LATIN AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS DISCUSSED

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When the discussion begins about Latin America, you can often hear the following: Does a revolutionary situation exist there now?

The Latin American communist parties, beginning from the national reality and situation on the continent as a whole, believe that a revolutionary situation of general character exists in many countries, that is, the maturation of the objective and several of the subjective prerequisites for revolution is progressing. But this still does not mean that a concrete revolutionary situation is present: regarding this, as V. I. Lenin repeatedly noted, far from all concrete revolutionary situations lead to revolution.

The revolutionary process in Latin America is a complicated phenomenon having its own specific characteristics; its main content is the struggle for authentic national sovereignty and economic independence which is interwoven with the sharp class struggle against capitalist exploitation and primarily against the foreign and local monopolies and latifundists. In the course of the revolutionary struggle in Latin America with its brilliant successes and pitiful defeats, a rich experience has accumulated. Therefore, the Latin American and international communist movement believes that the analysis and generalization of this experience is an important task.

Socialism in the New World

The construction of socialism in Cuba and the success of socialist ideas in other countries is a qualitatively new factor in the development of the continent. The International Conference of Communist
and Workers Parties of 1969 in Moscow pointed out that "The Cuban revolution snapped the chain of imperialist oppression in Latin America and led to the creation of the first socialist state on the Latin American continent, while signifying a historical turnabout and opening a new stage in the revolutionary movement here. In this region of the world fighting democratic and anti-imperialist movements are developing . . . which are discovering the path toward socialism."2

In Chile, the National Unity Government, after taking over state power, advanced to essential social and economic transformations. The progressive and nationalistic government of Peru is decisively conducting anti-imperialist and antioligarchical measures. Before the August 1971 coup in Bolivia, intentions were declared to conduct a similar policy.

These processes are explained by quite definite reasons. As it is well known, there was no bourgeois democratic revolution in the Latin American countries except for Mexico and Bolivia (it began in Guatemala, but American imperialism and domestic reaction drowned it in blood in 1954). The completion of a classical-bourgeois democratic revolution (that is, an antifeudal agrarian revolution) is hardly to be expected here in our century. Now social revolutions even in their early stages are distinguished by more advanced and even socialist characteristics.

However, the opponents of Marxism, despite these facts, often refer to the special features of the continent which would seem to exclude the application of Marxist-Leninist theory here. "Latin America is a continent of democracy, not socialism," is a widespread view. And it should be acknowledged that not all tendencies in the liberation revolutionary movement are able to understand the connection between the struggle for democracy and socialist perspectives. From the classical point of view, the adherents of such theories are divided into two groups essentially distinguished from each other: These are the foreign and internal counter-revolutionary forces and the followers of petit-bourgeois revolutionism. And both use the slogan, "Latin America is a special world!" as an argument (however, this can be said of any continent!). They repeat the special features of the working class, the peasantry, and the middle classes in the countries of the region, oppose revolution to reform, and speak about the extremist methods of struggle and other factors which, according to their imagination, predetermine social development along some sort of "special" path; in fact, analogous "special features" will also be found in other regions of the world, and by themselves cannot place the growing
influence of Marxism-Leninism in the liberation and revolutionary processes in doubt. Fidel Castro, in his speech on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the birth of V. I. Lenin, explains this question in the only true way, dialectically: "The theory of Marx was never an outline... it is science; scientific propositions are applied to concrete cases, but as a whole coincidental concrete cases do not exist. Special conditions were present in our country, but Marxist ideas found the widest application here."3

Among the "arguments" are both the aggressive policy of American imperialism and its "presence everywhere" in Latin America, because of which revolutions which would overstep capitalist limits are impossible. This fatalism has already been rejected by life itself. The petit-bourgeois revolutionaries advance the notion according to which only a partisan struggle on a continental scale can lead to success in these conditions.

The facts of the revolutionary struggle in Latin America (both its successes and failures) plainly repudiate the pseudo-revolutionary, fatalistic, and counter-revolutionary notions and show that Marxist-Leninist theory is universal. Socialist ideas in Cuba did not show the way immediately. There were both bitter lessons and failures, although the Cuban people under the leadership of the communist party and with the aid of the socialist countries overcame them; this was reflected in the recently announced slogan: "success is hammered out of failures."
The experience of the Cuban revolution significantly enriched Marxist-Leninist theory.

