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Joseph Hansen

THE OLAS CONFERENCE

Tactics and Strategy of a Continental Revolution

[Joseph Hansen, editor of "The Militant," attended the Organization of Latin American Solidarity conference as a reporter for that newspaper.]

The first conference of the Organization of Latin-American Solidarity, which met in Havana from July 31 to August 10, was recognized from all sides as an event of worldwide political significance.

The international press gave top priority to the deliberations, 157 foreign journalists registering for credentials. The State Department paid the conference a high, if involuntary, tribute by postponing a scheduled meeting of the Organization of American States until September in order to place this reactionary body in better position to try to offset the decisions reached by the OLAS gathering. All of Washington's satellite governments in Latin America reacted to the conference with anger and apprehension, taking extraordinary measures to block delegates from attending. The Mexican government, under pressure from the Johnson administration, even staged a provocative witch-hunt on the eve of the meeting.*

It was the largest assembly of authentic representatives of the active guerrilla fronts in Latin America that has yet been held. Cuban sponsorship of the gathering, the sponsorship of a workers state,

**Government agents raided a Maoist bookstore in Mexico City to secure "more than twelve tons of evidence" that Mexican capitalism and its chief ornament, President Diaz Ordaz, were the target of a guerrilla "plot" involving fourteen followers of either Mao Tse-tung, Fidel Castro, or Leon Trotsky. Some of the fourteen became acquainted with each other for the first time in the torture rooms of the Mexican political police. All of them are now in Lecumberri prison where they may be held indefinitely without trial.*

gave it added significance. Delegations attended from ten other workers states and from fourteen international organizations. (A conspicuous absentee was the People's Republic of China.) An outstanding feature was the presence of spokesmen of the Black Power movement in the United States. Stokely Carmichael, one of the leaders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, was included among the top figures of the conference, being made an honorary delegate.

The apprehensions of the imperialists and their retinue were not misplaced, as could be judged from the way their press and even the U.S. Congress fumed as the conference proceeded. Among the leftist currents, reactions were mixed, ranging from the open displeasure and opposition voiced by right-wing Communist party leaderships, as in France, to the gratification expressed by various guerilla movements, the commendatory statements of spokesmen of the Black Power movement in the United States and the recognition by leading Trotskyists that the conference represented an encouraging achievement and step forward for the world revolution.

The subjects considered by the delegates were of burning actuality:

(1) The United States and Latin America, with particular emphasis on the place of the Cuban revolution in the struggle of the exploited continent for freedom from the imperialist metropolis.

(2) The escalation of U.S. imperialist aggression in Vietnam, with its associated threat to other countries, including the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union, and the increasing implication that the extension of U.S. military power in Southeast Asia will continue until it reaches the level of nuclear war unless effective countermeasures are taken in time.

(3) The ghetto uprisings in the United States and their connection with the colonial revolution and the international struggle for socialism.

(4) The class struggle throughout Latin America, involving on the one hand the utterly reactionary oligarchies backed by Washington and on the other the worker-peasant masses and their revolutionary vanguard.

(5) The betrayal of the revolutionary struggle in Latin America committed by the right-wing leadership of the Venezuelan Communist Party.

(6) The class-collaborationist Kremlin policy of "peaceful coexistence" with world capitalism followed by the Kosygin-Brezhnev regime.

Throughout the proceedings, the main theme was the reactionary role played by U.S. imperialism in Latin America, particularly its maintenance of the most repressive military regimes. Considerable attention was paid to the depth of U.S. economic, political, and military penetration on a continental scale. The delegates added graphic accounts of what is happening in their own areas and how the U.S. blocks the social overturns needed to lift their countries out of stagnation.

The indictment of U.S. imperialism began with the opening ad-

dress made by President Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado and reached its most powerful expression in the closing speech made by Prime Minister Fidel Castro at the Chaplin theater.

However, the most dramatic moments in the presentation of the case against the world's most colossal economic and military power came during two press conferences at which the journalists and delegates were given an opportunity to question agents of the CIA captured in Cuba while on counterrevolutionary missions. One of the groups had landed during the conference itself!

From the basic premise concerning the continental scale of the role of U.S. imperialism and its policy of intervening in any country in Latin America where it decides an active threat may exist to its reactionary interests, the conference drew a number of far reaching conclusions.

First of all, it was obvious that the struggle for emancipation must itself be conducted on a continental scale. Heavy stress was placed on the identity of interests among the toiling masses in all the countries of Latin America. This was summarized at the conference in the words of Simon Bolivar: "For us, our country is America." Rephrased, this becomes the present-day slogan: "Latin America—one country."

Secondly, it was obvious in face of Washington's policy of blocking even modest reforms by bolstering or installing the most ferocious military dictatorships, that no road is left open to the peoples of Latin America but armed struggle. Moreover, it was affirmed that the objective of this struggle must be nothing less than a socialist victory.

These two conclusions—the hemispheric nature of the freedom struggle and the necessity of taking up arms in a battle for the socialist way out—were affirmed in speeches and resolutions that made headlines around the world. The position was graphically symbolized in two giant portraits, one of Simón Bolívar, the Liberator, as a backdrop at the opening session, the other of Che Guevara similarly placed in the Chaplin theater where the OLAS meeting came to an end. The meaning was unmistakable—what Bolívar began in the past century as a bourgeois democratic revolution can be completed and carried to success today only as a socialist revolution.*

** A curious sidelight was the reaction of the ultraleft sectarians to this. For instance, Mike Banda of the Socialist Labour League, describing the decor at OLAS as he saw it from London, said: "This conference significantly and unlike previous [?], conferences was adorned by portraits [?], not of Marx and Lenin, but of Simón Bolívar, the bourgeois-landlord-statesman."*

Banda was silent about Che Guevara and his portrait, probably because of a blind spot in his binoculars. But an unsigned article in an adjoining column of the same issue of The Newsletter (September 2) supported the thesis of J. Posadas and the SLL that it was all a lie about the famous guerrilla leader having left Cuba, since he was presumably liquidated by Fidel Castro. The authenticity of Guevara's message on the need to bring massive aid to the Vietnamese people by creating more

This outlook, it is clear, stands in sharp contradiction to the line of "peaceful coexistence," or class collaboration, followed by the right-wing leaderships of the Communist parties in Latin America. The experience with these leaderships, particularly the right wing of the Venezuelan Communist Party which went so far as to publicly repudiate the guerrilla fighters, was placed on the agenda for special consideration. The Cubans, along with the representatives of the various guerrilla fronts, called a showdown on the issue.

On the ground that they had betrayed the struggle in Venezuela, the Venezuelan CP leadership was not invited to the conference. It fell to a center group, headed mainly by the CP contingent in the Uruguayan delegation, to seek to avert or soften the showdown. They argued that it would be unwise to split with the right-wing Venezuelan CP leaders—they were good comrades who would see the error of their ways in time. The unity of the movement must be preserved at all costs. Even if the Cubans and the guerrilla fighters felt strongly about the actions of the Venezuelan CP leaders, definitive action should not be taken at the OLAS conference. The question should be referred to a subsequent conference of the Latin-American Communist parties where the Communists could settle their differences among themselves. Besides, it would be a mistake to make a fetish of armed struggle. In some countries, of course, no other means is open and it might well be that it will eventually prove to be a necessary stage in all countries; but the value of other forms of struggle should also be admitted. Criticism of the Soviet government for offering technical and financial aid to such dictatorships as the one in Colombia was considered particularly uncalled for and reprehensible.

These and similar arguments did not convince the delegates and the conference ended by characterizing armed struggle as the only road to victory under the conditions prevailing in Latin America, all other forms of struggle being necessarily subordinate to this and of value only insofar as they further armed struggle.

Vietnams and taking the road to socialist revolution is highly suspect, according to the same anonymous writer, who also remains unconvinced by Régis Debray's "unclear" statements about "some kind of encounter with Guevara" in Bolivia. It is not at all to be assumed from this that the SLL supports Guevara or his line. A subsequent article in the September 16 Newsletter declared that the OLAS conference drowned out basic Marxist concepts with "loud noises about 'armed struggle.'"

Whatever else may be said of Banda's views, it must be admitted that he adheres with flawless consistency to the SLL theory that Cuba is a capitalist state headed by "another Batista" who is itching to sell out to U.S. imperialism despite the resistance of the State Department to a deal, and who demonstrated this by caving in to the Kremlin's line of "peaceful coexistence," getting rid of the revolutionary Guevara as part of the betrayal. Thus it is not by accident, if we are to believe Banda, that Castro feels a natural affinity for the portrait of the "bourgeois-landlord-statesman" Bolívar, just as it is not by accident that Banda feels a natural affinity for the portrait, if not the thought, of the "manufacturer" Engels.

In conjunction with this, the conference held up the experience of the Cuban revolution as a general model. Whatever mistakes were made in the course of the Cuban revolution and whatever modifications might be required due to specific circumstances in the various Latin-American countries, the main lesson of Cuba remains valid—against a repressive military dictatorship of the Batista type, only armed struggle can assure victory. Moreover the Cuban experience, it was maintained, also remains valid on the tactical level. The key to mounting an armed struggle with any hope of success is to launch guerrilla war.

The question of armed struggle was thus taken at the OLAS conference as the decisive dividing line, separating the revolutionists from the reformists on a continental scale. In this respect it echoed the Bolshevik tradition. Seeking to pin things down still more tightly, the Cubans insisted on the key importance of guerrilla war as a method of moving toward armed struggle. They likewise insisted on the priority of the countryside over the city in initiating a guerrilla nucleus and advancing it. Certain modifications, nonetheless, were to be noted. For instance, it was reported that in Venezuela the guerrillas have shifted from a fixed center to a "moving column." Another interesting development was the distinction made between "revolutionary conditions" and "revolutionary situations." The former refers to the broad relationship of forces, the latter to a specific combination of circumstances such as Lenin had in mind in projecting the seizure of power. While revolutionary conditions hold for all of Latin America, in no country does a revolutionary situation in the Leninist sense exist at the present moment. Thus the perspective is for a long and difficult period with no easy success in sight.

While the delegates concentrated on problems of the Latin-American revolution, the framework of their deliberations was much broader. They did everything possible to utilize the conference as a sounding board to express solidarity with the Vietnamese people. They did not limit themselves to hailing the heroism of the Vietnamese but insisted on the need to support them in the most vigorous and effective way possible—by stepping up material aid, by opening up new fronts against U.S. imperialism, by revolutionists making the revolution in their own countries.

A similar attitude was displayed in relation to the struggle of the black people in the ghettos of the United States. When Stokely Carmichael spoke at the final plenum, he received a standing ovation; and throughout his stay in Cuba, the press, the radio and television featured him as one of the main luminaries. The uprisings in the ghettos in the U. S. going on at the time of the conference were given similar prominence; and after the conference a giant rally was staged in Havana on August 18 in commemoration of the Watts explosion. In this way the Cubans sought to call dramatic attention to the common ties between the colonial revolution and the struggle of the black people in the United States and to draw the appropriate lessons.

The conference ended by setting up a permanent organization with a set of statutes. The aim of the new organization, OLAS, is to co-ordinate and advance the revolutionary struggle in Latin America along the lines specified in the main resolutions passed by the delegates. In this way, the conference not only drew a balance sheet on the experience with the right-wing leaderships of the Latin-American Communist parties, it set up a new continental organization to challenge them in the field of struggle. This was probably the single most important outcome of the Havana gathering.

What was the line of political thought behind the OLAS conference? No documents are available on this, but it can be inferred with perhaps reasonable accuracy. I would say that the Cuban leaders have drawn certain broad conclusions concerning their entire experience up to this point.

To save the Cuban revolution from being smashed by American imperialism, they were compelled to turn to the Soviet Union. Without material aid from the Soviet Union, it would have been virtually impossible to survive without immediate extension of the revolution. Besides material aid, they also turned to the first workers state for models in various areas. This also involved turning to the existing Communist party in Cuba, particularly for cadres.

This course, from which the Cubans felt there was scarcely any realistic escape under the circumstances, also carried certain disadvantages. One of the worst was the undue impetus given to the growth of bureaucracy, which would have been a problem in any case. The danger was seen in time, and the Cuban leaders met it head-on in the famous Escalante affair. They drove ahead to completely restructure the party so as to further deprive the Escalantes of points of leverage.

In the international field, where the Cubans from the very beginning were committed to advancing the cause of world revolution, the experience was even more disturbing. Khrushchev's course in the missile crisis of 1962 showed the dubiousness of relying on the Soviet bureaucracy in a showdown with American imperialism. The doubts that arose, or were reinforced, at that time settled into firm conclusions in view of the policies followed by both Moscow and Peking in face of Johnson's escalation of the war in Vietnam. An Asian land war which ought to have led to an early defeat for American military power was permitted to drift into an increasingly dangerous threat without a single serious countermeasure being undertaken. The two powers have proved incapable up to now of uniting even at a government level in defense of a beleaguered workers state and with their own countries marked as subsequent targets! The Cubans thus came to see in Vietnam a warning as to their own possible fate.

The conclusion was inescapable. The defense of Cuba rests primarily on the Cuban workers and peasants. The best defense is extension of the revolution.

As they came to realize this with fresh urgency, the Cubans went

through another disappointing experience—the leadership of the Venezuelan Communist Party gave up the armed struggle to which it had committed itself and reverted back to the "electoral road"; i.e., participating in the electoral field, not as a revolutionary opposition party, but as a pressure group supporting the "progressive wing" of the national bourgeoisie.

And this betrayal received covert support from the Kossygin-Brezhnev government through cynical proffers of technical and financial aid to Latin-American military dictatorships participating with all their counterrevolutionary energy in the U. S. blockade of Cuba.

To counter the Venezuelan betrayal and the Kremlin's treacherous maneuvers in Latin America, a vigorous new assertion of revolutionary principles and a fresh start in applying them was obviously required. The OLAS conference was designed to serve this objective.

Looking back, it can be seen that the Tricontinental conference, held in January, 1966, represented a step in this direction. It ended in a compromise, however. Along with the assertion of revolutionary goals, formulas were agreed to that provided a cover for the right-wing CP leaderships and all those who were willing to pay lip service to armed struggle while in practice continuing to play the rotten game of electoral politics. This was capped with Castro's attack on "Trotskyism" which, however much it satisfied the right-wing CP leaderships, was taken by all vanguard elements with any real knowledge of the Trotskyist movement as at best a mistaken identification of Trotskyism with the bizarre sect of J. Posadas and at worst nothing but a belated echo of old Stalinist slanders, the purpose of which remained completely obscure. It was thus necessary to wait and see what the true outcome of the Tricontinental conference might be. The course followed by the Cubans quickly disclosed that the revolutionary side of that conference was the more important and it became clearer and clearer, particularly after the disclosures concerning the betrayal in Venezuela, that a public break with the right-wing CP currents was inevitable and imminent.

This was formalized at the OLAS conference. The right-wing CP leaders were branded as betrayers of the revolution, those who attempted to straddle the issue were compelled to line up, a clear declaration was made on armed struggle as the only road in Latin America. In this context, the political meaning of the OLAS conference is absolutely clear. It registered the fundamental differentiation of the Cuban revolution from the old Communist parties and their class-collaborationist politics.

Does this mean that the Cuban leaders have become "Trotskyist?" The answer is no. What they have done is assert their political independence in relation to both Moscow and Peking, or any other center for that matter. As the logical concomitant to this, they have decided on a policy of *nonexclusion* in relation to all other revolutionary tendencies. They will give a hearing to and collaborate with any revolutionary current. Whether or not a given tendency is actually

revolutionary is to be determined by its attitude toward the Cuban revolution and the principle of armed struggle in Latin America.

The break with the right-wing CP leaderships consummated at the OLAS conference consequently opens the way throughout Latin America for an accelerated regroupment of revolutionary forces. How this will work out specifically remains to be determined in each country, of course.

A conference or congress, no matter how revolutionary it is in principle, cannot do more than draw a balance sheet on the experiences of the preceding period and project a course of action in accordance with the lessons that have been learned. The OLAS conference was no exception; in fact it did well in this respect, accomplishing what it set out to do.

Nevertheless, some very important questions, raised at least by implication, received little or no discussion. In the coming period they will undoubtedly occupy the attention of many of those who participated in the conference and perhaps they will be brought up at a later stage in the regroupment process.

For instance, there is the problem of explaining the betrayal of the right-wing leadership of the Venezuelan Communist Party. It is scarcely sufficient to consider such a development to be a matter of individual weakness of character inasmuch as an entire leading staff of a mass party with a strong trade-union base was involved. Evidently the betrayal had social roots. These ought to be explored, not only for the education of new revolutionary cadres but also the better to avoid a repetition of such a disastrous outcome and the better to combat the betrayers in Venezuela itself.

