

Ernesto Che Guevara

GUERRILLA WARFARE:
A METHOD

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Ernesto Che Guevara

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GUERRILLA WARFARE

translated by JULIAN HARRIS

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This English translation has been made directly from the original Spanish.

intelligible to readers of English newspapers and magazines as well as to regular armies.

Guerrilla warfare has been waged many times in America. As a case in point to draw the experience of César Augusto Dandino fighting against the Yankee expeditionary force on the banks of the Segovia in Nicaragua can be noted, and recently Cuba's revolutionary war. Since then in America the problems of guerrilla warfare have become a question for theoretical and practical study for the Communist progressive parties, and whether it is possible or expedient to use it, has become the subject of heated and controversial discussions.

This article will try to present our views on guerrilla warfare and how to use it correctly.

Above all, it must be made clear that this form of struggle is means — means to an end. That end, essential and inevitable for all revolutionaries, is the winning of political power.

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GUERRILLA warfare has been employed on innumerable occasions throughout history in different circumstances, to achieve different aims. Of late it has been used in various people's wars of liberation when the vanguard of the people chose the path of irregular armed struggle against enemies of greater military power. Asia, Africa and America have been the scene of such actions when trying to attain power in the struggle against feudal, neo-colonial or colonial exploitation. In Europe guerrilla warfare was used as supplementary to their own or allied regular armies.

Guerrilla warfare has been waged many times in America. As a case in point closer to home the experience of César Augusto Dandino fighting against the Yankee expeditionary force on the banks of the Segovia in Nicaragua can be noted, and recently Cuba's revolutionary war. Since then in America the problems of guerrilla warfare have become a question for theoretical discussions for the Continent's progressive parties, and whether it is possible or expedient to use it, has become the subject of head-on controversial discussions.

This article will try to present our views on guerrilla warfare and how to use it correctly.

Above all, it must be made clear that this form of struggle is means — means to an end. That end, essential and inevitable for all revolutionaries, is the winning of political power. Therefore, in analysing specific situations in different countries in America one must use

the concept of guerrilla warfare in the limited sense of a method of struggle in order to gain that end.

Almost immediately the question arises: Is guerrilla warfare the only formula for seizing power in the whole of America? Or at least will it be the predominant form? Or will it simply be one of many forms used in the struggle? And in the final analysis it may be asked: Will the example of Cuba be applicable to the actual situation or other parts of the continent? In the course of polemics those who advocate guerrilla warfare are often accused of forgetting mass struggle, almost as if guerrilla warfare and mass struggle were opposed to each other. We reject this implication. Guerrilla warfare is a people's war, a mass struggle. To try to carry out this type of war without the support of the population is to court inevitable disaster. The guerrillas are the fighting vanguard of the people, stationed in a specified place in a certain area, armed and prepared to carry out a series of warlike actions for the one possible strategic end — the seizure of power. They have the support of the worker and peasant masses of the region and of the whole territory in which they operate. Without these prerequisites no guerrilla warfare is possible.

We consider that the Cuban Revolution made three fundamental contributions to the laws of the revolutionary movement in the current situation in America. They are: Firstly, people's forces can win a war against the army. Secondly, we need not always wait for all the revolutionary conditions to be present; the insurrection itself can create them. Thirdly, in the underdeveloped parts of America the battle-ground for

armed struggle should in the main be the countryside. ("Guerrilla Warfare")

Such are the contributions to the development of the revolutionary struggle in America, and they can be applied to any of the countries on our continent where guerrilla warfare may be developed.

The Second Declaration of Havana points out:

In our countries two circumstances are joined: underdeveloped industry and an agrarian regime of a feudal character. That is why no matter how hard the living conditions of the urban workers are, the rural population lives under even more horrible conditions of oppression and exploitation. But, with few exceptions, it also constitutes the absolute majority, sometimes more than 70 per cent of Latin American populations.

Not counting the landlords who often live in the cities, the rest of this great mass earns its livelihood by working as peons on the plantations for the most miserable wages, or they work the soil under conditions of exploitation indistinguishable from those of the Middle Ages.

These are the circumstances which determine that the poor population of the countryside constitutes a tremendous potential revolutionary force.

The armies are set up and equipped for conventional warfare. They are the force whereby the power of the exploiting classes is maintained. When they are confronted with the irregular warfare of peasants based on their own home-grounds, they become absolutely powerless; they lose 10 men for every revolutionary fighter who falls. Demoralization among

them mounts rapidly when they are beset by an invisible and invincible army which provides them no chance to display their military academy tactics and their fanfare of war, of which they boast so much to repress the city workers and students.

The initial struggle of small fighting units is constantly nurtured by new forces; the mass movement begins to grow bold, the old order bit by bit breaks up into a thousand pieces and that is when the working class and the urban masses decide the battle.