**Petit-Bourgeois Revolutionism**

The Latin American petit-bourgeois revolutionaries, as a rule, appeal to the Cuban revolution in confirming their views and declare their intention to follow its experience. However, they understand this experience extremely one-sidedly and at the same time mechanically transfer it to the other countries of Latin America. They dogmatically approach the method of partisan struggle, which is one of many tactical methods, and turn it into a strategy. The notions of "guerilla strategy," while reflecting in a distorted manner the positive fact of attracting broader and broader masses into the revolutionary struggle by itself, are the views of petit-bourgeois revolutionaries who are voluntaristically trying to fit reality to their theory.

The adherence of the petit-bourgeois notions of revolutionary struggle, although they often state their inclination to Marxism, are in
fact quite far from it; they not only doubt the leading role of the working class and of its party, but are also attempting to create a "new vanguard" which includes the most diverse social forces (and in particular cases even encompasses "racial revolutionary mysticism"). According to the ideas of the authors of such notions, all the youth are the "vanguard," because it alone is physically capable of conducting an exhausting partisan struggle. They believe that the "third world," which is also heterogeneous from the class point of view, rather than the world communist movement and the world socialist system is the main anti-imperialist and revolutionary force at the present time. They are often inclined to divide the countries of the world in the "rich" and the "poor," while thus extinguishing the social differences between them.

As a result, the adherence of petit-bourgeois ultrarevolutionary notions in Latin America are not able to find a solid foothold in any really revolutionary class, and in the international field they are doomed to isolation.

Pathos of Revolution

The Latin American communist parties until 1956, Rodney Arismendi points out, supported the opinion that the only possible way of completing a revolution was the armed way, and he adds: "this is basically a theoretical proposition."

The 20th CPSU Congress and the Declaration of Communist and Workers' Parties of 1957 advanced the proposition about the possibility of the peaceful way.

The bloc of Chilean communists and socialists (FRAP) during the presidential elections of 1958 were the first in the history of the continent to confirm that possibility. The Cuban revolution was victorious on 1 January 1959, and this again brought armed struggle to the forefront. The partisan movement unfolded almost over the whole region, but did not succeed in repeating the Cuban example. In Chile in 1970, a united front of left parties came to power by means of election, and this points out the actual possibilities of the peaceful path.

These events confirmed that during the recent period the sharp arguments on the question of the ways of completing a revolution became quite acute.

The communist parties of Latin America consider in determining the paths for revolution that the ruling classes do not intend to repudiate
power voluntarily. Relying on the Marxist notion of the state and revolution, communists come to the conclusion that Latin American revolutions should destroy the bourgeois state mechanism and create a state of a new type which, while fulfilling the functions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, will also implement as part of that the expropriation of the exploiters. "... socialist revolution," Arismendi writes, "assumes the overturn of the old ruling class, the destruction of the capitalist system, and the beginning of the construction of the bases of a new society. All this requires the application of revolutionary force whether the proletariat and the people come to power by means of an armed uprising or without it (my emphasis--GK)." The communist parties, including the Chilean Communist Party which is following the peaceful path, also assume that revolution cannot get along without-class coercion even in the case when there is no necessity of resorting to armed struggle, for changing the class character of power earlier assumes the appearance or presence of class coercion in some form. Therefore, they believe that it would be more exact to use such definitions as the "armed" and "unarmed" path instead of the "armed" and "peaceful". This confirms the circumspection with which communist parties examine the problem of the ways of completing a revolution: none of them are made absolute; they do not decide ahead of time which of them will lead to victory, and they only choose the path which seems most probable. Therefore, the public proclamation of some petit-bourgeois revolutionaries that the Latin American communist parties are, or were, opponents of armed struggle is without grounds. The majority of the parties do not exclude that it is possible to have to take up arms at one stage of the revolution. This can occur at the beginning stage if power is taken by arms, or at the later stages if the ruling classes unleash a civil war or in the case of imperialist intervention.

Petit-bourgeois revolutionaries who accuse communists of reformism are not able to understand that being revolutionary is not connected with particular methods of struggle and that the methods by themselves do not have a class content. They believe that the unarmed path is insignificant; they assume that the "guerilla strategy" alone expresses "being really revolutionary."