Obviously associated with this are the international ties of these leaders, their political background and particularly their formation in the school of Stalinism. All this should be brought out into the open and the lessons assimilated.

A related question is the failure of the Cubans in particular to anticipate the betrayal. To raise the question does not at all mean to indict the Cubans. In fact the integrity they have displayed makes it possible to raise it dispassionately. Study of the question will of itself eliminate the deficiency—which is lack of knowledge of the true history of the world Communist movement and lack of appreciation of what Stalinism did to that movement.

That this has a very practical side is indicated by a related question: How did it happen that in the internal struggle in the Venezuelan Communist Party, the faction that stood for revolutionary principles ended up in a minority while the faction that stood for class collaboration ended in a majority? The question is all the more pertinent in view of Cuba's nearness, the impact of the Cuban revolution throughout the continent, and the fact that the revolutionary faction had behind it the weight of a workers state. The course of that factional struggle ought to be studied closely in all its aspects with a view to determining whether the defeat was objectively inevitable or

whether perhaps avoidable errors were committed. If the defeat was due to a shift in the relationship of class forces in Venezuela, then the revolutionary movement must examine not only the causes of this but how it affects tactics and strategy. If it was due to blunders in leadership, the objective effect of these blunders must still be weighed.

A problem which some delegates were already pondering at OLAS demands the most intensive consideration. This is the problem of the revolutionary struggle in the cities. The key issue is what to do in situations where the masses are not yet prepared to engage in all-out combat but can be mobilized to at least some degree. Is leadership of the workers and the unemployed to be turned over to the right-wing betrayers? Without a battle for the allegiance of the masses? Are there partial struggles which the workers and unemployed might be prepared to engage in that could prove propitious to the revolutionary cause and which might serve at least to remove the right-wing betrayers from the field as a serious obstacle?

It is to be noted that the Venezuelan betrayers, in seeking to answer the damning charges leveled against them by Fidel Castro, have advanced as one of their strongest arguments precisely the question of the revolutionary vanguard maintaining its ties with the masses in the cities. They, of course, seek to utilize the masses as pawns in the electoral game and at the same time divert them from the revolutionary road; but their calculation that the Cubans are vulnerable on this issue should be weighed quite objectively. It is not only in chess that the moves of a foe can indicate weaknesses in one's own position that might otherwise be overlooked. The correct countermove would seem to be to step into the arena of the class struggle in the cities and seek to outflank the right-wing CP leaders to the left. The secret of success lies in the development of transitional slogans which in and of themselves are more realistic than the measures advocated by the reformists yet entail a logic that takes the masses along the road of revolution.

All this is associated with the question of developing a homogeneous leadership and organizational structure capable of giving correct guidance to the revolutionary struggle in all its aspects. This is what revolutionary Marxists mean when they talk about the necessity of building a party of action. At the OLAS conference this question was colored by the Cuban experience so that one heard such contradictory statements as "the revolution will be made with or without a party" and "the guerrillas constitute the core of the party." If the revolution can be made without a party why advance the concept of a party being built around guerrillas or of guerrillas performing any political function at all? And while the possibility of making a revolution without a party was voiced, at the same time the necessity for absolute discipline in the struggle, the disciplined combination of the military and political aspects was insisted upon. The question obviously demands deep consideration, the elimination of misunderstandings arising from various sources, not least of all the bad impression

created by the Stalinist and Social Democratic record in Latin America and elsewhere. A study of the Bolshevik experience could possibly prove of unusual interest if it were undertaken with due consideration for the peculiarities to be found in Latin America.

The correct relationship between revolutionary theory and practice can also be expected to come under examination in the coming period. There was an evident tendency at the OLAS conference to ascribe the failures and betrayals of the right-wing CP leaderships to wrong or outdated theories, or to "theorizing" divorced from reality. Deeper study of the whole phenomenon of Stalinism will disclose, however, that the policies of the parties affected by it did not flow from "theory" but directly from some very mundane and practical bureaucratic interests. The "theory" constituted little more than window dressing although eventually certain theories that were advanced, such as the theory of building socialism in one country, had their own pernicious influence. The tendency noticeable at the OLAS conference to discount theory was one of the consequences of leaving out of account the role of Stalinism as a determinant in the betrayal of the Venezuelan Communist Party.

It should be added that the seeming bias against revolutionary theory in general derives in reality from a specific rejection of Stalinist, Social Democratic and all other varieties of reformist ideology, just as the seeming discounting of the decisive role which a party can play as a revolutionary instrument derives from a specific rejection of parties of the Stalinist and Social Democratic type. This attitude, a necessary stage in preparing the way for the organization of genuinely revolutionary mass parties in Latin America and for a rebirth of revolutionary theory, is now coming to a close. The definitive break with the right-wing CP leaderships is a certain sign of this.

Finally it should be noted that while the black struggle and its Black Power phase in the United States was handled in exemplary fashion at the OLAS conference, the antiwar struggle and the dynamic movement shaping around it in the United States did not come up for attention and analysis. The oversight stood out all the more in view of the importance ascribed to it by the Vietnamese and the impact it has had throughout the world. Perhaps the Cubans misjudge the potentiality of the antiwar movement, considering it to be frozen in a pacifist pattern. In the coming period this wholly unprecedented development in the American class struggle will undoubtedly reveal new facets that will not fail to prove impressive to all Latin-American revolutionists and to invite closer attention on their part.

The OLAS conference ended a chapter in Latin-American revolutionary politics and opened a new one with very promising perspectives. For the imperialists, things have taken a decided turn for the worse. For the vanguard, a great advance has been registered. They are now in a much better position to carry out their duty, which is to make the revolution.

Fidel Castro

SPEECH TO OLAS CONFERENCE

Speech delivered by Major Fidel Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and Prime Minister of the Revolutionary Government, at the closing of the First Conference of the Latin American Organization of Solidarity (OLAS) at the Chaplin Theater on August 10, 1967. "Year of Heroic Vietnam."

Delegates,
Honored Guests,
Comrades:

It is not easy to deliver the closing address of the First Latin American Conference of Solidarity. In the first place, what should our attitude be? To speak as a member of one of the organizations represented here? Or to speak somewhat more freely, simply as a guest speaker?

I wish to say that we intend to express here the opinion of our Party and our people, which is the same opinion and the same points of view defended by our delegation in OLAS. (APPLAUSE)

Could we say that the Conference has achieved a great ideological victory? Yes, we believe so. Does this mean that the agreements were reached without ideological struggle? No, the agreements were not reached without ideological struggle. Were opinions unanimous? Was support of the Declaration read here unanimous? Yes, it was unanimous. Does it represent unanimous opinions? No, it does not represent unanimous opinions. Some of the delegations present here had reservations on various aspects, and they expressed their reservations.

Throughout the Conference, the international press has been trying to sound out, to analyze, the development of the Conference. It has expressed various ideas on the ideological struggle that took place here. Some did so with more objectivity, others with less; some in a

spirit of honest journalism, others without much journalistic honesty; some were jubilant when the opinions were unanimous and some were jubilant when they were not. And, of course, we must say that there were some within the Conference who were indiscreet; there were some indiscretions. For some agencies undoubtedly arranged to contact the delegations and various versions came out: some accurate, others less accurate, but undoubtedly revealing a certain lack of discretion on the part of delegates to the Conference.

Some things were discussed publicly while others, very few others, were not. In the case of those that were not discussed publicly, the objective was to come up with the most positive results possible. A deep sense of responsibility prevailed among many of the delegates to the Conference, for it sought to accomplish something useful and positive, beneficial to the revolutionary movement and adverse to imperialism. It was not because of the principles involved that some of the questions under discussion could not be made public. If some things were not discussed publicly, it was simply due to a sense of responsibility; to prevent public consideration of those questions from which the enemy could glean an advantage.

But, naturally, there were indiscretions, and nearly all the things discussed are known more or less. The agreements are clear and decisive.

The Conference was not the only event that took place during these days. There were certain events that made the delegates to this Conference not only participants in ideological and political discussions and agreements, but also witnesses to and judges of the activities of imperialism against our country.

Some will ask about our reason or reasons for setting these proofs before this Conference of OLAS. A few might consider this a strange coincidence. The most suspicious—principally those who represent a section of the press which has been continually hostile to the Revolution and, on many occasions, to the truth—might look quite skeptically upon the coincidence between the presence of counterrevolutionary infiltrators in our country and the OLAS Conference.

Some spokesmen of imperialism have said that we made these presentations simply to demonstrate that imperialism intervenes in Cuba, and with a view to the next Conference of Foreign Ministers. These ideas might be legitimate if a case of fair play were involved; but, on the part of imperialism, there can be no fair play. These men were presented simply because such infiltrations have occurred systematically and incessantly in our country since the beginning of the Revolution. If this Conference of the OLAS were to last some time more, it could be said that every week we could bring here proof of the number and the kind of agents and the kind of missions that imperialism carries out against our country. Every week! It is unusual for a week to go by without our capturing one of these individuals.

Is it, perhaps, necessary for us to prove that imperialism carries out subversive activities against our country? Is it, perhaps, necessary for us to prove that imperialism carries out all sorts of crimes against our country and that it has been, for over eight years, openly intervening in the affairs of Cuba?

Yesterday someone expressed doubts as to whether the CIA was so naive—so naive!—that, instead of sending food specially prepared for such missions, hydrophilized, dehydrated, it would be so foolish as to include ordinary canned fruit. We have no intention of using this rostrum to humiliate anyone in particular, even less, persons who have been authorized to enter the country. And simply, without any personal allusions, I want to refer to the doubts, the thoughts, the ideas. Is it not, perhaps, extreme naïveté to believe that the CIA is a perfect, wonderful, highly intelligent organization, incapable of making the slightest mistake? But was it not in a book written precisely by U.S. journalists that we read sinister accounts of dozens and dozens of stupidities and crimes committed by the CIA? Are we to think that the CIA is so perfect that it cannot make mistakes? Wasn't the mistake which the CIA, the Pentagon, the State Department, imperialism as a whole, made at Girón ten thousand times greater than that? Wasn't that a much greater mistake? (APPLAUSE) It was a far greater mistake than the insignificant detail—probably done without consulting anyone—of picking up some canned fruit, or whatever it was, from the well-stocked pantry of the mother-ship! And to attempt—on such a flimsy excuse—to cover up evidence that anyone with a minimum of common sense and good judgment would deny! It is really extraordinary that there are people in the United States who believe such things; that the CIA is a good angel, incapable of committing misdeeds, or crimes; that the things the CIA does against Cuba are yet to be proved; that the CIA, moreover, is incapable of committing stupidities.

Perhaps the CIA commits crimes . . . This they accept or they reject. But it is necessary to analyze from a moral standpoint—from a moral standpoint!—whether the crimes of the CIA or the imbecilities of the CIA are the heart of the matter.

We are not going to ask anybody in particular, but we ask ourselves, we ask those who are listening to us, if there is anyone in the world who can believe that the CIA is not a sinister, interventionist, criminal organization, inconceivably unscrupulous?

The fact that we are used to imperialist acts of vandalism must not cloud our responsiveness or our ability to judge these facts from a moral standpoint. In one sense, these are simply things that happen to our country practically every day. But if we analyze the facts more deeply, how many principles, how many international laws, how many norms of civilization, how many moral standards does the United States Government officially violate through the CIA? Like vulgar pirates, using the flag of any country, yet more immoral than the pirates of old—for the pirates of old, we hear, used the pirate flag,

and piratical Yankee imperialism uses the flag of any country in the world.

The use of any methods, the use of official documents, of official United States maps, the use of forged documents, the use of any resource or means whatsoever, to carry out their intentions. And of course, why speak of the moral or legal aspects of the aims of these activities?

When it became evident, yesterday, that one of these individuals had been seen only a few days ago in a Miami restaurant by the clerk, Charles; the manager, Joe; the cook, Sam . . . and even the cat, (LAUGHTER) when it was obviously too far fetched to believe that our imagination had put this man on the stand, then up cropped another theory: that, perhaps, instead of the CIA, an organization of anti-Castro exiles was involved.

Is it that the United States Government does not consider itself responsible for the crimes committed by those organizations in the U. S.? Are they now going to say that they are not responsible, when they are the ones who organized all those people, nourished them, indoctrinated them, trained them—trained them in U. S. institutions? Does the fact that an exile organization may be involved exonerate the U. S. Government from responsibility?

But, unfortunately for certain interested persons, this did not concern a group of exiles working with the CIA, but rather it involved direct CIA organization. The embarrassing thing about this is that it was organized directly by the CIA, not indirectly through counter-revolutionary organizations. For the CIA works through counter-revolutionary organizations, but it also works—as was explained to you—directly.

Of course, CIA technique is superior when it works directly; when we say superior technique, we do not mean to say superior intelligence. Is there electronic equipment that never goes wrong? This simply shows that electronic equipment is much more intelligent than the CIA and much more infallible.

And as for the insinuation that markets and Five and Ten Cent Stores in the U. S. come stocked with this automatic equipment that transmits long messages in a fraction of a second or a minute—one of the most modern electronic devices . . . if they really sell such CIA equipment in the United States, wonderful! Because, in that case, perhaps U. S. revolutionaries will be able to buy stocks of such equipment for their intercommunications. (APPLAUSE)

Since when, in which store, in which Five and Ten can one buy these ultramodern, ultrasensitive, tiny sets capable of automatically transmitting messages in code over thousands of kilometers? One must really be naive! I do not criticize anybody for vacillating before such evident facts and refraining from comment, such as the journalist who said he was not a judge. (LAUGHTER) What a great fellow!

(LAUGHTER) Really, the AP educates its little cadres well! (LAUGHTER) If you want to know what kind of judges these fellows are, analyze what they write day by day and you will see how "impartial" they are.

There is only one thing which is true—their statement that they are not judges. They are not judges because they are partial, and they are absolutely incapable of judging anything. For eight years, we have been reading the news put out by that agency, which is always serving imperialist interests, always concealing something, always defending something that is never good—even by mistake!—distorting everything.

We Latin Americans know these facts only too well. All the representatives present here know them well. These facts are known, above all, to those who have to suffer these lies, this reporting, which while serving the worst imperialist causes, is the only information available, to whole nations on this continent. And that is part of the imperialist mechanism, because those lying, truculent, fraudulent news agencies are part and parcel—part and parcel!—of the imperialist machinery. They are part and parcel of the instruments used by imperialism to carry out its policies.

Courtesy compels us to treat individuals with politeness, but courtesy does not compel us to refrain from stating some truths which are only too well known. (APPLAUSE)

Besides referring to some of those news dispatches, we might ask if they were written out of naïveté—if it is not perhaps naïve to publish such dispatches—and why they do so. Of course, there is an agency here that tries to be objective very often—I wouldn't say that it always is—and this is a British agency.

It says here: "A group of Cuban anti-Castro exiles called the Escambray Second Front stated today in this city that the contingent of men whose capture was announced on this date in Havana were guerrilla members of that organization. Andrés Nazario, General Secretary of the Front, pointed out that the guerrilla fighters had left for Cuba about four weeks ago.

"He added, 'They were going to infiltrate into Cuba to carry out a mission of subversion and guerrilla warfare, joining up afterwards with patriots inside Cuba.'"

That is, this news dispatch removes all doubt. It is official confirmation from the U.S. by the gentlemen who sent the counterrevolutionaries presented here. But there is something else. Here is an AP dispatch:

"Four of the captured exiles who were today presented in Havana as invaders were landed in Cuba by an anti-Castro military force based in Miami.

"The band of infiltrators was described today in Miami by its leader, Major Armando Fleites, as on a mission"—as on a mission—"to kill Prime Minister Fidel Castro. This would form part of a campaign of irregular warfare designed to overthrow the Communist regime."

That is, we were not inventing anything when we stated the concrete mission of these men; we were not inventing anything when we presented, among other weapons, a 22 caliber pistol with silencer and bullets with potassium cyanide—a pistol that makes less noise than striking a match, with a silencer and bullets poisoned with potassium cyanide.

And what laws did that arrogant, incredible deed violate? What laws can we refer to, what principles, what norms? For even in all-out war, that type of bullet is absolutely banned.

And without anyone bothering him, the ringleader publicly declares to an imperialist news agency there, declares openly and calmly, in the name of an organization that has its own official shingle, that the group came to this country to assassinate a government leader.

Does the government of the United States not feel responsible for these acts? We directly accuse the U. S. Government and hold it responsible for these acts. (APPLAUSE AND CRIES OF: "FIDEL, FOR SURE, HIT THE YANKEES HARD!") We accuse President Johnson and hold him responsible for the fact that plans are drawn up with absolute impunity in the United States for the assassination of government leaders of another State, using the most abhorrent methods, and that these plans are not only put into operation—serious attempts are being made at this—but also brazenly made public.

