possibility of forming a revolutionary leadership distinct from the ideology of both the petty-bourgeois Castro leadership and that of the Stalinists, and determined to go forward at once to extend the workers' and peasants' revolution to Latin America.

-----oooo00000oooo-----