Petit-bourgeois revolutionaries are not able to understand the essence of proletarian internationalism and they treat revolutionary solidarity in a distorted manner, they do not take the concrete correlation of class forces into consideration, and they rely on global schemes. As a counterweight to them, the communists begin with an analysis of the national reality of each country; their understanding

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of proletarian internationalism also includes the armed assistance to the revolutionaries of other countries as a form of counteracting reaction if those believe it necessary. In June 1971, for example, the communist parties of the Central American countries and Mexico at their subregional conference, after taking the most barbaric methods of repression employed by counterrevolution into consideration, endorsed the "necessity of showing continual and more active fighting solidarity" with the revolutionary countries of the whole region.

Concerning the notion of solidarity, Fidel Castro stated in the above-mentioned speech: "When we speak about the support which we are giving to the revolutionary movements, it should be noted that this support is addressed not only to the partisan movements alone, but also to the governments which sincerely are conducting a policy directed at the economic and social liberation of their countries from imperialist oppression; by whatever means that government came to power, Cuba will give it assistance."6

Individual groups of petit-bourgeois revolutionaries also bring up the question about revolutionary terror as a method of struggle. V. I. Lenin wrote: "In principle we have never and can never reject terror. It is one of the military actions which can be quite advantageous and even necessary at a particular moment of battle, with a particular status of the army, and under particular conditions. But the crux of the matter is in fact that terror is not at all advanced at the present time as one of the operations of an active army closely connected and conforming to the whole system of struggle, but as a self-sufficient means for an isolated attack independent of any army."7

Latin American communists share this Leninist proposition and rely on it in analyzing the situation in Latin America. As Aresmendi notes, "The fear of deviation, in the given case of left deviation, cannot serve as either a theoretical or methodological argument for disproving the thesis if this thesis is scientifically correct and corresponds in its essence to Marxism-Leninism."8 And here the problem comes down to the fact that making the methods of terror absolute in its essence does not correspond to Marxism-Leninism.

Communists do not reject the necessity of struggling to attract petit-bourgeois revolutionaries as allies; at the same time they criticize their mistakes from a theoretical position. Communists try to avoid identifying all ultrarevolutionaries with anarchists or blanquists, if they do not reject class struggle. Many ultraleftists struggle sincerely and honorably, but since they exclusively apply its extreme methods,
because of circumstances this sometimes leads to divergence from the correct course and can even generate anti-Marxist sprouts.

The petit-bourgeois revolutionary movement in general, and their extremist groups in particular, immediately become impatient in the case of failures when they cannot achieve their goal, and they try by any means to achieve what they were not able to achieve in a better situation even in unfavorable conditions. This "running forward" from reality is doomed to certain destruction, for it does not rest even on a minimal calculation of the concrete conditions and the actual correlation of forces. The danger of that position consists in the fact that it can lead revolutionaries to superfluous sacrifices. Extremist terrorist acts can be used by reaction as the occasion which "justifies" the activity of counterrevolution. In addition to that, extremist organizations are easily penetrated by provocateurs.

Keeping all this in attention, Latin American communists at the same time do not repudiate that the struggle of the ultrarevolutionaries is a constituent part of the class struggle, for it arises as a product of objective causes and conscious decisions and, if they are joined with a mass movement, can play a definitely positive role.

The only correct revolutionary policy is always and under all conditions the mobilization of the popular masses; revolutions accomplished in those conditions have as many paths (and numberless methods) as there are existing concrete situations; and since there are no two identical situations, there will not be two identical revolutions. Latin American communist parties believe that the path for revolution in the final reckoning will always be characterized by the concrete correlation of forces, methods, and means of the class struggle.