These are certainly serious matters. They are more than serious; they are grave. And all these statements demonstrate the absolute truth regarding the charges and information offered to the people by the Revolutionary Government as normal procedure.

What is strange about that? What is strange about their sending other spies? What is strange about that? We could ask the CIA and see what they have to say about this man.

And, above all, we could ask the CIA what a U. S. destroyer, a mother-ship, helicopter and a Neptune aircraft were doing today, anxiously searching for something 20 miles north of Pinar del Rio Province.

And it so happens that, at dawn yesterday, some fishermen ran into "Bichinche"—I think that's his name.* (APPLAUSE)

No, don't harbor any illusions. I understand your desires to see "Bichinche" captured.

They were in a boat because they took to sea in a rubber raft in accordance with the emergency instructions they have.

The fishermen spotted them at dawn. And the fishermen might have done better, they might have taken them aboard, but their boat was small and they were unarmed. But they immediately reported what they had seen and we immediately drew the conclusion as to who they were.

*"Bichinche," according to the testimony of one of the captured CIA agents, was the code name for the missing CIA agent Castro mentions. "Chinche" is Spanish for "bed bug," hence "bichinche" would suggest "double bed bug."

And, naturally, today we were competing with the CIA. (LAUGHTER) Our reconnaissance plane and the Neptune were so close to one another that our crew photographed the Neptune. I presume that they photographed our plane, too.

The CIA and the government of the United States were looking for "Bichinche" today (LAUGHTER) at the same time that our planes and our ships were trying to find "Bichinche." (LAUGHTER) "Bichinche" has become almost famous. (LAUGHTER)

But what happened? What happened? The means of escape was very difficult to detect because it is a rubber raft that can be easily hidden in the mangrove trees during the day. And they try to help themselves by moving with the currents until they are picked up, but the CIA didn't know that "Bichinche" was in trouble. But, since a note came out in the Sunday papers saying that they had re-embarked—since that was the theory of our Security Department, after it found the things that had been left ashore, and based on all the information . . .

It isn't easy to locate a rubber raft. We do not know if the CIA, the destroyer, the plane or the helicopter found "Bichinche". We, unfortunately, couldn't locate him. But we were both competing, 20 miles north of Cuba, to see who could find that "needle in a haystack." (LAUGHTER)

Perhaps "Bichinche" will get away. We won't be sad about that. We are not in a hurry. Didn't they fall into our hands today? They will, tomorrow or the day after. (APPLAUSE) And there are quite a few of them.

At the time of Girón, quite a number of "big fish"—as the people say—were caught . . . More than a thousand! And many individuals who certainly did not imagine they would be caught here, were caught—because that was their fate—as instruments of the CIA.

We could ask, by the way, if anyone can tell us if the maps—the maps brought in by those CIA agents—are also sold at Five and Ten Cent stores in the United States. (LAUGHTER) Because we should certainly like to have some of those maps, for they are detailed with minute precision. And that was a military map, a military blueprint, with every detail: the sentry boxes, munitions depots, bases for launching anti-aircraft missiles. One asks oneself why the CIA wants such minutely detailed maps of our military installations. What are their objectives?

And these drawings—are they by any chance sold at Five and Ten Cent stores? Without any doubt, the objectives of this type of espionage are belligerent, the aims are aggressive.

And, naturally, there is something that does not appear in the drawings, and that is the courage of those who defend these military positions! (APPLAUSE)

Because that is something that certainly cannot be found either on

the maps or in the imaginations of these gentlemen of the CIA.

But we believe the evidence is indisputable, and we are prepared to put it at the disposal of anyone.

And the capture of CIA agents has become commonplace here—it is a weekly occurrence. It isn't even given publicity most of the time, because it is no longer news to anyone.

Is it necessary for us to prove that the imperialists are aggressors against Cuba? Does it have anything to do with the Foreign Ministers' meeting of the OAS? To some extent, yes, and to some extent, no.

Is it our purpose to convince the OAS? Who is going to make such a joke? It is not our intention either to convince the OAS or to neutralize its agreements. We have other ways of neutralizing OAS agreements! (APPLAUSE) We intended, in any case, to demonstrate how cynical these gentlemen of the OAS are, we intended to demonstrate how brazen the gentlemen of the OAS, headed by the U.S. Government, are. We intended simply to unmask them; we intended to demoralize them. That is one part of it. That's why I say that it is true that it has some relation to the OAS meeting.

But we do not intend to use this as an excuse. The OAS does not have even an iota of self-respect, the OAS does not have one iota of morality. And none of the governments of this continent—which, with the exception of Mexico, (APPLAUSE) are admitted accomplices in acts of banditry against our country, just as they were in the intervention against the Dominican Republic and in all the misdeeds committed by imperialism—have the slightest right to invoke any law or to invoke any principle against Cuba's acts in support of the revolutionary movement! (APPLAUSE) Because they have violated all norms, all rights, all principles. And this is their responsibility, not ours.

They are mistaken if they think that we are going to accept this imperialist order. Those who believe that we are going to accept this imperialist order, this law of "grabbing the lion's share" that the imperialists are trying to impose on the world, this blackmail, they are very much mistaken, because our country will never be subjected to such an order.

The imperialists assume the right to commit every kind of misdeed in the world with entire impunity. They daily bomb North Viet Nam, utilizing hundreds of planes: that is the imperialist order, those are the laws of imperialism. They invade the fraternal Dominican Republic with 40,000 soldiers, they openly set up a puppet government there with their occupation troops; that is the order of imperialism, those are the laws of imperialism. A State such as Israel, at the service of the imperialist aggressors, gets hold of a large part of the territory of other countries, establishes itself there at the very edge of the Suez Canal and is already claiming the right to participate in the control of that Canal—so all that's lacking now is for it to ask that a pipeline be installed to run from the Aswan Dam to irrigate the Sinai Peninsula. And there they are, and nobody knows

how long they'll stay, and the longer nothing is done, the longer they'll stay: that is the order imperialism wants to establish, those are the laws imperialism wants to impose upon the world. To send murderers on missions with poisoned bullets to kill leaders of other States, to constantly send armed infiltration groups to a country they have been harassing for eight years. That is the imperialist order! Those are the laws imperialism wants to impose upon the world! And we are a small country, but we will not accept that order! We will not accept those laws! (PROLONGED APPLAUSE)

We are not a country of adventurers, of provocateurs, of irresponsible people, as some have wanted to picture us. We simply refuse to accept that order and those laws of imperialism. And if the price of this attitude by our country were the sinking of this country in the Bartlett Deep* and the wiping of our entire population off the face of the earth—if that were possible—we would prefer this to accepting that order and those laws that imperialism wishes to impose upon the world. (APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS OF: "FIDEL, FOR SURE, HIT THE YANKEES HARD!")

Go out into the streets and ask any Cuban citizen—young or old; father, son, or mother—ask him what he prefers, what he would choose: the acceptance of such a Draconian order, submission to the dictates of imperialism, or death. (SHOUTS OF "PATRIA O MUERTE!") You will find that there are very few who think differently, who prefer to accept the imperialist order. But do not think that all of them will be counterrevolutionaries; there will also be some who, invoking Marxism-Leninism, will say that that is what has to be done—that is, that we should accept submission to the imperialist Draconian order. There are such persons, and they may be found anywhere.

Do you gentlemen of the press want information? You already have some, and there will be more if you are a little patient.

There are currents, there are attitudes. And we do not impose attitudes on our people. We have tried both to teach and learn; we have tried to educate ourselves as consistent revolutionaries and help the people also to educate themselves as consistent revolutionaries.

No one would affirm that the problems of this country are easily solved, that the dangers threatening this country are insignificant or minor. No one will be able to make light of the situations which this small country faces resolutely, without hesitation, at the very doorstep of the most powerful imperialist country in the world—and not only the most powerful one, but the most aggressive; and not only the most powerful and aggressive; but the bloodiest, the most cynical, the most arrogant of the imperialist powers in the world.

The very essence of imperialist thinking is revealed in what the imperialists publish. Of course, we should state—to avoid any mis-

*Bartlett Deep is the area of ocean floor between the Caymen Islands and Jamaica off the southern coast of Cuba.

understanding, so no honest person will mistakenly think I am referring to him—that we know that, in spite of the infamous conditions that prevail there, there are some honest writers and journalists in the United States. (APPLAUSE) I am not talking about them. But there are so many of the other kind that I am afraid someone may think we do not know how to distinguish between them. But here is a case which expresses the essence of imperialist thinking. It is an article from the New York *Daily News* entitled "Stokely, Stay There." We would indeed be honored if he wished to remain here . . . ! (PROLONGED APPLAUSE) But he himself doesn't want to stay here, because he believes that the struggle is his fundamental duty. But he must know that, whatever the circumstances, this country will always be his home. (APPLAUSE)

The article states: "Stokely Carmichael, the Negro firebrand, is in Havana, capital of Red Cuba, after having stopped off at London and Prague, and we suggest that he remain in Havana, his spiritual home.

"As pointed out, we urge Stokely to remain in Red Cuba until this miserable island is rescued from communism, and then he can head for some other Red country. If Carmichael returns to the United States we think that the Department of Justice should throw the book at him."

And in conclusion, after more of the same sort of thing, it states: "While we are busy in Viet Nam, we can hardly crush Castro—although the Government could, and should, stop discouraging Cuban refugees who plan Castro's destruction."

Stop discouraging!—stop discouraging Cuban exiles who plan Castro's destruction! Discouragement indeed! Discouragement indeed! "But let's stick a reminder in Uncle Sam's hat to trample Castro underfoot with all the force necessary to destroy his communist regime just as soon as we win the war in Viet Nam." (JEERS AND BOOS)

If the danger posed in this country depended on a U.S. victory in Viet Nam, we could all die of old age!

Observe how they express themselves, with what unbelievable exasperation, with what contempt, they speak of "a Negro firebrand," of "the miserable island," of "trampling underfoot." Because it must be said that the imperialists are annoyed by many things, but most of all they are annoyed by the visit here of a Negro leader—of a leader of the most exploited and most oppressed sector of the United States—by the strengthening of relations between the revolutionary movement of Latin America and the revolutionary movement inside the United States. (PROLONGED APPLAUSE)

In the past few days, innumerable articles about Stokely's trip have been published in the U.S. press; some very insulting, others more subtle. They have elaborated a whole series of theories. Some say "Stokely is fooling Castro," "Castro is fooling Stokely," "Stokely wants to make him believe that he represents the Negro movement—

the majority of the Negro movement—and Castro is using him." Statements of that sort.

And they have gone still further. Some theorists have stated: "How strange that this country is not racist, and Stokely is a racist . . . How strange! How strange!" Their aim is to create the impression that the Negro movement in the United States is a racist movement.

It is logical that the exploiters, who for centuries practiced racism against the Negro population, now label as racists all those who struggle against racism.

It is claimed that they have no program. Well, that shows that often a movement can begin before a program is drawn up. But it is also false that the movement has no program. What is happening is that the Negro sector of the population of the United States at this moment, overwhelmed by daily repression, has concentrated its energies on defending itself, on resisting, on struggle.

But it will not be long before they will discover something that is inevitable according to the law of society, the law of history. And that is that the revolutionary movement in the United States will arise from this Negro sector, (APPLAUSE) because it is the most exploited and repressed sector, the most brutally treated in the United States (APPLAUSE); the revolutionary vanguard within the United States will arise from the most mistreated, the most exploited and oppressed of the Negro sectors. The revolutionary movement within U.S. society will arise from this sector by the law of history—not for racial reasons, but for social reasons, reasons of exploitation and oppression, because this sector is the most long-suffering and oppressed—as has been the case in all epochs of history: as occurred with the Roman plebeians, the glebe serfs of the Middle Ages and the workers and peasants of modern times.

This is a social truth, a historic truth. Have patience, and from that oppressed sector the revolutionary movement will arise—vanguard of a struggle—that will one day liberate all of U.S. society!

That is why we must reject—as injurious and slanderous—the attempt to present the Negro movement of the United States as a problem of racism. We hope they will give up the illusion that anyone has deceived anyone. The drawing together of the revolutionaries of the United States and those of Latin America is the most natural thing in the world, and the most spontaneous. And our people have been very receptive to and very capable of admiring Stokely for the courageous statements he has made in the OLAS Conference, because we know that this requires valor, because we know what it means to make such statements within a society that applies the most cruel and brutal procedures of repression, that constantly practices the worst crimes against the Negro sector of its population; and we know how much hatred his statements will arouse among the oppressors.

And, for this reason, we believe that the revolutionary movements all over the world must give Stokely their utmost support as protection against the repression of the imperialists, so that it will be very clear

that any crime committed against this leader will have serious repercussions throughout the world. And our solidarity can help to protect Stokely's life. (APPLAUSE)

And this is why—because all these inevitable events within the process are developing—revolutionaries are getting together, internationalism is being practiced. We believe that the attitude of this U. S. revolutionary leader offers a great lesson, a great example of militant internationalism, something very characteristic of revolutionaries. We undoubtedly sympathize much more with this type of revolutionary than with the super-theoreticians, who are revolutionary in word but bourgeois in deed.

This internationalism cannot be merely proclaimed; it must be practiced! And the Negroes of the United States are offering resistance, they are offering armed resistance. They didn't go around propounding theses, or talking about objective conditions before they seized weapons to defend their rights. They did not seek a philosophy—and, much less, a revolutionary philosophy—to justify inaction.

And we believe that if there is any country where the struggle is hard, where the struggle is difficult, that country is the United States. And here we have U. S. revolutionaries setting an example and giving us lessons!

It always seems that we have to bring along some dispatches, certain papers, news items, especially to an event of this nature. We sincerely believe that we would not be fulfilling our duty if we did not express here that the OLAS Conference has been a victory of revolutionary ideas, though not a victory without a struggle.

A latent ideological struggle has been reflected in the OLAS. Should we hide the fact? No. What is gained by concealing it? Was it the aim of the OLAS to crush anyone, to harm anyone? No. That is not a revolutionary method; it is not in accord with the conscience of revolutionaries. But let us be clear about this—genuine revolutionaries!

We believe that revolutionary ideas must prevail. If revolutionary ideas should be defeated, the Revolution in Latin America would be lost or would be delayed indefinitely. Ideas can hasten a process—or they can delay it considerably.

We believe that the triumph of revolutionary ideas among the masses—not the masses in their entirety, but a sufficiently broad part of them—is an absolute requisite.

This does not mean that action must wait for the triumph of ideas, and this is one of the essential points of the matter. There are those who believe that it is necessary for ideas to triumph among the masses before initiating action, and there are others who understand that action is one of the most efficient instruments for bringing about the triumph of ideas among the masses.

Whoever hesitates while waiting for ideas to triumph among the greater part of the masses before initiating revolutionary action will never be a revolutionary. For, what is the difference between such a

revolutionary and a rich landowner, a wealthy bourgeois? None whatsoever!

Humanity will, of course, change; human society will, of course, continue to develop—in spite of men and the errors of men. But that is not a revolutionary attitude.

If that had been our way of thinking, we would never have initiated a revolutionary process. It was enough for the ideas to take root in a sufficiently large number of men for revolutionary action to be initiated, and, through this action, the masses began to acquire these ideas; the masses began to acquire that awareness.

It is obvious that there are already in many places in Latin America a number of men who are convinced of such ideas, and who have begun revolutionary action. What distinguishes the true revolutionary from the false revolutionary is precisely this: one acts to move the masses, the other waits for the masses as a whole to acquire awareness before starting to act.

And a whole series of principles exists that one should not expect to be accepted without an argument, but which are essential truths, accepted by the majority, but with reserve by a few. This Byzantine discussion about the ways and means of struggle, whether it should be peaceful or nonpeaceful, armed or unarmed—the essence of this discussion, which we call Byzantine because it is like an argument between two deaf and dumb people, is what distinguishes those who want to promote revolution, and those who do not want to promote it, those who want to curb it and those who want to promote it. Let no one be fooled.

Different terms have been employed: whether this is the only way, or not the only way; whether it is exclusive, or not exclusive. And the Conference has been very clear about this. It has not used the term, the only way, although it could be called the only way; it has referred, instead, to the fundamental way, to which the other forms of struggle must be subordinated. And, in the long run, it is the only way. To use the word "only"—although the sense of the word is understood and it is the right word—might lead to erroneous thinking about the immediacy of the struggle.

That is why we understand that the Declaration's reference to the fundamental way, as the road that must be taken in the long run, is the correct formulation.