The Hegemony of the Working Class

The working class is also the revolutionary vanguard in Latin American society, because its interests and goals objectively coincide with the requirement of historical development. In this sense, the working class is the most revolutionary (if you like, the most left) independent of the degree of its consciousness or of its participation in any given political struggle. In this, however, the experience of Latin America shows that at the first stages of revolutionary liberation processes, the leading role can belong to other revolutionary forces. But the transition to socialism can be ensured only under the leading role of the working class and party. In Cuba a small revolutionary vanguard, whose members at that time still called themselves petit-
bourgeois revolutionaries, began the struggle. After becoming aware of the antipopular and antinational character of the dictatorship, they became able to direct the toiling classes, middle classes, and even some representatives of the ruling classes against it. Together with that, the transition to a socialist revolution in 1961 became possible only because of the mass support of the working class and of other toiling classes, and socialist construction, as Fidel Castro correctly pointed out in July, 1970, "confirmed . . . that the proletariat, the industrial proletariat, is the real revolutionary class and potentially the most revolutionary class."9

The events in Peru and Bolivia (up to August 1971) also give grounds to make a similar kind of conclusion about the leading role of other social forces at a particular stage of revolution.

However, in such cases the necessity of relying on the masses, the necessity of a particular modification in the class character of the movement in the course of time becomes even more obvious and vitally important for the continuation and development of progressive social processes. In the final reckoning the basic cause of the defeat of many petit-bourgeois revolutionaries was just that they were absolutely not "proletarianized" and as their result revolutionaries of even the most sincere and revolutionary intentions brought the complacency, adventurism, and anarchism of small producers into the movement. They did not want to acknowledge the revolutionary creativity of the masses while limited by the sphere of activity of the revolutionary vanguard.

Rural toilers (by which we understand both the peasantry and the agricultural proletariat), whose size in Latin America is significant, can also play a large revolutionary role. In Cuba, for example, the agricultural proletariat was the backbone of the partisan movement, and later, of the Insurgent Army. The political actions of the agricultural proletariat in other countries is evidence that its position is becoming close to the positions of the working class. Other strata of rural toilers can also play a revolutionary role, and this sometimes generates the illusion of self-sufficiency for them. Deprived of land and rights and not having confidence in tomorrow, they often have a propensity for extreme methods of struggle which seem to them "the most revolutionary."

Thus, significant revolutionary forces exist in Latin America in addition to the proletariat and its parties, and where the proletariat and its party are not strong enough or commit mistakes, the role of these revolutionary forces, and primarily of the agricultural proletariat and petit-bourgeois, can increase to the detriment of the role of the working class. However, serious and long-term revolutionary changes as
Marxism-Leninism understands them will not occur while the leaders of these movements try to exclude those forces which represent scientific socialism from the revolutionary process. The hegemony of the working class should be implemented in every consistent revolutionary movement, whichever way the revolution develops. Only this will ensure its success.

The tendencies of deepening and expanding the class struggle in Latin America has filled the old forms with a new content, and the appearance of new methods of struggle not only does not diminish, but constantly requires carrying out the hegemony of the working class and the vanguard role of the communist parties.

The United Front Policy

In the countries of the region, armed struggle has the richest traditions, but the definite experience and tactics of the united front, which in the period of the Second World War permitted communists to attain significant successes and now acquires a new scope, is present. At the present time, the united front policy in Latin America has a qualitatively new character: its components include not only an election, but also a political, alliance for the sake of implementing a previously worked out program of the socialist transformation of society; they unite all the forces which are capable and inclined to struggle for realizing that program; and finally, they nominate a common candidate for president. Such was the basic outline for creating the National Unity bloc, the political alliance of the Chilean left wing forces. As a result of the victory of National Unity, the left wing forces obtained state power, and possibilities for a socialist restructuring are opened in the country.

The Broad Front of Political Parties was created in Uruguay. The 20th Congress of the Uruguayan Communist Party in December 1970 expressed the idea that the probability "of taking power is becoming real and potential in the short range."10 Elections in Uruguay were held in November 1971 and the Broad Front received (according to preliminary data) 220,000 votes (20 per cent). Thus, a new page in the history of the country was opened.

In Argentina in November 1970, the "National Meeting of Argentinians" was created with the participation of communists, left Peronists, socialists, radicals, part of the Christian Democrats and also other political parties and organizations, which united the progressive forces on the basis of a
the minimum program of resolving national problems.

In Brazil, the tendency of the military dictatorship which came to power in 1964 by means of a coup hinders the unification of the masses, but the prospects for an upsurge in the popular movement are also encouraging here.