If we wish to express our way of thinking, that of our Party and our people, let no one harbor any illusions about seizing power by peaceful means in any country of this continent. Let no one harbor any such illusions. Anyone who tries to sell such an idea to the masses will be deceiving them completely.

This does not mean that one has to go out and grab a rifle tomorrow anywhere at all, and start fighting. That is not the question. It is a question of ideological conflict between those who want to make a revolution and those who do not want to make it. It is the conflict between those who want to act and those who want to hold

back. Because essentially, it is not that difficult to decide if it is possible, if conditions are ripe, to take up arms or not.

No one can be so sectarian, so dogmatic, as to say that, everywhere, one has to go out and grab a rifle tomorrow. And we ourselves do not doubt that there are some countries in which this task is not an immediate task, but we are convinced that it will be a task in the long run.

There are some who have put forward theses that are even more radical than those of Cuba—that we Cubans believe that in such and such a country the conditions for armed struggle do not exist, and that this is not so. And the interesting thing is that this has been claimed in some cases by representatives who are not among those most in favor of the thesis of armed struggle. We will not be annoyed by this. We prefer that they make the mistake of wanting to make the revolution, although immediate conditions may be lacking, than that they make the mistake of never wanting to make the revolution. And let us hope that no one makes a mistake! But nobody who really wants to fight will ever have differences with us, and those who never want to fight will always have differences with us. (APPLAUSE)

We understand the essence of this matter very well. It is the conflict between those who want to impel the revolution and those who are deadly enemies of the ideas of the revolution. A whole series of factors have contributed to these positions.

This does not always mean that it is enough to maintain a correct position and nothing more. No, even among those who really want to make revolution many mistakes are made. It is true that there are still many weaknesses. But logically we will never have profound differences with anyone—in spite of their mistakes—who honestly maintains a revolutionary position. It is our understanding that revolutionary thought must take on new impetus; it is our understanding that we must leave behind old vices: sectarian positions of all kinds and the positions of those who believe they have a monopoly on revolution or on revolutionary theory! And, poor theory, how it has had to suffer in these processes. Unhappy theory, how it has been abused, and how it is still being abused!

And these years have taught us all to meditate more and analyze better. We no longer accept any "self-evident" truths. "Self-evident" truths belong to bourgeois philosophy. A whole series of old clichés must be abolished. Marxist literature itself, revolutionary political literature itself should be renewed because repeating the same old clichés, phraseology and verbiage that have been repeated for 35 years wins over no one, convinces no one at all. (APPLAUSE)

There are times when political documents, called Marxist, give the impression that someone has gone to an archive and asked for a form: form 14, form 13, form 12; they are all alike, with the same empty words, in language incapable of expressing real situations. Very often, these documents are divorced from real life. And then many people are told that this is Marxism . . . and in what way is

this different from a catechism, and in what way is it different from a litany, from a rosary? (APPLAUSE)

And anyone who considers himself a Marxist feels virtually obligated to go to this or that manifesto. And he reads 25 manifestos of 25 different organizations, and they are all alike, copied from models, incapable of convincing anyone.

And nothing was farther from the thought and style of the founder of Marxism than empty words, than putting a straightjacket on ideas. Because Marx was, undoubtedly, one of the greatest and most brilliant prose writers of all time. But, worse than the phrases are the ideas they often encompass. Meaningless phrases are bad, but so are the accepted meanings of certain phrases. Because there are theses that are 40 years old; for example, the famous thesis concerning the role of the national bourgeoisies. How hard it has been to become convinced, finally, that this idea is an absurdity on this continent; how much paper, how many phrases, how much empty talk has been wasted while waiting for a liberal, progressive, anti-imperialist bourgeoisie.

And we ask ourselves if there is anybody who, at this time, can believe in the revolutionary role of a single bourgeoisie on this continent?

All these ideas have been gaining strength, have been held for a long time—a long series of theses.

I am not going to say that the revolutionary movement and the communist movement in general have ceased to play a role—even an important role—in the history of the revolutionary process and of revolutionary ideas in Latin America. The communist movement developed a method, style, and in some aspects, even took on the characteristics of a religion. And we sincerely believe that that character should be left behind.

Of course to some of these "illustrious revolutionary thinkers" we are only petit-bourgeois adventurers without revolutionary maturity. We are lucky that the Revolution came before maturity! (APPLAUSE) Because at the end, the mature ones, the over-mature, have gotten so ripe that they are rotten. (APPLAUSE)

But we consider ours a Marxist-Leninist Party, we consider ours a Communist Party. (APPLAUSE) And this is not a matter of words, it is a matter of facts.

We do not consider ourselves the teachers, we do not consider ourselves the pace-setters, as some people say we do. But we have the right to consider ours a Marxist-Leninist Party, a Communist Party.

We are deeply satisfied, and it is with great joy, not nostalgia, with happiness, not sadness, that we see the ranks of the revolutionary movement increasing, the revolutionary organizations multiplying, Marxist-Leninist spirit making headway—that is, Marxist-Leninist ideas—and we felt deeply satisfied when the final resolution of this Conference proclaimed that the revolutionary movement in Latin America is being guided by Marxist-Leninist ideas. (APPLAUSE)

This means that convent-like narrow-mindedness must be overcome. And we, in our Communist Party, will fight to overcome that narrow concept, that narrow-mindedness. And we must say that, as a Marxist-Leninist Party, we belong to OLAS; as a Marxist Leninist Party, we belong not to a small group within the revolutionary movement, but to an organization which comprises all true revolutionaries, and we will not be prejudiced against any revolutionary.

That is, there is a much wider movement on this continent than that of just the Communist Parties of Latin America; we are committed to that wide movement, and we shall judge the conduct of organizations not by what they say they are, but by what they prove they are, by what they do, by their conduct.

And we feel very satisfied that our Party has wholeheartedly entered into this wider movement, the movement that has just held this first Conference.

The importance of the guerrilla, the vanguard role of the guerrilla . . . Much could be said about the guerrilla, but it is not possible to do so in a meeting like this. But guerrilla experiences on this continent have taught us many things—among them the terrible mistake, the absurd concept that the guerrilla movement could be directed from the cities.

This is the reason for the thesis that political and military commands must be united. This is the reason for our conviction that it is not only a stupidity but also a crime to want to direct the guerrillas from the city. And we have had the opportunity to appreciate the consequences of this absurdity many times. It is necessary that these ideas be overcome, and this is why we consider the resolution of this Conference of great importance. The guerrilla is bound to be the nucleus of the revolutionary movement. This does not mean that the guerrilla movement can rise without any previous work; it does not mean that the guerrilla movement is something that can exist without political direction. No! We do not deny the role of the leading organizations, we do not deny the role of the political organizations. The guerrilla is organized by a political movement, by a political organization. What we believe incompatible with correct ideas of guerrilla struggle is the idea of directing the guerrilla from the cities. And in the conditions of our continent it will be very difficult to suppress the role of the guerrilla.

There are some who ask themselves if it is possible in any country of Latin America to achieve power without armed struggle. And, of course, theoretically, hypothetically, when a great part of the continent has been liberated there is nothing surprising if, under those conditions a revolution succeeds without opposition—but this would be an exception. However, this does not mean that the revolution is going to succeed in any country without a struggle. The blood of the revolutionaries of a specific country may not be shed, but their victory will only be possible thanks to the efforts, the sacrifices and

the blood of the revolutionaries of a whole continent. (APPLAUSE)

It would, therefore, be false to say that they had a revolution there without a struggle. That will always be a lie. And I believe that it is not correct for any revolutionary to wait with arms crossed until all the other peoples struggle and create the conditions for victory for him without struggle. That will never be an attribute of revolutionaries. There are those who believe that a peaceful transition is possible in some countries of this continent; we cannot understand what kind of peaceful transition they refer to, unless it is to a peaceful transition in agreement with imperialism. Because in order to achieve victory by peaceful means—if in practice such a thing were were possible, considering that the mechanisms of the bourgeoisie, the oligarchies and imperialism control all the means for peaceful struggle . . . And then you hear a revolutionary say: They crushed us; they organized 200 radio programs, so and so many newspapers, so and so many magazines, so and so many TV shows, so and so many of this and so and so many of that. And one wants to ask him: What did you expect? That they would put TV, radio, the magazines, the newspapers, the printing shops, all this at your disposal? Or are you unaware that those are the instruments of the ruling class designed explicitly for crushing the revolution? (APPLAUSE)

They complain that the bourgeoisie and the oligarchies crush them with their campaigns, as if that were a surprise to anyone. The first thing that a revolutionary has to understand is that the ruling classes have organized the State so as to dedicate every possible means to maintaining themselves in power. And they use not only arms, not only physical instruments, not only guns, but all possible instruments to influence, to deceive, to confuse.

And those who believe that they are going to win against the imperialists in elections are just plain naive, and those who believe that the day will come when they will take over through elections are even more naive. It is necessary to have lived in a revolutionary process and to know just what the repressive apparatus is by which the ruling classes maintain the *status quo*, just how much one has to struggle, how difficult it is.

This does not imply the negation of forms of struggle. When someone writes a manifesto in a newspaper, attends a demonstration, holds a rally or propagates an idea, he may be using the so-called famous legal means. We must do away with the differentiation between legal and illegal means; methods should be classified as revolutionary or non-revolutionary.

The revolutionary employs various methods to achieve his ideal and his revolutionary aim. The essence of the question is whether the masses will be led to believe that the revolutionary movement, that socialism, can come to power without a struggle, that it can come to power peacefully. And that is a lie! And any persons in Latin America who assert that they will come to power peacefully are deceiving the masses. (APPLAUSE)

We are talking about conditions in Latin America. We don't want to involve ourselves in other problems which are already large enough—of those of the revolutionary organizations of other countries, such as in Europe. We are addressing Latin America. And of course, if they would only confine their mistakes to themselves . . . But no, they try to encourage the errors of those of this continent who are mistaken! And to such an extent that part of the so-called revolutionary press has attacked Cuba for our revolutionary stand in Latin America. That's a fine thing! They don't know how to be revolutionaries over there, yet they want to teach us how to be revolutionaries over here.

But we are not anxious to start arguments. We already have enough to think about. But, of course, we will not overlook the direct or indirect, the overt or covert attacks of some neo-Social Democrats of Europe. (APPLAUSE)

And these are clear ideas. We are absolutely convinced that, in the long run, there is only one solution, as expressed in the Resolution: guerrilla warfare in Latin America.

Does this mean that if a garrison rises in rebellion because there are revolutionaries in it we should not support the rebellion because it is not a guerrilla struggle? No! It is stupid to think, as one organization did, that the Revolution would be made with the rebellion of garrisons only. It is no less stupid to have a rebellion in a garrison and afterwards let it be crushed by overpowering forces. New situations are arising; new situations may arise—we do not deny that. For example, in Santo Domingo a typical case came up: a military uprising that began to take on a revolutionary character.

But, of course, this doesn't mean that the revolutionary movement has to wait around for what may come up, for what may take place. Nobody was able to foresee, nobody was able to estimate the form, the character that the revolutionary movement would take on, especially as a result of imperialist intervention.

In other words, by stressing the role of the guerrilla as an immediate task in all those countries where true conditions exist, we do not discard other forms of revolutionary armed struggle.

The revolutionary movement must be ready to take advantage of, and support, any expression of struggle that may arise, that may develop or that may strengthen the position of the revolutionaries. What I do not believe is that anybody who considers himself a revolutionary can wait around for a garrison to rebel in order to carry out revolution, that any revolutionary can dream of making a revolution through the rebellion of garrisons. The uprising of military units may constitute a factor—one of those unforeseeable factors that may arise—but no really serious revolutionary movement would base itself on those eventualities. Guerrilla warfare is the main form of struggle, but it does not exclude any other expressions of armed struggle that may arise.

And it is necessary—most necessary—that these ideas be clarified,

because we have had very bitter experiences; not the blows or reverses of a military nature, but rather the frustrations of a political nature, the consequences—sad and disastrous for the revolutionary movement in the long run—of a series of wrong concepts. The most painful case was that of Venezuela.

In Venezuela the revolutionary movement was growing. The revolutionary movement there has had to pay dearly the consequences of the absurd concept of trying to lead the guerrillas from the city, of trying to use the guerrilla movement as an instrument for political maneuvering, of trying to use the guerrilla movement as a tool of dirty politics: the consequences that can arise from incorrect attitudes, from wrong attitudes and, on many occasions, from immoral attitudes.

The case of Venezuela is well worth taking into consideration, for if we do not learn from the lessons of Venezuela, we will never learn.

Of course, in spite of treason, the guerrilla movement in Venezuela is far from being crushed. And we, gentlemen, have every right to use the word "treason."

We know there are some who do not like this; some will even feel insulted. May those who do not also carry the seeds of treason in their hearts one day be convinced that they have no reason to feel insulted.

The case of Venezuela is eloquent in many aspects. For in Venezuela a group—which, with all these wrong concepts, was in the leadership of a Party—almost achieved what neither imperialism nor the repressive forces of the regime could achieve.

This Party, or rather the rightist leadership of the Venezuelan Party, has come to adopt a position which smacks of an enemy of revolutionaries, an instrument of imperialism and the oligarchy. And I do not say this for the sake of talking; I am not a slanderer, I am not a defamer.

We have some unfinished business with that group of traitors. We have not encouraged polemics; we have not incited conflicts; far from that, for a long time we have kept silent while enduring a barrage of documents and attacks from that rightist leadership, as that leadership forsook the guerrilla fighters and took the road of conciliation and submission.

We were the victims of deceit. First they spoke to us about a strange thing—for many of these problems begin with a series of strange things—they began to talk of democratic peace. And we would say: "What the devil does that democratic peace mean? What does that mean? It's strange, very strange." But they replied, "No, that's a revolutionary slogan to widen the front, to unite forces, to present a broad front." A broad front? Well, theoretically speaking, who would oppose this? "No, have faith in us."

Then after a few months, they began to speak of tactical retreats. Tactical retreats? How odd! If they had told us the truth we might have disagreed, we might have had doubts, whatever the case; but never . . .

A tactical retreat: that is what they said to the rank and file, that is what they said to the people. The tactical retreat was followed by an attempt to end the struggle, an attempt to suppress the guerrilla movement. For anyone knows that in a guerrilla movement there is no tactical retreat. A guerrilla group that retreats is like an airplane that cuts off its engine in mid-flight: it falls to the ground. Such a tactical retreat must have been the brainchild of some genius in high-flown revolutionary theories. Whoever has an idea of what a guerrilla group is, and begins to hear talk of retreat by the guerrillas, will say: "This man is talking a lot of nonsense." There can be total withdrawal of guerrillas, but not retreat.

Gradually they let their mask slip, until one day they revealed themselves completely and said: "Let's take part in the elections." They spoke out in favor of elections.

But even before they declared themselves in favor of elections, they committed one of the vilest deeds that a revolutionary party can commit: they began to act as informers, as public accusers of the guerrillas. They took advantage of the case of Iribarren Borges.* They utilized that episode to begin speaking out openly and publicly against the guerrilla movement, practically throwing it into the claws of the government beasts. The government had the weapons and the soldiers with which to pursue the guerrillas who would not retreat; but the so-called Party or the rightist leadership of the Party which had assumed its command, took it upon itself to arm, both morally and politically, the repressive forces fighting the guerrillas. We have to ask ourselves honestly, how could we, a revolutionary party, cover up, in the name of an argument, of a cloistered *ex cathedra* type of thinking, the attitude of a party that was trying to morally arm the repressive forces fighting the guerrillas.

And so the phrase-making began, the accusations began. They said that we were creating factionalism, that we were creating factionalism!

A group of charlatans weren't under judgment here but a group of guerrilla fighters who had been in the mountains for years, who had gone there and had then suffered every form of neglect, of abandonment. Could revolutionaries have said, "Yes, once again you are

*Julio Iribarren Borges, a Venezuelan public official, was kidnapped March 1, 1967 and found killed March 3. The event was used as a pretext for suspending constitutional rights and attacking the Cuban government. March 4, the Venezuelan Communist Party condemned the assassination as anarchistic and terrorist. March 6, "Granma," the official organ of the Cuban Communist Party central committee, carried a declaration by Venezuelan guerrilla leader Elías Manuitt claiming responsibility for the assassination, as an "application of revolutionary justice." Fidel Castro covered this whole history in his March 13 speech commemorating the tenth anniversary of the attack on the presidential palace, the full text of which is contained in a special issue of "World Outlook," Vol. 5, No. 13. In the speech, Castro condemned the Venezuelan Communist Party for its opportunistic support of the government side, tantamount to demanding punishment of the guerrilla leaders.

right, you who have been deceiving us, you who began by telling us one thing, then another, and ended up by doing this."

Naturally, we publicly expressed our condemnation—after a series of statements had already been issued by that rightist leadership against our Party—of the treacherous ways in which they were slandering and attacking the revolutionaries, using the Iribarren incident as a point of departure.

Logically, that provoked the irate and indignant protest of that rightist leadership, which made us the butt of a series of tirades. They did not answer a single one of our arguments; they were unable to answer even one, and they wrote a maudlin reply to the effect that we were ignoble, that we had attacked an underground Party, that we were fighting a most combative, a most heroic anti-imperialist organization. And they drafted a reply against us.

Why has it been necessary to bring that reply here? Because that document became the argument of a gang, a whole gang of detractors and slanderers of the Cuban Revolution. And that incident signaled the beginning of a real international conspiracy against the Cuban Revolution, a real conspiracy against our Revolution.

We feel that this is a problem that must be clarified; at least the truth must be clarified.

I am going to read this answer, if you'll pardon me, even though it is rather lengthy. Of course, it is an answer full of phrases which are not at all kind to us, but if you'll permit me I would like to read this answer, which has been made public, (APPLAUSE) the so-called "Reply of the Communist Party of Venezuela to Fidel Castro." And may this be a starting point for refuting some things that have been said about Cuba and about the Revolution.

It reads: "Fidel Castro, Secretary General of the Communist Party (in power) of Cuba, and Prime Minister of the Socialist Government of Cuba, taking advantage of his comfortable position, has attacked the Communist Party of Venezuela, an underground Party, with hundreds of its militants in prison, dozens of them having been killed in the mountains and streets of the cities; and now subject to relentless persecution daily, while new victims fall even as Fidel Castro speaks.

"The man who is tolerated in all his verbal excesses, thanks to the fact that Cuba occupies the front line of the anti-imperialist struggle, should have the elementary finesse to be careful of his language when referring to the Communist Party struggling in the country which in all of Latin America is that most intervened by Yankee imperialism and is fighting it under the most difficult conditions. Knowing who he is and with the whole world listening, Fidel Castro has not hesitated to insult a Communist Party which is hardly able to answer due to repression.

"Therefore: Fidel Castro's action is ignoble, takes unfair advantage and is treacherous and lacking the nobility and gallantry that have always characterized the Cuban Revolution.

"Second: Fidel Castro has expressed a negative judgment concerning the murder of Iribarren Borges, even claiming a right to express an opinion on this matter. Nevertheless, with surprising nerve, he wants to deny the same right to the CPV. Fidel Castro, evidently does not want the Communist Party of Venezuela, which acts in Venezuela, which is in Venezuela, to express an opinion, to pass judgment on a Venezuelan political event which took place on Venezuelan soil and closely affects the life of the CPV. On the other hand, he himself can do so from Cuba.

"According to his peculiar point of view, we are on speaking terms with and play up to the government. He does the same and pretends to be the voice of an intangible revolutionary oracle. This strange way of reasoning shows an irresponsible arrogance and self-sufficiency not appropriate in a Chief of State.

"As to the event itself, the CPV said exactly the same thing that Fidel Castro did, no more, no less. On the other hand, we assert that what does play up to reaction and imperialism are speeches such as that of Fidel Castro"—they don't even thank me (LAUGHTER)—"slander like that which he has hurled against our Party, his efforts to divide it, and such matters as the murder of Iribarren Borges.

"Third: The CPV claims the right to plan its own policy without anybody's interference. Cuba has marched along a hard, revolutionary road with honor, in this she is an example and inspiration to us. But the one thing that we have never been, are not, and never will be, is an agent of Cuba in Venezuela, or of any other Communist Party in the world.

"We are Venezuelan Communists, and we do not accept the tutelage of anyone, no matter how great his revolutionary merits may be.

"If there is any revolutionary group in Venezuela that submits with pleasure to the tutelage and patronage of Fidel Castro, that is its business. The CPV will never do it. If Fidel Castro does not like it, so much the worse for him. Now then: Why does Fidel Castro intervene precisely at this time against the CPV? Because the CPV has already begun to defeat in practice, and not only ideologically, the anti-Party faction of Douglas Bravo; because the Party and the Communist Youth have attained great political and organizational successes in applying their policy; because our recent feat, the rescue of comrades Pompeyo, Guillermo and Teodoro, has filled all the militant Communists of the country with enthusiasm and renewed energy; and because, finally, the anarchistic, adventurous policy of the anti-Party group has shown the inevitability of its failure and has helped enormously in the clarification of problems under discussion.

"That is precisely why Fidel Castro has thrown all the weight of his prestige against the CPV in a desperate attempt to help the anarchistic group of adventurers, which he sponsored and urged on so the CPV would go under.

"Nevertheless, our policy and the facts prove daily what the ad-

jectives 'hesitant,' 'halting' and 'opportunist'—that Fidel Castro applied to the leadership of the CPV—are worth. And that is proved here in Venezuela, even in spite of the things Fidel Castro has done to us, and, surely, will continue doing to us.

"But let him and the whole CPV understand this clearly: we will not even discuss the sovereignty of the CPV.

"Fourth: Fidel Castro has described the leadership of the CPV as cowardly, in a new demonstration of that irritating tendency of his to believe himself possessed of a monopoly on bravery and courage. We Venezuelan Communists do not suffer from childish exhibitionism; we do not go around proclaiming our virtues in this field. When Fidel Castro was a child, that great patriarch of Venezuelan communism Gustavo Machado was already storming Curacao and invading Venezuela, arms in hand.

"And from then on, the history of the CPV, which is a political history, was also the history of the men who confronted Gómez's terror and that of Pérez Jiménez; the men who directed the insurrection of January 23, 1958; the men who were responsible for Fidel Castro's receiving a plane loaded with arms when he was still in the Sierra Maestra; and the men who, if they have hesitated in anything during the last eight years, have not faltered in risking their lives.

"This answer of ours is the best demonstration we can give Fidel Castro of what the leadership of the CPV is really like. Accustomed to believe in his power as a revolutionary High Pasha, he thought his speech would surely crush and confound us. He couldn't be more mistaken, and now Fidel Castro will see why Yankee imperialism and its agents insist so much on liquidating this Venezuelan Communist Party.

"Fifth: In his speech, Fidel Castro shows that he wants to assume, once more, the role of a sort of arbiter of the revolutionary destiny of Latin America—a superrevolutionary who, if he had been in the place of all the Communists of Latin America, would have already made the Revolution.

"On another occasion we referred to the characteristics of the Cuban struggle and to the place where Fidel Castro would still be if it had occurred to him to hoist the red flag in the Sierra Maestra. At the moment we only want to reject the role of revolutionary "papa" that Fidel Castro adopts.

"We firmly reject his presuming to believe that he and only he can decide what is and what is not revolutionary in Latin America. In Venezuela this question is judged by the CPV, before itself and its people, before no one else. But of this Fidel Castro,—highest dispenser of revolutionary diplomas, who asks what North Viet Nam would say if Cuba were to trade with South Viet Nam—we only want to ask if he thinks about what the Spanish people have to say about his trading with Franco and the Spanish oligarchy, or what the Negro peoples of Zimbabwe, Rhodesia, and the patriots of Aden might say about his trading with imperialist Britain. Or is it that

what Fidel Castro considers as opportunism in others, in him would be washed away by the holy waters of his own self-sufficiency?

"Sixth: This is an unpleasant polemic and one that makes the enemy jump with joy; but which evidently cannot be deferred any longer. Fidel Castro himself forced us to the limit with his speech. All right, then. We will argue. And just as we claim our descent from Simón Bolívar and the fathers of our homeland in our anti-imperialist struggle, so we tell Fidel Castro that the descendants of Simón Bolívar and Ezequiel Zamora will never tolerate anybody's using language as insolent and provoking as that which he used in his speech on March 13.

"The Venezuelan believes himself neither above nor below anybody else; but if there is one thing that will provoke his fiery militant pride, it is an insult.

"And already Fidel Castro must have started to realize that he has stumbled against something different, that he has come up against the Venezuelan Communists.

"Seventh: We realize that such acts as Fidel Castro's will cause us difficulties but we do not despair.

"We have the calm conviction of those who know they are right, and we have the revolutionary passion to defend it."

March 15, 1967

Political Bureau of the Central Committee
of the Communist Party of Venezuela

Pompeyo Márquez

Guillermo García Ponce

Alonso Ojeda Olachea

Pedro Ortega Díaz

Eduardo Gallegos Mancera

Teodoro Petkoff

Germán Lairét."

"Without comment," it says above. "Answer of the Communist Party of Venezuela to Fidel Castro." And below: "Please reproduce and distribute. Second Front-Alpha 66, 109 South West 12 Avenue, Miami, Florida. 33-130."

Do not think that I have gotten this letter from a spokesman of a Party or from a political newspaper. Thousands of copies of this letter were sent to Cuba from the United States by the Organization "Second Front-Alpha 66," the same people who sent that gang with guns and bullets treated with cyanide to murder Prime Minister Fidel Castro, as they said.

And this certainly requires some comment. In the first place, I am not going to refer now to what I said that night, because it would take too long. It is not true that we personally insulted anyone. We did not call anyone in that Party a coward; we said that the political

line was cowardly. I was not insulting or offending anyone or saying so-and-so is a coward.

Naturally, far from answering any criticisms made, they drew up this document and published it. It was one of the many that they have written and, naturally, we have compiled. Our Party has been working on a document to answer this and all the intrigues of these gentlemen, which will be released at an opportune moment. But a series of imputations are made in this document, the same ones that have been made against the Revolution, against our Party, and not only by imperialism . . . not only by imperialism. Among other things, these gentlemen did not hesitate in accusing us, in accusing our Party, of intervening in the internal affairs of the Venezuelan Party and of intervening in the internal affairs of Venezuela.

They accused us of having agents in Venezuela, they insinuated that the guerrilla group—the combatants who refused to retreat and surrender—was a group of Cuban agents. These were exactly the same as the slanderous accusations made by the U.S. State Department.

In this document Cuba was also accused of trying to be an arbiter, of trying to direct the Latin American revolutionary movement: exactly the same accusations that imperialism makes against us. In this document they even include false statements, even mentioning arms which came from Venezuela—but these did not come when we were in the Sierra Maestra; they were 150 weapons that came when our troops were advancing on Santiago de Cuba, in December, when the columns of Camilo Cienfuegos and Ernesto Guevara had already taken an important part of Santa Clara. (PROLONGED APPLAUSE) They practically throw in our faces the sending of a planeload of arms which they claim they sent. They almost try to say that the war was won with these arms . . . And they were not the ones who sent these arms. And they are so short of arguments, so short of arguments, that they have had to resort to such deceptions.

Perhaps someday the Venezuelan people will ask them about the millions of dollars they collected throughout the world on behalf of the guerrilla movement—which they abandoned, whose members they left without shoes, clothing, food, and even the bare necessities; and which they have accused and attacked without scruples of any kind. Some day—I repeat—the Venezuelan people may ask these swindlers how much they collected throughout the world: the figures, the numbers, the data.

And what did they do? For our part, we do not ask them anything; we are not interested. When we help someone, we truly help him, we do not ask him for an accounting of what he did with this aid.

Nevertheless, there is one argument which has gone all the rounds, and is going to have a full answer. There was something that became the gang's argument, the argument of the "Mafia." (Perhaps, if it were not for these painful circumstances, we would not have to

discuss this problem.) This is the argument of our trade with Spain, with England and the other capitalist countries. Of course, this argument, or this problem, was not originally under discussion at all. This was not what was being discussed. Why, then, did these gentlemen bring this problem into the discussion? Why did they bring this argument into the discussion? They did so in connection with our critical position on financial and technical aid extended to the Latin American oligarchies.

In the first place, there has been a deliberate attempt to distort our views. Furthermore, these gentlemen of the rightist leadership of the Communist Party of Venezuela had a goal, and they pursued it in a very immoral manner. Once, when Leoni's administration was seeking to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, we were asked what we thought of it and we voiced our opinion; these gentlemen were also asked, and they also responded negatively to the idea.

Why do these gentlemen resort to this argument and drag in a problem that was not being discussed with them? It is very clear, it forms part of the plot, of the conspiracy in which they and their fellows are participating with imperialism to create a serious conflict between the Cuban Revolution and the socialist countries. It is unquestionable that this argument is one of the basest, most despicable, most treacherous and most provocative. It is an attempt to find a contradiction between our position and our trade with capitalist countries. But this argument until very recently has been bruited about by the "Mafia," and not only has it been published openly—the capitalist press also published it, and the counterrevolutionary organizations have circulated this letter—but this vile argument has also been spread about *sotto voce* in corridors and powwows by the detractors of and conspirators against the Cuban Revolution.

In the first place, they are lying when they state that Cuba is opposed to trade. In every international body, in every economic conference, in all organizations in which Cuba has taken part as a State, we have constantly denounced the imperialist policy of blockade, and we have denounced the acts of the government of the United States against our country as a violation of free trade and of the right of all countries to trade with each other. Cuba has inflexibly maintained that position at all times; that has been a policy pursued by our country and the entire history of the commercial relations of our country bears it out. Our position does not refer to commerce; it has never referred to commerce. And our position is known by the Soviet Union; we have stated our viewpoint to them.

We were talking about financial and technical help given by any socialist State to the Latin American oligarchies. These things must not be confused; one thing should not be confused with the other! Some socialist states even offered dollar loans to Sr. Lleras Restrepo*

*Carlos Lleras Restrepo, President of Colombia.

because he was in difficulties with the International Monetary Fund.

And we asked ourselves: How can this be? This is absurd! Dollar loans to an oligarchic government that is repressing the guerrillas, that is persecuting and assassinating guerrillas! And the war is carried out with money—among other things, because the oligarchies have nothing with which to wage war except money, with which they pay mercenary forces.

And such things seem absurd to us—as does everything that implies financial and technical aid to any country that is repressing the revolutionary movement, to countries that are accomplices in the imperialist blockade against Cuba. That we condemn. It is unfortunate that we have to go into this problem in detail, but, naturally, it is the number one argument employed by the "Mafia." And it is logical. Cuba is a small country against which the United States practices a cruel blockade. At Gran Tierra we explained to some of those present here how the imperialists do everything within their power to prevent our obtaining even such insignificant things as handfuls of new seeds, varieties of rice, cotton or anything else, seeds for grain, vegetables, anything.

No one can imagine to what lengths the imperialists go to extend the economic blockade against our country. And all those governments are accomplices; all those governments have violated the most elemental principles of free trade, the right of peoples to trade freely; those governments help imperialism in its attempts to starve the people of Cuba.

And if that is true, if that is the case, and if internationalism exists, if solidarity is a word worthy of respect, the least that we can expect of any State of the socialist camp is that it refrains from giving any financial or technical aid to those regimes. (PROLONGED APPLAUSE AND SHOUTS OF "FIDEL")

It is truly repugnant that this vile argument is used, as if to test the revolutionary steadfastness of this country, or to provoke conflicts with it. And, truly, this nation's steadfastness, its policy based on principle, its decision, has been to act in a responsible way, yes! Carefully, yes! So as to prevent, wherever possible, polemics and conflicts. Yes. But never let it be believed that any circumstance, irrespective of its difficulty, any problem, no matter how great, will enable them to drive our dignity or our revolutionary conscience to the wall. Because if that were true, if the leadership of this Party were thus disposed, we would have given up long ago in the face of the greatest and most lethal danger, the danger to which our adamant political position toward imperialism has exposed us.

And it is equally repugnant that they try to find a contradiction between this position and Cuba's commercial policy with the capitalist world. The imperialists have tried to maintain the blockade. And the question is not what countries we do trade with, but rather how many countries throughout the wide world we do *not* trade with, simply

because, one by one, and under the incessant and growing pressure of the imperialists, they have broken trade relations with us.

We have never broken off those relations. Imperialism has taken care of that, in the same way that it has seen to it that these countries, one by one, broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba. We have never broken relations with anyone. That is a weapon that imperialism has used against the Cuban Revolution, in diplomatic relations, in commercial relations.

And it is worthwhile to speak about commercial relations, as well, for some of the "Mafia"—and how else can I describe those who so slanderously and basely attack our Revolution, without any serious and powerful argument—have spoken of our not having broken off diplomatic relations with the State of Israel. Neither did our country break off relations with Albania when a great number of countries from the socialist camp did so; we did not break off relations with Federal Germany, but Federal Germany did not want to accept our establishing relations with the German Democratic Republic. And even though we knew that the consequences would be the breaking off of diplomatic and commercial relations with the Federal Republic, this country had not the slightest hesitation in being among the first to establish diplomatic relations with the German Democratic Republic. (APPLAUSE) And this country has never hesitated to put political principles above economic interest. If this were not so, we should long since have found millions of reasons to reconcile ourselves with imperialism, especially in these times when it has become so fashionable to do so.