In Venezuela, two petit-bourgeois parties, the Electoral Movement of the People and the Republican Democratic Union were the initiators in creating the Popular National Front which the communists joined in February 1971. The front intends to nominate a common candidate for the new presidential elections in 1973. In Ecuador, communists, socialists and other progressive forces, trade unions, and university organizations in June 1971 joined in the Popular Unity bloc which placed defending the sovereignty of the country and liquidating exploitation as its goal.

The progressive forces of Mexico formed the National-Liberation Movement which operates in close collaboration with the communists.

In the other countries of Latin America, political alliances of the progressive, democratic, and anti-imperialist parties, organizations and other social forces are in the process of forming. The conference of the communist parties of the Central American countries and Mexico in June of last year unanimously acknowledged the necessity of improving collaboration with other revolutionary and progressive movements with the purpose of creating a regional united front for struggling with the common enemy. The movement of national fronts already has its own variety of continental organ in the form of the Latin American Unity Movement. Its goal, as proclaimed at the March 1971 press conference in Montevideo, is to direct the public opinion of the Latin American countries toward the struggle for achieving an independent economic and cultural development. This goal completely corresponds to the political attitude and fighting capacity of the popular masses. The continental character of the unity movement is also reflected in the joint governmental measures of the countries of the "Andean Group" directed at limiting the role of American capital.

The organizational, political and ideological self sufficiency of the communist parties participating in them is the decisive condition for the creation and success of united fronts, and this simultaneously ensures them freedom of action and protection of the interests of the working class. The organizational dissolution of the communist parties in some faceless bloc and ideological concessions on their part would not influence but on the contrary would hinder the formation of united fronts. Chilean communists as decisively as possible emphasize that their experience in
this regard can serve as a lesson for the future. The Uruguayan Communist Party occupies the same position. While speaking about the united front, Argentinian communists warn that "while taking part in them, communists should without fail stick to a hard and principled policy, preserve its ideological and political independence, and enter every situation from clear Marxist-Leninist positions."\[11\]

Another decisive condition for a correct and effective united front policy is attracting a majority of the toilers into the political struggle, and in an even wider sense, a correct policy in regard to their allies. An isolated party, even if it is cohesive, and an isolated working class cannot obtain victory in revolution. Therefore, K. Marx warned revolutionaries that a working class solo unaccompanied by a peasant choir is turned into a funeral march. V. I. Lenin repeatedly emphasized that the vanguard alone cannot be victorious. The popular character of the Latin American united fronts corresponds to these instructions, since, from the class point of view, it signifies the association of the exploited classes and part of the middle strata. Communists are striving to give the struggle an all-national character, and they want to attract, in the first or second phase of the revolution, all those representatives of the social classes and groups whose interests at the given moment coincide with the tasks of the united front in it. Communists believe that a temporary agreement can even be concluded with some bourgeois groups.

Che Guevara in analyzing the Cuban revolution noted that "in practice the nonrevolutionary forces also influence the creation of revolutionary power"\[12\] to the extent that they oppose the dictatorship and its American protectors. However, Guevara emphasized that those phenomena are exceptional. It is also necessary to occupy a similar position in regard to radicalized church circles. At the same time, it is necessary to use great efforts to attract the reformist lower clergy and the Catholic masses following them to the side of the anti-imperialist movement.

A profound understanding of the essence of united front tactics is being exhibited in regard to left wing extremists in Chile. Before the victory of Salvador Allende, they, although acting incorrectly and sometimes even turning to anticommunism on occasion, weaken the position of the conservative forces, but in that situation when the broad coalition of the left wing social forces came to power and when it still had to be solidified in many spheres, the preservation and continual strengthening of unity is a vitally important task. In these conditions, left-wing extremism can objectively affect the weakening of this unity.
Many members of the Left Revolutionary Movement (MIR) are not aware that the tactics by which the bourgeoisie were defeated with their own weapons, namely by using bourgeois juridical norms, requires no less revolutionary courage and political audacity than armed actions. The Chilean Communist Party Central Committee plenum which took place in June 1971 emphasized that despite several important changes in the MIR position, its general line directed at the seizure of land and enterprises and the notion of class struggle acknowledging the unavoidability of armed conflict do not correspond to the concrete conditions of Chile. The plenum believes that at the given moment the very first task of all revolutionaries is to win the "battle for production." The MIR party is not able to understand that this is a fundamental class policy. Similar positions are characteristic for the members of the Peruvian MIR who do not wish to acknowledge the significance of the anti-imperialist and anticapitalist measures of the military government. Chilean President Allende granted amnesty to the arrested MIR members; this, of course, does not signify that their views are accepted, but is clear evidence that National Unity would like to "win" the ultrarevolutionaries with the purpose of further expanding the united front. The Peruvian government released E. Bejara [Bekhara] and other partisans arrested by the preceding government from prison; in 1970 R. Debray was released by the government of Jose Torres. The third National Congress of the Bolivian Communist Party (1971) in emphasizing the special danger of the course of the Maoists and other extremists stated: "It is necessary to turn spontaneous insurrectionists into permanent revolutionaries by arming them ideologically and giving them a theoretical knowledge directing the unconscious but sincere passions of youth toward organized and conscious actions." It is notable that Debray, in distinction from his former views, acknowledged in his first statements after release that in the class struggle political actions are more important than armed actions; he also spoke about the fact that there could not be a single form of struggle for all Latin American countries.