To make the slightest insinuation that we follow a selfish policy of self-interest in our international positions is to forget what this country has paid for its unyielding stands, its solidarity with a great number of countries—Algeria among them—notwithstanding the fact that this gave another country, one of the biggest buyers of Cuban sugar, an excuse to cede to the pressures exercised by imperialism and to stop buying our sugar. And there are many cases.

Our people always understood, and we believed that everybody understood quite clearly, that every time the imperialists failed in their pressures to keep others from purchasing from or selling to us, it meant a victory for our Revolution over the blockade. And we have always regarded as an expression of, in a certain sense, a position of self-defense—and we have spoken publicly about this, and stated it in the *Plaza de la Revolución* only a short time ago—the fact that the European countries could not accept, and why they could not accept, imperialist pressuring. Why Europe, in spite of its economic and industrial development, must contend with competition from the Yankee monopolies, the attempts of the Yankee imperialists to take over their economies, and why—as a question of self-interest—it was impossible for them to yield to U.S. imperialist pressuring. Moreover, since Cuba paid its bills and paid promptly, and since Cuba offered an expanding market, the imperialists met with re-

sounding failure in their attempts to force the entire capitalist world to break off trade relations with Cuba, as they had desired.

What has this to do with our arguments? What has it to do with our statements? If the imperialists had succeeded, the path of the Revolution would have been much more difficult.

Do we trade with the socialist camp? Yes, in trade which is practically all barter, on the so-called clearing basis, which has a value only in the country with which the agreement exists. But if our country needs certain things such as medicines of a certain kind, things essential for the life of our people, and the trading organizations in a socialist country say, "We do not have them," we must look for them in other markets and pay in the currency of that country. This is where imperialism tries to crush us. And if we have bought medicines in capitalist countries—because we cannot get them, or a similar product, in a socialist country, in order to save the lives of sick people, of children, to reduce—as we have reduced—the infant mortality rate, the mortality rate in general, (APPLAUSE) and attain the position Cuba has today, for instance in public health and in many other fields, apparently we are criminals; apparently we are people without principles; apparently we are immoral; apparently we are the opposite of what we claim to be.

The same applies to the argument concerning the breaking off of relations with the State of Israel. I think no one can have the slightest doubt regarding the position of Cuba in that painful problem: a position of principle, an uncompromising position, a firm position. It is just that we do not like fig leaves.

What is Israel? A State which acts as an instrument of Yankee imperialism, which is, in turn, the instigator, the protector, of that State. And that is why I ask those of the "Mafia," those who seek to slander Cuba with such arguments, why they don't break relations with the United States? (APPLAUSE) It just happens that if we are not obedient "yes-men," we are immoral, we are a people without principles, we are a people full of ideological contradictions . . . And all this is simply part of a repugnant conspiracy to create a conflict between the Cuban Revolution and the states of the socialist camp.

We are not instigators of conflicts, we do not seek unnecessarily, gratuitously, to create conflicts of this nature. I believe that through confronting a powerful enemy, the interdependence among the movements, the Parties, the revolutionary States, will grow to a high degree.

A country as small as ours, without any possibility of economic self-sufficiency, in need, principally, of the arms to defend itself from Yankee imperialism, must very much desire this. No one can picture us as acting in an irresponsible manner and creating problems that can be avoided. But between that position, the idea that this country can be intimidated with provocations of that sort, and Cuba's position, there is a profound abyss.

And actually, behind all of this there is a conspiracy between these elements of the reactionary "Mafia" within the revolutionary movement

and Yankee imperialism to create a conflict between our Revolution and the States of the socialist camp. Because what they, in fact, seek, what they demand, what they urge, is that the socialist camp also join in the imperialist blockade against Cuba.

This is exactly what they really want and they do not hide it. The same March 18, three days after their widely-publicized "reply," an AP news dispatch came from Caracas—because a certain Party spokesman, who had frequent dealings with the AP, frequent conversations with the AP, became very much a figure-of-the-moment as spokesman for that rightist leadership, and the AP, overjoyed, reported: "Fidel Castro has no ideology. 'He is a revolutionary but he is not a politician,' a leader—now in the underground—of the Venezuelan Communist Party told the Associated Press today."

I cannot imagine what interest Leoni could have in persecuting these clandestine gentlemen, yielding, cringing denouncers of the Cuban Revolution, or why they talk of the great feat involved in the liberation of the illustrious "Tom," "Dick" and "Harry." In fact, the only one who profited from that was Leoni and not the people of Venezuela nor the revolutionary movement, because Leoni gained from it a pack of bloodhounds, who only fall short of asking him to provide them with rifles so that they may set out to punish those criminal, bandit, factionist and divisionist agents of Cuba. And since these "journalists," in connection with their missions, must often play the role of journalists, and occasionally like to promote certain contradictions, the journalist added: "When asked if the CPV was not siding with the enemy by trying to have the Soviet Union withdraw its support from Castro, the spokesman replied: 'We coincide dangerously with the Venezuelan government, but remember that we support the Cuban Revolution and the Cuban Communist Party.'" Evidently I am the bad man, the intruder, the provocateur, the revolutionary "Pasha," etc., etc. (LAUGHTER) "'Our attack is not against the Cuban Revolution, but against Castro, who has insulted us.'"

"He made it clear,"—he made it clear!—"that the Communist Party of Venezuela wished that the Soviet Union would get Castro out of the way." They accuse me of trying to interfere in their internal affairs. And they say that nothing arouses their fury and their revolutionary ardour and their pride more than someone who tries to meddle with them—not that imperialism or Leoni meddle, but that somebody makes a criticism with all the justified reasons that I have explained here. ". . . that the Communist Party of Venezuela wished that the Soviet Union would get Castro out of the way." And they put forth the thesis that someone could get Castro or anybody else out of the way, remove or install anybody.

Where did they get such farfetched theories? Although it is hardly strange, since we have a surfeit of farfetched theories.

This gentleman states that the Communist Party of Venezuela would like the Soviet Union "to get Castro out of the way." Let's forget Castro. Really, these gentlemen are naive, they are farfetched, they

are ridiculous. It is not Castro but a Revolution that they must get out of the way! A simple head cold could get Castro out of the way. (LAUGHTER) But no one can get a genuine Revolution out of the way! (APPLAUSE)

Am I perhaps a slanderer? In the "Mafia" there are some who will react just as those who doubted our witnesses and questioned our evidence, and who will say: "That is a lie, a slander." But on August 1 of this year, an AP news dispatch date-lined in Washington, from Ary Moleón—and these gentlemen play a role in all of this—reports: "The highest Venezuelan diplomatic official present here advised today against loosely labelling the Havana meeting of the Latin American Organization of Solidarity as communist, saying that those who attend it are, in effect, anarcho-Castroites."

So now they borrow and exchange vocabulary among themselves! Pompeyo and his retinue saying that we intervene in the internal affairs of Venezuela. Tejera Paris and his clique saying: No, no, no. They aren't Communists; they are anarcho-Castroites. Pure ideological exchange, ideological commerce between Tejera Paris and Pompeyo, between the State Department and the rightist leadership of the Communist Party of Venezuela. Now they borrow one another's concepts and words.

When have we ever seen imperialism treating communists with so much delicacy? When has it ever used so much sweetness, decency, finesse, if the image it has tried to create of a Communist is the worst possible: the most heartless, degenerate, depraved, cruel and savage of human beings?

And suddenly: No! Be very careful! Don't call those people Communists! Communist is a more sacred, more respectable, more venerable, more decent, friendly, conciliatory word. (APPLAUSE) Tejera Paris, the great ideologist of tropical communism! (LAUGHTER)

"The Venezuelan Ambassador to the White House, Enrique Tejera Paris, said that this distinction is fundamental"—it is indeed fundamental; this theoretician knows what he is talking about!—"if we want to understand a situation that is more complex than the simple application of labels."

What care, what exquisite delicacy, what subtlety, what differentiation! What? Call these people Communists? They are anarcho-Castroites. And they are really bad! (LAUGHTER)

"Tejera stressed that the present meeting in Havana is not only to protest against the other governments of the hemisphere, but against the established Communist Parties in Latin America."

What a defense lawyer we have here, saying that this meeting was called to attack the Parties! And since when have the imperialists been so exquisitely concerned about the Parties? And who appointed Tejera Paris defense counsel for the Parties?

"The diplomat recalled that the Communist Party of his country has accused Castro's regime of intolerable intervention in the internal

affairs of Venezuela and of appointing himself arbiter of the Latin American Revolution."

Beware! Do not be confused; these are anarcho-Castroites; they are dangerous, they are bad; do not call these people Communists: do not forget that the Venezuelan Communist Party accused Castro of intervention in the internal affairs of Venezuela; do not forget that it accused him of trying to set himself up as an arbiter.

Have we ever seen the like before? Has anyone ever used such refined language and exquisite courtesy in speaking of the Communists of this continent?

I believe that what is intolerable is this, what is really painful is this: offense, diatribe and slander from imperialism are a thousand times preferable to praise from imperialism. Tell me who defends you, and I will tell you who you are! Tell me who attacks you, and I will tell you who you are! (APPLAUSE)

As far as we know, no one, no oligarch, no imperialist, no imperialist henchman, ever printed one of my speeches for distribution by the thousands. Never! Not a speech, not a phrase, not a line, not a word. Leoni did not have my speech printed; he did not distribute it; if he read it, he probably made a gesture of disgust. Alpha 66, a well-known organization of counterrevolutionaries in Miami, which, in complicity with the CIA, organizes personal attacks with potassium cyanide and silencers, had thousands of copies printed of the declaration made by that leadership and distributed them all over the world.

Heirs of Bolívar? What an offense to the memory of Bolívar! They would have accused Bolívar himself of being an interventionist. What accusations would they not have made against him?

They call themselves sons of Bolívar, followers of Bolívar, and speak of the hundreds of dead? What right have they to speak in the name of the dead, they who betray the dead? What right have they to invoke martyrs, they who are thinking of running for office as representatives, senators and mayors, and canvass for votes with pictures of the fallen and betrayed heroes?

Because that declaration against Cuba was made in March. In April they issued a long document. If you were to read it—it is long and I am not going to read it—you would see the cliché-ridden style. This was a hybrid product of three or four stock models, because it is long. It is the document in which they propose an alliance with the bourgeois parties, and which ends by saying—this is the final note:

"Finally, the armed movement at this moment is unable to play a decisive role, because of the stagnation of the guerrilla fronts and the armed struggle in general, a situation made more serious by the false political ideas and operations prevailing in the anarcho-terrorist group."

Anarcho-adventurist, anarcho-terrorist, anarcho-Castroite! Any day now, Johnson will be talking about the anarcho-terrorists!

"In view of this national movement, the Central Committee has resolved that the Party should take active part in the next elections, under the slogan 'Neither continuation nor Caldera—a change'; a change favoring democratic freedom and national sovereignty, a change toward the independent development of Venezuela.

"The electoral campaign is being conducted under conditions of governmental advantage and repression. The Party will struggle against this situation, to turn the elections into a battle against the reactionary clique that leads the AD and the government."* Amen. (LAUGHTER)

That is, the dead will appear on campaign posters! And in this country, we know about these things, our people know about such things, and these things only produce nausea and repugnance, because we had our fill of this. The one thing that no one will ever be able to tell our people is that this is a Communist attitude, nobody; for even at the beginning of communism, in the middle of the last century, when the Communist Manifesto was written, Marx always said that Communists should support the most militant and progressive sectors of the bourgeoisie. These so-called Communists join the cheap politicians of the bourgeoisie to oppose the heroic guerrilla fighters. Our people and the Venezuelan people certainly have to know that this kind of apostasy, this trade in the blood of those who have fallen, this effrontery in sending men to die, in leading them wrongly, in order to present themselves afterwards on election posters . . . our people know that history does not forgive this, that history will never forgive such a crime.

These gentlemen do not have to be destroyed; they just have to be left alone, because they will destroy themselves.

We know the environment we live in; the reactions, the temperaments, the characters of our peoples. And we know that the most shameful, the most abominable thing is to send men to their deaths in order, later on to solicit votes in the name of these betrayed dead. And here is the last dispatch, from yesterday, following the same line of thought, on which the "Mafia" and imperialism coincide: "The American nations are today considering a request from Venezuela to denounce the Cuban regime of Prime Minister Fidel Castro as harmful to the cause of peaceful coexistence which the Soviet Union propounds.

"The question—which could explode in the rear guard of Castro's Moscow-supported regime—would be an answer to the call of the Conference of the Latin American Organization of Solidarity to fight for the seizure of power through armed struggle."

It says that the Associated Press obtained a copy . . . They're very clever. They get copies from everywhere. This is point four of that document, that they say has eleven points, which they publish in this dispatch:

"To express to the extra-continental governments who actively sup-

* *Acción Democrática, the Venezuelan government party.*

port the present government of Cuba the serious concern of the OAS member-States, inasmuch as such support tends to encourage the interventionist and aggressive activities of the Cuban regime against the other countries of the Western Hemisphere, and, until these activities cease, the cause of peaceful and active coexistence among the nations of the world will suffer.

"To this effect, it is recommended to the governments of the OAS member-States that joint or separate steps be taken concerning those States that actively support the present Government of Cuba, in order to reiterate this expression of concern."

Peaceful coexistence? And this terminology in the mouths of the OAS and its clique? This terminology in the mouths of the OAS and its clique, of sending—in a few words—groups or commissions of the OAS to visit the governments of the socialist States so that they will withdraw their aid to Cuba. It's incredible! It's incredible to be seeing and hearing these things! What do these gentlemen base this on? How can they be so shameless? How do they dare to do such a thing?

And point five: "To ask the governments which support the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America to withdraw their support of that organization as well as of the Second Tricontinental Conference, scheduled to be held in Cairo in January 1968; and reiterate the categorical repudiation of that organization by the member-States of the OAS; repudiation of that organization, whose purposes—as shown by the resolutions of its first Conference which took place in Havana in January 1966—are to promote the separation of the peoples into groups divided by sectarianism and violence.

"To that effect, it recommends that the governments of the member-States approach the American States and the organizations supporting the Tricontinental Organization, individually or as a group, in order to insist on this proposal."

Since the governments of certain States belong and others do not belong to the organizations, it follows that these gentlemen feel inspired to approach the State organizations that have been at the Tricontinental and say to them: "They are no good; repudiate those people; leave the Tricontinental."

If this doesn't smell of imperialism ordering the world around, then what does it mean, gentlemen? What is it? What have we come to? What nerve these gentlemen have! What illusions, and what shameless pretensions!

But at any rate, the machinations of the "Mafia" and imperialism are very evidently trying to isolate Cuba completely, to proclaim the total blockade of Cuba, so that not even a grain of birdseed will enter this country. They coincide in their despair; they are dreaming, they are raving, they imagine atrocious, dreadful things. And this country is isolated, it is absolutely alone. Poor people! If that hypothesis were possible—and it isn't—they'd have to suffer the shock

of seeing that forsaken country, without a grain of birdseed, living, resisting, working and marching onward.

This small country has not accumulated enough merits in the eyes of the world, has not accumulated enough merits with regard to the Revolution. And often we have imagined the conditions under which imperialism would impose a total blockade on this country, surround Cuba with its ships, and prevent everything from coming in. Would they crush the Revolution? I am asking the people: Would they crush the Revolution? (EXCLAMATIONS OF: "NO!")

That is a most solid "No," coming from the heart of a revolutionary people. (PROLONGED APPLAUSE) In short: if we were not prepared for everything—for everything—we could not call ourselves revolutionaries.

We do not deliberately promote conflict, problems, difficult situations.

That will never be the attitude of the Revolution. They'll never see an irresponsible, absurd attitude adopted by the Revolution, no! But neither will they see the Revolution hesitating, the Revolution giving up; they'll never see the Revolution yielding one iota of its principles!

For *Patria o Muerte* has many meanings. It means being revolutionaries until death, it means being a proud people until death! And the fact that we speak about *Patria o Muerte* does not mean that we have a sense of fatalism. It is the expression of a certain determination. When we say "death," we mean that not only we would be dead, but many of our enemies would be dead, as well. Destroy our people? No matter how many of its soldiers Yankee imperialism sends here to die, it cannot destroy this country! (PROLONGED APPLAUSE)

These incidents, these attitudes are calling us all to order; they are calling us all to reason, to clarify things. These attitudes are the result not of development, but of the deterioration of revolutionary ideas and of revolutionary conscience. The resolutions of OLAS do not mean that everything is done. They do not mean that the struggle has ceased. The Tricontinental, also, had resolutions, and there were those who signed the resolutions and forgot all about them afterwards.