The Uruguayan Tupamaros, the Argentine Montoneros, and the urban partisan groups in Brazil and other countries are also strenuously seeking possibilities to show themselves in the political arena apart from armed struggle. In the long run, this can positively affect the expansion of the social base of united fronts. Communists believe that anticommunism is the limit outside of which expanding united fronts would be a great political error.

The united fronts have to find an organizational method for uniting the popular masses standing outside of ideology and politics. The question is about those masses which still do not dare join political
parties and are even less prepared to fight for socialism, but which are inclined to strike out against the injustices of the capitalist system they are caught in and against foreign domination. The committees for the defense of the revolution play this role in Cuba both in the armed and political struggle as well as in production and other spheres of social activity. In Chile, the committees of National Unity as local territorial organs aided the victory of S. Allende in the elections in a decisive manner. In Peru, committees for the defense of the revolution arose spontaneously; communists gave support to this process to the extent the committees were supporters of the progressive measures of the government. United fronts in other countries of Latin America also are trying to create their own local organs.

The experiences and successes of the united fronts shows that in Latin America revolution can be implemented in an unarmed way, but the unarmed way cannot be made absolute and it cannot be the negation of a single previously known or new way of revolution.

A New Mode of Military Thinking?

1968 brought unusual events for Latin America: the military government of Peru which came to power by means of a coup, while relying on the assistance of the popular masses, began to conduct a progressive policy and held an anti-imperialist position on a number of important questions. In the same year, the army seized power in Panama and held up the ratification of a new one-sided treaty about the canal and the regular military agreement with the U.S. The Panama military government has still done little to change the economic structure of the country, however, it can be confirmed that we are nevertheless not speaking about a traditional putsch to the extent that political prisoners including communists were released and activity by democratic organizations was permitted. This policy contradicts the intentions and interests of the local oligarchy and American imperialism.

In 1969 a coup of a similar type occurred in Bolivia. However, here both the first military government of Ovando Candia and the second of Jose Torres did not venture to go far and hesitated. All this was an attempt of particular military circles to change the former state of affairs.

In analyzing these phenomena, it is not sufficient to say that "a new mode of military thinking" is being formulated in Latin America.
If it is to be believed that the army is free from class contradictions and that it is independent of society, then that explanation seems really logical and sufficient. The military, however, do not act because they are military, but on the strength of objective social development and of their own subjective class goals. It is notable that at this time the military governments are made up not of representatives of the reactionary generals, "the guerill," but from officers who come from the middle strata of the population. The question is beginning to be not about "a new mode of thinking" of the military, but about the fact that patriotic and democratic tendencies are developing within the armed forces of several countries, as formulated at the International Conference of Communist and Workers Parties of 1969 in Moscow. Arismendi makes this definition specific as follows: "there is no guarantee that the formation of class positions in revolutionary processes will occur in the classical manner. To the contrary, particular countries are approaching the democratic and anti-imperialist phase by different routes, and in individual cases it is possible that the radical bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, the military, or other groups, will head the movement." This does not mean that in those cases the popular masses and communist parties are playing an insignificant role; to the contrary, without their support those groups would not be able to retain power. The united anti-imperialist popular fronts formulated under the leadership of the communists are a reliable support for the progressive military governments.