There must be struggle. We have to struggle. And the statement that Cuba wants to set itself up as an arbiter, a head, a leader is more than ridiculous. I am going to tell you what we really think. There is no reason why there should be leading people and much less leading men! It is leading ideas that are needed! (APPLAUSE) And revolutionary ideas will be the sole, true guide of our peoples. We fight for our ideas! We defend ideas! But to defend ideas does not mean to claim to lead anyone. They are our ideas and we defend them, these revolutionary ideas. But nothing could be more ridiculous, because the world does not need countries which lead, Parties that lead, or men who lead. The world, and above all our Latin American world, needs ideas that lead.

And the ideas will arise in the process. We know the process. At the beginning, when a few of us began to think about the idea of an

armed struggle in our country and we began to struggle, very few believed in this possibility—very few. And for a long time there were very few of us. And afterwards, little by little, these ideas began to gain prestige, began to catch on, and the moment came when everybody believed them and the Revolution won.

How difficult it was to get the idea accepted that the struggle of the people against modern professional armies was possible in order to make a revolution! And when that was finally demonstrated, after the triumph of the Revolution, what happened? Everybody believed in this truth in such a way that the counterrevolutionaries believed that it was also a truth for them, and there followed the organization of counterrevolutionary guerrilla groups and counterrevolutionary gangs, and even the most garrulous park-bench counterrevolutionaries grasped the idea, joined a gang and took to the hills. Then it became necessary to show them they were mistaken, that this was true for revolutionary action against the oligarchies, but that a counter-revolution of oligarchs, guerrilla warfare of oligarchs and of reactionaries against a social revolution, was impossible. And how difficult it was! Until we finally showed that this was true. We have had to point out two facts: that it is impossible for oligarchs to defend themselves against the people's struggle; and that it is impossible for the people to be defeated by counterrevolutionary guerrilla gangs. And the CIA knows that. Do you know who are probably the most convinced of the effectiveness of armed revolutionary guerrilla warfare and of the oligarchies' incapacity to resist the armed guerrilla struggle by the people? Do you know who? The CIA, Johnson, McNamara, Dean Rusk, Yankee imperialism. They are the most convinced.

And one asks oneself: How is it possible that these counterrevolutionaries let themselves be confused and deceived and dragged into armed counterrevolutionary struggle against the Revolution, if it is impossible to win? The reason, we are forced to admit, gentlemen, is that these counterrevolutionaries are more consistent than many who call themselves superrevolutionaries.

They are most consistent. They wrongly believe in that and let themselves be dragged in . . . Naturally, afterwards they always say the same thing, that is a rule without exception: that they had been fooled, that they had been deceived, that they believed that the army, that the militia . . . All that. We've heard it over and over again. We know it . . .

And, of course, the ideas in our country have had to develop dialectically, in struggle, in clashes. And it will be the same in every country; no country will be free from this clash of ideas. These clashes of ideas exist even in Cuba. No, the fact that we have a revolutionary people does not mean that there are no antagonisms, no contradictions. We are in contradiction here with the counterrevolution and imperialism; and there are also contradictions with those who share these ideas of the reactionary gentlemen of the Venezuelan Party.

And in this country we also have our micro-faction—we can't call

it a faction because it has no volume, it has no size, it has no possibilities, it has nothing—it is a micro-faction that has existed. Where does that micro-faction come from? From the old resentful sectarians. For our Revolution has its history; our Revolution has its history. I said that at the beginning very few believed in it; afterwards many did.

Our Revolution went through that process; it passed through the process of sectarianism. The sectarians created serious problems for us, with their ferocious opportunism, with their inexorable policy of persecution against many people. They brought elements of corruption into the Revolution. And naturally, the Revolution, with its methods, its patience, made criticisms; it was splended, it was generous with that sectarianism.

And not only that. We had to be careful to prevent criticism of sectarianism from creating neosectarianism in the ranks of the Revolution; and that was also prevented. But some sectarian elements held on, they swallowed their resentment, and each time they have had a chance they have expressed it. There are those who never believed in the Revolution except in an opportunistic way, trying to profit by the efforts of the revolutionary people, trying to climb high in a shameful way. They never believed in the Revolution, they haven't learned in eight years, nor will they learn in ten years. They will never learn.

Let this be clearly understood: I am not referring to old Communists, for the worst expression of sectarianism, of the activities of those sectarians, has been in trying to involve the concept of old Communists with their pseudo-revolutionary attitudes.

It should be stated that the Revolution counts, and has always counted, on the support of the real Communists in this country.

But logically, during the time of sectarianism, many cowards who had deserted the ranks of the old Party turned up again. Opportunism, sectarianism, brings on all this: isolated from the masses, it tries to gain strength through favoritism. And then followed enrollment after enrollment, and privileges. Of course, afterward, when the Revolution called a halt to sectarianism, it prevented expressions of sectarianism of another kind. That has always been our stand, that has always been the stand of the revolutionary leadership, which has always tried to overcome those problems in the style characterizing our Revolution, without falling into excesses of any kind, preferring to sin by omission rather than by excess.

And here we also have our micro-faction made up of old sectarians, which is not the same as old Communists. And I repeat, the greatest harm is that they have tried, although in vain, to instill their unhealthy ideas, their resentful ideas, into the old, true revolutionaries. They were the ones, for example, who thought at the time of the October Crisis that we should have let Yankee imperialism inspect us, search us from head to foot, let the planes fly over low, all of that! They have been systematically opposed to all the concepts of

the Revolution, to the deepest, sincerest, purest revolutionary attitudes of our people, to our concepts of socialism, of communism, of everything.

That is, no one will be exempt. And this micro-faction has the same attitudes as that "Mafia"; this splinter group constitutes a new form of counterrevolutionary activity, in that it has the same goals as Alpha, as Faria, as Pompeyo and Company, as McNamara, Johnson and that gang.

Now the CIA has a new thesis: why is it interested in planning so many assassination attempts and other things? Its thesis now is that Castro has to be eliminated in order to check the Revolution. For imperialism is losing ground. At the beginning it wanted to do away with everything revolutionary; now, the more ground it loses, the more frightened it gets. Now its thesis is to make the line of the Revolution more moderate, to change that line, to move Cuba into a more moderate position—and in this, Alpha, Johnson, Faria, the CIA, the micro-faction and political "Mafia" all coincide. And they are harboring illusions.

Really, I'm not interested in buying an insurance policy. I don't care a fig what they believe! I'm not interested in being indebted to our enemies for their ceasing to consider me their true enemy. I'm not interested in being indebted to our enemies for calling their actions to a halt. They are within their rights; they are within their rights. I do not intend to buy any insurance policy.

But I think it is necessary to tell you that the line of this Revolution is not the "Castro line"; it is the line of a people, it is the line of a leading group with a real revolutionary history. (LONG APPLAUSE) And it is the essential line of this Revolution!

The "Mafia" groups encourage one another; the international "Mafia" has been encouraged, greatly encouraged, by the idea that insurmountable antagonisms, insurmountable conflicts, may arise between the Cuban Revolution and the socialist camp. Really, the only thing we can say is that it is an honor to our Revolution that our enemies think about it so much; likewise, all Latin American revolutionaries must regard it as an honor that imperialism has given so much attention to the problem of OLAS. They were quick with threats; they postponed the OAS conference; they said they were going to do a lot of things, they were going to "clean the place up," that this meeting could not take place. And the OLAS Conference has been held—true representation of a genuine revolutionary movement, whose ideas are solid because they are based on reality. OLAS is the interpreter of tomorrow's history, interpreter of the future, for OLAS is the wave of the future (Tr. N.: *Olas* means "waves" in Spanish), symbol of the revolutionary waves sweeping a continent of 250 million.

This continent is pregnant with revolution. Sooner or later, it will be born. Its birth may be more or less complicated, but it is inevitable. We do not have the slightest doubt of this. There will be victories, there will be reverses, there will be advances, there will be

retreats. But the dawn of a new era, the victory of the peoples in the face of injustice, in the face of exploitation, in the face of oligarchies, in the face of imperialism—whatever the mistakes that men may make, whatever the mistaken ideas that may be obstacles on the road—is inevitable.

We have spoken to you with complete and absolute frankness. We know that true revolutionaries will always feel solidarity with Cuba. We know that no true revolutionary, that no true Communist on this continent, as among our people, will ever let himself be drawn into those positions which would lead him to an alliance with imperialism, which would make him go hand in hand with the imperialist masters against the Cuban Revolution and against the Latin American Revolution.

We do not condemn anyone *a priori*, we do not close the doors to anyone, we do not attack any persons en masse, lumped together; we express our ideas, we defend our ideas, we debate these ideas. And we have absolute confidence in the revolutionaries, in the true revolutionaries, in the true Communists. They will not fail the Revolution, just as our Revolution will never fail the revolutionary movement of Latin America. (APPLAUSE)

We do not know what awaits us, what vicissitudes, what dangers, what struggles. But we are prepared; each day we try to be better prepared; we will be better and better prepared.

But one thing we can say; we are calm, we are secure, this little island will always be a revolutionary wall of granite and against it all conspiracies, all intrigues, all aggressions will be smashed to splinters. (APPLAUSE) And high upon this revolutionary wall there will fly forever a banner with the legend: *Patria o Muerte! Venceremos!* (OVATION)

OLAS

GENERAL DECLARATION

The First Conference of the Latin American Organization of Solidarity met in Havana, capital of the Republic of Cuba, from July 31 to August 10, 1967.

This Conference constituted a brilliant stage in the revolutionary struggle which the peoples of our continent are waging in mountains and cities for definitive and total national and social liberation. For the first time in the history of Latin America, the true representatives of its exploited, starved and oppressed masses met to discuss, organize and advance revolutionary solidarity, exchange experiences, coordinate their activities on an ideologically firm basis and, in the light of what their revolutionary past and the present conditions have taught them, confront the global counterrevolutionary strategy of imperialism and the national oligarchies.

The main aim of the Conference has been, in short, to tighten the ties of militant solidarity among anti-imperialist fighters of Latin America and to work out the fundamental lines for the development of the continental revolution. This great assembly has opened up possibilities for an ample and profound discussion of old problems of revolutionary strategy and tactics as well as an exchange of opinions regarding the role of different classes and social strata within the present historical process of the continent. The exchange of opinions, the agreement on a common line and the creation of a permanent body of solidarity constitute an important step toward the encouragement and the promotion of the revolutionary struggle in Latin America. Revolutionary armed struggle—triumphant in Cuba and already started in Venezuela, Colombia, Guatemala and Bolivia—will not end until the bureaucratic and military apparatus of the bourgeoisie and the landholders is destroyed and the revolutionary power of the working people is established, confronting at the same time the internal counterrevolution and Yankee intervention, to resolutely tear out imperialist domination at its roots.

The struggle undertaken will end only with the victory of the true

descendants of heroic, self-sacrificing liberators. We are living in the period of the second war for independence.

One and a half centuries have elapsed since the peoples of our America took up arms to crush the colonial power that subjugated, exploited and humiliated them, shaking the whole continent with their valiant deeds and sacrifices. The revolutionary struggle which culminated in the overthrow of Iberian domination in almost all of America was led by capable, resolute and undaunted men, the majority of them coming from those groups of wealthy intellectuals educated in the theory of bourgeois liberalism and the ideals of the French Revolution, with a clear perspective of the continental character of the struggle and, thus, with a perfect understanding of their duties as Latin American revolutionaries. Simón Bolívar, the personification of the liberators of his time, said, "For us, our home is all America." These men who constituted the revolutionary vanguard of the emancipating movement not only realized that the struggle was one from North America to Patagonia but, together, they set out to liberate their single homeland with unified action that extended beyond the frontiers of the colonies and to deprive the enemy of his territorial base for later attacks against the peoples who had gained independence.

In accordance with such concepts, objectives and methods, the vanguard of the liberators began by forging a united political and military command and marched always at the head of the revolutionary armies, organizing and guiding the peoples along the only path that would lead to victory: armed insurrection. The objectives pursued determined the nature of the struggle. In the face of reactionary violence, the essence of the colonial regime, there was no alternative for the winning of independence, sovereignty and dignity than revolutionary violence. History does not list a single case of any dominant class that has graciously given up power. On the contrary, history shows that the oppressed and exploited must wrest power from their oppressors and exploiters.

Then, as now and as always, there were some who had little faith and rejected the correctness of the path undertaken, adopting pro-colonialist positions or openly passing over to the side of the enemy. They were, obviously, pseudo-revolutionaries, incapable of facing the trial by fire, able only to mask their tendencies toward conciliation, inaction and treason with long-winded pseudo-revolutionary rhetoric—the typical weaklings to whom José Martí alluded. In ostensible contrast to the conformists, failures and cowards, the combatants of the liberating vanguard maintained their confidence and absolute security in the inevitable victory of their major undertaking. The most fruitful lesson given by this militant vanguard to posterity is that when the peoples are determined to win or die, and have courageous, firm and enlightened leadership, the result of that determination is always victory, despite the enemy's size and power.

But that vanguard went even further when, at the Panama Con-

gress called at the request of Bolivar, it tried to include its determination to contribute to the emancipation of Cuba and Puerto Rico, the last footholds of Spanish domination on the continent. The plottings of the government of the United States against such an intention exposed its early ambitions to seize Cuba and Puerto Rico and exercise its control over our America—as was already indicated in the Monroe Doctrine, presented when the armies of the peoples of the continent were the masters of the Andes and the brilliant glory of Ayacucho was rising to its zenith.

The leaders of the revolutionary movement were forced to transfer the political power they had won in the first war of independence waged by the peoples of our America to the native minority that owned the land. The colonial flags had been lowered, but the weak and backward economic structure of colonial society, characterized by its low level of technical and capitalist development, remained intact, and, therefore, the regime of oppression and exploitation against which the peasant masses, the slaves, the Indians and the manual laborers had rebelled, remained. Never before had true, heroic and unknown protagonists achieved such poor results for their efforts, nor had their great feats been so completely ignored.

The conditioning factors of the colonial regime—latifundia, commercial monopolies, ideological resistance to change, scientific backwardness, social stratification, the religious yoke, political oppression—explain the slowness of the development of the future nations of Latin America and, likewise, the frustration, shortly after their becoming independent of the mother country, of capitalist development free of ties and the formation of a national bourgeoisie. The radical discrepancy between the ideas that inspired the struggle for independence and the reality on which the new republics were based was evident. This gigantic battle did not result in a fully developed capitalist bourgeois regime, for this process was the inverse of that which took place in the United States—which, at the start, adopted the most dynamic, powerful and aggressive form of capitalism, and later developed criminal, aggressive imperialism.

With the increase in economic growth during the years following independence, certain conditions favorable for the independent development of capitalism and a bourgeoisie in Latin America were created: but this development was paralyzed, deviated and deformed by imperialist penetration. However, the organic weakness of the Latin American bourgeoisie so far as breaking up the latifundia—which had to be done if agricultural production and the internal market were to be expanded—and the interconnection of their class interests with the class interests of the landowners would force the bourgeoisie to form a closely united oligarchy with the landowners directly linked to the caste which controls the professional army—in whose hands the decisive levers of political power are concentrated.

It would be absurd to suppose that, under such conditions, the so-called Latin American bourgeoisie could develop political action

independent of the oligarchies and imperialism in defense of the interests and aspirations of the nation. The contradiction in which it is objectively caught is, by its nature, insurmountable. The weakness of such a structure explains with complete clarity its incapacity to face the brutal assault which universal imperialist expansion implies. And it also explains its immediate subordination to the foreign interests and the framework of underdevelopment in which it stagnates, with its corresponding class relations, privileges and hierarchies and its economic, political, social and cultural corollaries.

The economic influence of the European colonial power was swiftly shifted after the Spanish-Cuban-U.S. war, and was replaced by the growing colonial domination of the United States, ever more voracious, harsh and expanding, propped up by the oligarchies and the apparatus of force of the puppet governments—which, for many years, presented the world with the tragicomedy of a falsely free continent whose countries had flags, anthems and colors on the map as formal attributes of their so-called sovereignty and of their subjected economy.

It is well known that U.S. imperialism controls almost completely the mechanisms of foreign trade, the bank system, the most fertile land, the mines, the public services, the principal industries and the propaganda media in Latin America. The vast natural resources of this continent—tin, zinc, bauxite, lead, manganese, cobalt, graphite, iron, copper, nickel, vanadium, beryllium, sulphur and oil—are subjected to systematic draining, in detriment to the development of the peoples that, with their work and sweat, extract those riches from the heart of a land that is theirs in name only. Latin America leads the underdeveloped regions of the world in the field of investments of U.S. capital; which are concentrated especially in mining, oil, commerce and industry. In the period from 1956 to 1965 those investments reached the amount of 2,893 million dollars, obtaining a profit of 7,441 million dollars. For every dollar invested, U.S. imperialism has plundered nearly three dollars from our people.

These key figures do not include, of course, interest payments and other benefits from loans and associated capital, or the various forms of penetration it uses, the looting and the plunder violating bourgeois pseudo-legality. Its objective, already achieved, is to take over our internal market and to make the Latin American economy complementary to that of the U.S., choking off—or, at best, condemning to stagnation—those branches of national industry that can compete with U.S. products. National capital is necessarily limited to commerce and manufacture dependent on the foreign monopolies. The consequences of this process of absorption and hegemony are obvious: the plunder of resources, ruin of national industries, distortion of economy, a permanent deficit in the balance of payments, low wages, chronic unemployment, increasing inequality, technological backwardness, massive malnutrition, massive illiteracy, unsanitary conditions on a wide scale, a very high mortality rate, serfdom, racial discrimination, political instability, an increasing sharpening

of class contradictions, and criminal violence as the essence of power.

To these forms of economic penetration by imperialism we may add its thousand forms of ideological penetration and the comparative rates of demographic expansion—with the increase of the internal *per capita* gross product, and the unequal redistribution of the national gross income—and we get a vivid picture of the dramatic situation that our peoples are facing.

The tremendous political gravitation that this entails is self-evident. The same contradictions between the Latin American bourgeoisie and U.S. imperialism are developed under conditions of such subjection that they never take on an antagonistic character. The impotence of the Latin American bourgeoisie is absolute.

There has not been a single act of direct or indirect imperialist intervention in our countries—since the past century—that has not been justified or supported by the bourgeoisie. It is intrinsically unable to face the imperialists. Furthermore, it is their obedient servant and their profiting intermediary. The problems caused by this complex and condensed structure of anti-popular, anti-national and anti-historic interests, based on the exploitation of man by man, maintained by force—and mainly for the benefit of Yankee imperialism, which generates and conditions it—cannot be solved through academic "structural reforms" and "the effective exercise of representative democracy." The only real way to solve them is through the revolutionary struggle of the peoples.

The interventionist policy of the United States in Latin America that was initiated with the Monroe Doctrine is emphasized and defined with the doctrines of the "ripe fruit" and of "manifest destiny," with the pillage of more than half of the Mexican territory, the freebooting adventures of William Walker in Central America, the imposition on Cuba of the Platt Amendment and the leasing of the territory occupied by the Guantanamo Naval Base, the shameful occupation of Puerto Rico, the dirty maneuvers in connection with the control of the Panama Canal, the cynical Roosevelt corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, the unfair loans, the brazen acts of intervention in Nicaragua, Panama, Mexico, Haiti, Colombia, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic, and the creation in Bogotá of the so-called Organization of American States, mere cover for the old and discredited Pan-American Union, whose devious intentions were denounced and opposed by José Martí, who, before anyone else, with keen political insight, foresaw the inception of the imperialist phenomenon in the United States, identifying it by name—in a letter to Manuel Mercado—on the eve of his heroic death.

The pseudo-legal machinery set up in the OAS by Yankee imperialism in order to legalize its economic expansion, political domination and acts of military aggression in Latin America is completed with the so-called Inter-American Treaty for Mutual Assistance, an instrument for the application of its repressive policy on the continent.

The peoples of Latin America have not remained with their arms

folded when confronted by their executioners and exploiters. They have stood up to them repeatedly in unequal battle against the oligarchies and imperialism, sometimes obtaining certain benefits and the temporary respect of elementary rights. They have resorted to all forms of struggle, from popular demonstrations and political strikes to sporadic uprisings, and on no few occasions have been victims, due to the way in which they live, of the illusion of demagogic movements led by parties at the service of the oligarchies and imperialism. But the most important thing has undoubtedly been their unwavering attitude of resistance and rebellion against oppression, poverty, plunder and humiliation, with no other support than the moral strength that stems from conscience and dignity. In the course of their struggles against the oligarchies and Yankee imperialism, the Latin American people have accumulated revolutionary energy, have raised their political level, have strengthened their cadres and have promoted militant solidarity beyond their frontiers. They have not obtained any political or economic advantage that was not wrested from the exploiters by sheer force, and that is why they have gained a clear perception that only the defeat of the oligarchies, of the puppet governments and of imperialist domination could definitely and totally liberate them and place their destinies in their own hands.

The triumph and consolidation of the Cuban Revolution made clear that armed insurrection is the true way for the working people to come to power, and that professional armies can be destroyed, oligarchies vanquished, Yankee imperialism defeated and socialism—as a national way of life—developed and strengthened in spite of economic blockade, subversion, aggression, blackmail, harassment, pressure and counterrevolution.

The first fundamental consequence of the Cuban Revolution was the rise of the anti-imperialist movement and the resulting radicalization and demarcation of the clashing forces. Their polarization becomes clearer and sharper all the time, with the urban working class, the agricultural laborers, the peasants, the students, the most progressive middle strata, the underemployed, the unemployed, the Indians and the Negroes on one side, closely united, fighting militantly for their liberation, defending and promoting the Cuban Revolution through concrete action, and with the oligarchies, the puppet governments and Yankee imperialism on the other, trying to destroy it.

Yankee imperialism has tried to isolate Cuba from America so that its example will not spread through the continent. But Cuba has never been more united with the rest of the peoples of America. The imperialists have claimed that Cuba wants to impose an extra-continental ideology on the continent. The peoples of America, however, have felt the Cuban Revolution to be closely linked to their own revolution. It is the Yankee imperialists and their reactionary ideology that are alien to Latin America. The aspirations and ideals of all the peoples of Latin America are defined and summed up in Cuba. The attempt to isolate Cuba has succeeded only in tightening

up even more the bonds of indestructible unity of the Cuban people with the other peoples of America. They constitute one big family facing a common enemy, the principal enemy of all humanity: Yankee imperialism.

The submission and sell-out attitudes of the oligarchies and puppet governments reached notorious heights beginning with the Conferences of the OAS at Punta del Este in 1961 and 1962, where, following the dictates of Washington, they openly schemed to isolate Cuba diplomatically and economically from the rest of Latin America, unleashing simultaneously a brutal repression against their own people. These actions threw into glaring relief the counterrevolutionary and pro-imperialist nature of the "gorilla" regimes and also of the "reformist" or "democratic-representative" regimes.

Incapable of solving the problems posed by underdevelopment and imperialist penetration; increasingly harassed by the growing demands of the workers, the peasants, the students and the unemployed; terrified by the rising tide of the revolutionary war, they see imperialist aid, alliance and intervention—with its anti-guerrilla centers, its Green Berets, its marines and its Inter-American Peace Force—as the only guarantee of their survival and the only force capable of defending their interests. Yankee imperialism itself, in a fruitless attempt to curb the revolutionary impetus and to smear the image of the Cuban Revolution in the minds of the Latin American masses, dreamed up the fraudulent Alliance for Progress, whose purpose was to draw them even further under the sway of the imperialist policy of self-enrichment, exploitation and repression.

Its failure has been so complete that even the Inter-American Committee, operating under its direction, has been forced to point out the fraud contained in this Alliance for Backwardness.

Latin America's present circumstances contain conditions for the development and triumph of the Revolution which will emancipate it from the social structure of the oligarchic-imperialist power which holds back its independence, progress and welfare. These conditions exist because in the rural areas there are millions of peasants and agricultural workers subjected to sub-standard living conditions and to an extraordinary regime of labor exploitation and an incredible concentration of land in a few hands, and because in the cities the luxury and lavish spending of the ruling classes contrast dramatically with the overcrowding, squalor and poverty in which millions of workers and unemployed have to live.

This demonstrates the antithetical nature of the interests of the exploiters and the exploited. An increasingly clear and solid class consciousness has been created by the conditions of capitalist development in some regions of this continent, by the existence of a progressive intellectual stratum and particularly of a student body with great traditions of struggle which form part of the left. The savage position of the puppet governments, the oligarchies and Yankee imperialists, which resort to torture and murder in opposing all popular demands

and also to other extremely cruel and stupid methods in their war against the masses and their revolutionary vanguards, also has contributed to the development of a militant consciousness and a clear understanding of what the right road to political, economic, social and cultural change is, and to oppose counterrevolutionary violence with revolutionary violence—already given legitimacy by the Cuban Revolution and the success of the guerrilla forces.

The conditions for revolution which exist in Latin America are repeated in other underdeveloped countries of Asia and Africa, continents which participate in the same historical anti-imperialist movement as Latin America. Just as in the pre-revolutionary years of Russia and China, these conditions indicate that the development of revolution is possible. Within the context of the Latin American revolutionary struggle, these conditions require that the task be carried out by a bold, decided and valiant revolutionary vanguard, forged in the people's war and closely related to the peasant and proletarian masses, one which, combining both political and military leadership, can and must make itself the core of political, ideological and revolutionary action, confronting and defeating professional armies and outwitting the oligarchies, puppet governments and imperialist domination. In Latin America the Revolution of the workers is the first item on the agenda. Conditions are ripe to begin this Revolution with confidence, determination and prospects of success. Viet Nam teaches us that the victory of the Latin American peoples is possible.

This Conference, after a deep and exhaustive analysis of the conditions existing on the continent and after having ideologically clarified the essential problems of the revolutionary movements, has arrived at the following conclusions:

Latin America exists in conditions of convulsion, characterized by the presence of a weak bourgeoisie which, in indissoluble union with the landholders, constitutes the controlling oligarchy of our countries. Increased submission and almost absolute dependence of this oligarchy on imperialism has caused the intense polarization of forces on the continent, consisting of the oligarchic imperialist alliance on one side and the peoples on the other. The peoples have a tremendous revolutionary power which is only waiting to be channeled by a correct leadership, by a revolutionary vanguard, in order to develop or to initiate the fight.

That power is the power of the proletarian masses, of city and rural workers, of a poor and highly exploited peasantry, of the young intellectuals, of students with a great tradition of struggle, and of the middle strata, all joined together by the common denominator of the exploitation to which they are subjected.

In the face of the crisis of the whole structure of the economic, social and political system throughout the continent, and the growing rebelliousness of the peoples, imperialism has designed and developed a continental strategy of repression which proposes vainly to detain

the course of history. The survival of the colonial and neocolonial systems of exploitation and domination are the aims of U.S. imperialism.

This situation determines and demands that revolutionary violence be unleashed and developed in response to reactionary violence.

Revolutionary violence as the highest expression of the peoples' struggle is not only the path, but it is the most concrete and the most direct potential for the defeat of imperialism.

The peoples as well as the revolutionaries have confirmed this reality and consequently realize the need to initiate, develop and bring armed struggle to its culmination in order to destroy the bureaucratic-military apparatus of the oligarchies and the power of imperialism.

In many countries the special conditions prevailing in the countryside, the favorable topography and a potentially revolutionary social base, in addition to the special adaptation of technical methods and professional armies to repress the people in the cities and which, on the other hand, are ill-adapted to an irregular war, mean that guerrilla warfare is the fundamental expression of armed struggle, the best school for revolutionaries and their indisputable vanguard.

The revolution, already underway in some countries, an imperative necessity in others and a future prospect in the rest, has a well-defined anti-imperialist character within its anti-oligarchic aims.

The principal objective of the peoples' revolution on the continent is the seizure of power by means of the destruction of the bureaucratic-military apparatus of the State and its replacement by the people in arms in order to change the existing economic and social regime. This objective can be achieved only through armed struggle.

The development and the organization of the struggle depend on choosing the right site on which to carry it out and the most adequate methods of organization.

The lesson of the Cuban Revolution, the experiences accumulated by the revolutionary movement in recent years throughout the world and the presence in Bolivia, Venezuela, Colombia and Guatemala of an ever-growing armed revolutionary movement show that guerrilla warfare as a genuine expression of the peoples' armed struggle is the most effective method and the most adequate form for waging and developing revolutionary war in most of our countries and, consequently, on a continental scale.

In this particular situation the unity of the peoples, the identity of their aims, the unity of their views and their disposition to unite in carrying out the struggle are the elements characterizing the common strategy that must be opposed to that which imperialism is developing on a continental scale.

This strategy requires a precise and clear expression of solidarity, whose most effective characteristic is the revolutionary struggle itself, which extends across the continent and whose vanguard detachments are the guerrilla and liberation armies.

We, the representatives of the peoples of our America, conscious

of the conditions which prevail on the continent, aware of the existence of a common counterrevolutionary strategy directed by U. S. imperialism,

Proclaim:

1. — That making the Revolution is a right and a duty of the peoples of Latin America;
2. — That the Revolution in Latin America has its deepest historical roots in the liberation movement against European colonialism of the 19th century and against imperialism of this century. The epic struggle of the peoples of America and the great class battles that our peoples have carried out against imperialism in earlier decades, constitute the source of historical inspiration for the Latin American revolutionary movement;
3. — That the essential content of the Revolution in Latin America is to be found in its confrontation with imperialism and the bourgeois and landowning oligarchies. Consequently, the character of the Revolution is the struggle for national independence, for emancipation from the oligarchies, and for taking the socialist road to its complete economic and social development;
4. — That the principles of Marxism-Leninism guide the revolutionary movement of Latin America;
5. — That armed revolutionary struggle constitutes the fundamental course of the Revolution in Latin America;
6. — That all other forms of struggle must serve to advance and not to retard the development of this fundamental course, which is armed struggle;
7. — That, for the majority of the countries of the continent, the problems of organizing, initiating, developing and completing the armed struggle now constitute the immediate and fundamental task of the revolutionary movement;
8. — That those countries where this task is not now included in immediate planning must nevertheless inevitably consider this as a future probability in the development of their revolutionary struggle;
9. — That the historic responsibility of furthering revolution in each country belongs to the people and to their revolutionary vanguards;
10. — That in most of our countries the guerrillas are the embryo of liberation armies and constitute the most efficient way of initiating and carrying out revolutionary struggle;
11. — That the leadership of the revolution requires, as an organizing principle, the existence of a unified political and military command in order to guarantee success;
12. — That the most effective type of solidarity that the revolutionary movements can offer each other lies precisely in the development and culmination of their own struggle within their own countries;
13. — That solidarity with Cuba and cooperation and collaboration with the armed revolutionary movement are imperative duties of an international nature, the duties of all the anti-imperialist organizations

of this continent;

14.— That the Cuban Revolution, as a symbol of the triumph of the armed revolutionary movement, constitutes the vanguard in the anti-imperialist movement of Latin America. Those peoples that carry out armed struggle will also place themselves in the vanguard as they advance along the road of armed struggle;

15.— That the peoples directly colonized by European powers—or subjected to the direct colonial domination of the United States—who are now on the road to liberation must maintain, as their immediate and fundamental objective, their struggle for independence and their close ties with the general struggle on this continent, since this is the only way of preventing their being absorbed into the neocolonial system of the United States;

16.— That the Second Declaration of Havana, a résumé of the great and glorious revolutionary tradition of the past 150 years of Latin American history, serves as a guiding document for the Latin American Revolution, and has been upheld, widened, enriched and made even more radical by the peoples of this continent during the past five years.

17.— That the peoples of Latin America harbor no antagonisms toward any peoples in the world and extend their hand of brotherly friendship to the people of the United States itself, encouraging them to fight on against the oppressive policy of imperialist monopolies;

18.— That the struggle in Latin America is strengthening its bonds of solidarity with the peoples of Asia and Africa and the socialist countries, especially with the Negroes of the United States, who suffer from class exploitation, poverty, unemployment, racial discrimination and the denial of the most basic human rights and who constitute a force of considerable importance within the revolutionary struggle;

19.— That the heroic struggle of the people of Viet Nam aids all revolutionary peoples fighting against imperialism to an inestimable degree and constitutes an inspiring example for the peoples of Latin America;

20.— That we have approved the Statutes and created a Permanent Committee with its seat in Havana for the Latin American Organization of Solidarity, which constitutes the true representation of the peoples of Latin America.

We, the revolutionaries of our America, the America lying south of the Río Bravo, successors of those men who won our first independence, armed with an irrevocable will to struggle and a revolutionary scientific orientation and with nothing to lose but the chains which bind us:

Assert:

That our struggle constitutes a decisive contribution to the historic struggle of humanity to liberate itself from slavery and exploitation.

THE DUTY OF EVERY REVOLUTIONARY IS TO MAKE THE REVOLUTION.

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