Another factor cannot be left out of sight. Armed forces often try to direct the creative energy of the popular masses not along the popular-democratic route, but toward supporting special "national models" of social development. "Neither capitalism nor socialism!" is the favorite slogan of many military politicians. The simultaneous negation of both the existing and future social systems is a typical phenomenon of petit-bourgeois revolutionism. In the slogan, the "no" said to capitalism objectively becomes the decisive element, but the simultaneous objectivist negation of the present and future can lead to inhibiting social transformations and creating favorable conditions for reactionary maneuvers. An example of this is the coup executed in Bolivia by the military circles of the opposite wing in August 1971.

The contradictions in the policy of the military stem from the fact that they come to power without a clearly worked out revolutionary program and have a tendency to rely exclusively on their own forces, but they are gradually becoming aware that without the support of the revolutionary forces and the popular masses they are neither able to maintain power nor to move forward. It can be thought that their desire to avoid creating their own political party is an expression of these
contradictions; instead of it they seek forms for the direct and continual participation of all (!) citizens in the development of the revolution. However, it is quite natural that reliance on the revolutionary forces and on the masses in the long run signifies the possibility of a qualitative change. Peruvian President Velasco Alvarado in vain stated in his speech of 24 June 1971: "We know well that the revolutionary process should be embodied in the real transfer of power to the strata of the majority. Our movement is moving toward this goal . . . ." This does not mean substitution in the leaders of the revolution. The same military men can remain leaders if they turn out to be capable of understanding the requirements of objective development and are able to move from "suprasocial" positions to the positions of the revolutionary classes.

The Peruvian Communist Party Central Committee plenum (July 1971) greeted the steps taken to stimulate the participation of the popular masses in the revolutionary process and pointed out that the only way out of the difficult situation (caused by the actions of American imperialism and the local oligarchy) is further deepening the revolutionary process. The plenum documents state that the party, despite ideological and other differences with the government, will not hesitate for a second in giving it assistance right up to the mobilization of communists if the situation reaches a civil war.

In conclusion it should be said that noticeable tendencies exist for underestimating these positive factors and of reducing them in the end to "a new mode of military thinking;" those "theories" that the army in Latin America is becoming "the new vanguard" have appeared which, to the contrary, are evidence for the presence of tendencies to clearly overestimate the changes in the armed forces. The fact is that the class struggle permeates all the political institutions of class societies including the army where representatives of the middle strata (and of the exploited classes) are present in high concentration and organized with power in their hands and are beginning to act consciously. Since the question is about class struggle, the representatives of the reactionary classes and of foreign monopolies cannot be left out of consideration and it cannot be believed that there never again will be reactionary military putsches in Latin America or that every activity of the military will have a progressive character.

Reforms and Revolution

The policy of the united front and the philosophy "neither capitalism nor socialism" allows us to set up the question about the interaction of reforms and revolutions in a new way. The Latin American left-wing
extremism implies every action (whether it be actions of the communists parties or of military governments) besides armed actions under reformism: the right-wing forces and opportunists want to limit social development with reforms alone. Some call exclusively for action and others expect from evolution what in the given situation can only be obtained by revolutionary action.

The communists are leading a consistent struggle against opportunism and right-wing deviations and are also consistently struggling against leftist extremism. The experience of the class struggle on the continent shows that if a mass revolutionary struggle is present (armed or unarmed), reforms always become its byproducts. But without a mass revolutionary struggle it is impossible to carry out objectively necessary social reforms. K. Marx directed the attention of revolutionaries to the fact that reforms are never the result of the weakness of the strong, but are always the result of the strength of the weak. This brings the conclusion that the dilemma of "reform or revolution" is false.

After the Cuban revolution, the enemies of socialism on the continent tried to close the road to social progress with interventions, counterrevolutionary terror, as well as with reformist policy from which they expected the weakening of class contradictions and social tensions (the program of the "Alliance for Progress" of President J. Kennedy; the encouragement of Christian-Democratic and bourgeois-democratic parties and tendencies in general). The policy of the Chilean Christian-democratic government (1964-1970) is characteristic in this regard. Its reformism stood between two fires, the exploited classes and the middle strata expected more radical transformations from the government, when they did not follow, were completely disappointed in it. As a counterweight to this the Chilean oligarchy and foreign monopolies supported the Christian-Democrats on the assumption that in implementing reforms they would not go too far; in fact, the Christian-Democrats did not justify their hopes and thereby lost the support of part of the right-wing forces. Thus, bourgeois reformist policy itself was deprived of its social base. The disappointment in the bourgeois reformism of the government played a definite role in turning the popular masses to the side of National Unity.

Things turned out differently, for example, in Peru where anti-oligarchic and anti-imperialistic reforms enjoyed mass support in fact because they exceeded the boundaries of bourgeois reforms. In that situation it would have been a pernicious error on the part of the left-wing forces not to support the government measures. It is not indifferent for the working class from which positions it should carry
on the struggle for achieving subsequent revolutionary goals; the main thing is never to lose sight of the strategic goal. The party, the working class, and its allies, the toiling masses, must be prepared for revolution and not for reforms. However, it cannot be believed that reforms and social transformations in general are not needed and that they mean the defeat of revolution. V. I. Lenin wrote: "It would be completely incorrect to suggest that while we are for carrying on an immediate struggle for socialist revolution, we can or should throw out the struggle for reforms. Not at all. We do not know how quickly we will succeed in obtaining success and how quickly objective conditions will permit the onset of this revolution. We should support every improvement, which is a real improvement in the economic and political condition of the masses."14

The successful policy of the communist parties and other revolutionary forces confirm the correctness of the basic Marxist-Leninist method of concretely analyzing the concrete situation. Relying on this alone, the working class and its party can take the initiative or react on time and correctly to social processes and to manifestations of the class struggle of which under particular conditions even the secondary can play an important role.

In the coming revolutions the Latin American working class can have many allies, but in fact because these allies live in the same society, they are trying to find their own ideological expression and to introduce their own (understandable and acceptable for them) methods into the revolutionary struggle. This circumstance requires an unhesitating adherence to principles and great practical flexibility from communists, in other words, it is necessary to the end to be conscious of the words of Lenin: "... to think that social revolution is feasible ... without the revolutionary outbursts of a part of the petit-bourgeoisie with all its prejudices and without the movement of the unconscious proletarian and semiproletarian masses against landlord, church, monarchical, national, and so on, oppression is to think that it thus means to repudiate social revolution ... . Whoever is waiting for a 'pure' social revolution will never see it. This is a revolutionary in words who does not understand the reality of revolution."15 Latin American communists therefore see nothing extraordinary in the fact that beside them revolutionaries with extremist or generally confused views are carrying on the struggle. They start out from the fact that this struggle develops objectively independent of their will and because of the fact that they do not agree with it or are separated from it alone, it will not stop existing and will not move from the incorrect positions. Communists are carrying on a principled and uncompromising struggle.
against the erroneous notions of the petit-bourgeois revolutionaries while trying to turn them into their own political allies who are capable of moving from the struggle of individuals and groups to the class struggle and from the moral condemnation of capitalism to a conscious political struggle against it.

It is natural that the desire of communists in a majority of situations are crowned with success. However, in Latin America, because of the special features of the economic development and social structure, the middle strata are very numerous and their revolutionism finds its expression in tendencies of making armed methods of struggle absolute. The petit-bourgeois revolutionary theories will still try to put the leading role of the working class in doubt an innumerable number of times. As a counterweight to their impatience, communists will often be forced to play the role of a "brake," and petit-bourgeois revolutionaries will be inclined to accept these actions as reformism and opportunism. The Latin American communist parties, like the other detachments of the world communist movement, are forced again and again to give battle to the nationalist and reformist notions of "special development" on the ideological plane and to show that in our age the role of the basic classes on this continent also is identical to their historical role.

Latin America is now indisputably characterized by an upsurge of the revolutionary forces. However, it is impossible not to see that counterrevolution is being simultaneously activated. The actions of extremist revolutionaries can present a particular danger for the fate of Latin American revolutions, but it would be pernicious to forget even for an instant that the armed counterrevolutions of the local reactionaries and the intervention of American imperialism is the greatest danger. The revolutionaries of the continent are opposing their own solidifying unit which rests on international revolutionary solidarity to these forces.

FOOTNOTES


2. Ibid.


11. Problemy mira i sotsializma (Problems of Peace and Socialism) (Hungarian), 1971, No. 5, p. 29.