What is it that from the very beginning of the fight makes those units invincible, regardless of the number, strength and resources of their enemies? It is the people's support, and they can count on an ever-increasing mass support.

But the peasantry is a class which, because of the ignorance in which it has been kept and the isolation in which it lives, requires the revolutionary and political leadership of the working class and the revolutionary intellectuals. Without that it cannot alone launch the struggle and achieve victory.

In the present historical conditions of Latin America the national bourgeoisie cannot lead the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle. Experience demonstrates that in our nations this class—even when its interests clash with those of Yankee imperialism—has been incapable of confronting imperialism, paralyzed by fear of social revolution and frightened by the clamour of the exploited masses. (“Second Declaration of Havana”)

Supplementing these statements which constitute the essence of the revolutionary declaration of America, the

Second Declaration of Havana in other paragraphs states the following:

The subjective conditions in each country, the factors of consciousness, of organization, of leadership, can accelerate or delay revolution, depending on the state of their development. Sooner or later, in each historic epoch, as objective conditions ripen, consciousness is acquired, organization is achieved, leadership arises, and revolution is produced.

Whether this takes place peacefully or comes to the world after painful labour, does not depend on the revolutionaries; it depends on the reactionary forces of the old society; it depends on their resistance against allowing the new society to be born, a society produced by the contradictions of the old society. Revolution, in history, is as the doctor who assists at the birth of a new life: it does not use forceps unless it is necessary, but it will unhesitatingly use them every time labour requires them. A labour brings the hope of a better life to the enslaved and exploited masses. Revolution is inevitable in many countries of Latin America. Nobody's will determines this fact. It is determined by the frightful conditions of exploitation which afflict mankind in America. It is determined by the development of the revolutionary consciousness of the masses, by the world crisis of imperialism and by the universal movement of struggle of the world's subjugated peoples. ("Second Declaration of Havana")

We shall start from this basis to analyse the whole question of guerrilla warfare in America.

We have asserted that it is means of struggle to achieve an end. Our first concern is to analyse the end and to

see whether the winning of power here in America can be attained in any other way than by armed struggle.

Peaceful struggle can be carried out through mass movements and can—in special situations of crisis—compel governments to yield, so that the popular forces eventually take power and establish a proletarian dictatorship. Theoretically this is correct. When analysing this on the American scene we must arrive at the following conclusions: Generally speaking, on this continent there exist objective conditions which impel the masses to violent actions against the bourgeois and landlord governments; in many other countries there exist crises of power and some subjective conditions too. Obviously, in the countries where all these conditions are given, it would be criminal not to act to seize power. In others where this situation does not occur, it is right that different alternatives should emerge and that the decision applicable to each country should come out of theoretical discussion. The only thing history does not permit is that the analysts and executors of proletarian policy should blunder. No one can claim the role of vanguard party as if it were a university diploma. To be a vanguard party means to stand in the forefront of the working class in the struggle for the seizure of power, to know how to guide this struggle to success by short cuts. That is the mission of our revolutionary parties, and the analysis should be profound and exhaustive in order that there will be no mistakes.

At present there is in America a state of unstable balance between oligarchical dictatorship and popular pressure. By "oligarchical" we mean the reactionary alliance between the bourgeoisie and the landlord class of each country with a greater or lesser preponderance

of feudalism. These dictatorships continue within certain frameworks of legality which they set up for themselves to facilitate their work during the whole unrestricted period of their class domination, while we are undergoing a stage in which the pressure of the people is very strong and is knocking at the doors of bourgeois legality which its own authors have to violate in order to check the impetus of the masses. The barefaced violations of all established legislation—or of legislation especially instituted to sanction their deeds—only heighten the tension of the people's forces. The oligarchical dictatorship, therefore, endeavours to use the old legal order to change constitutionality and further suppress the proletariat, without a head-on clash. Nevertheless, this is just where a contradiction arises. The people now do not tolerate the old, still less the new, coercive measures adopted by the dictatorship, and try to smash them. We must never forget the authoritarian and restrictive class character of the bourgeois state. Lenin refers to it thus:

The state is the product and the manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises when, where, and to the extent that class antagonisms objectively *cannot* be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable. ("State and Revolution")

In other words, we must not allow the word democracy, used in an apologetic manner to represent the dictatorship of the exploiting classes, to lose its deeper meaning and acquire the meaning of giving the people certain liberties, more or less good. To struggle only to restore

a certain degree of bourgeois legality, without at the same time raising the question of revolutionary power, is to struggle for the return of a certain dictatorial order established by the dominant social classes; it is only a struggle for a lighter ball to be fixed to the convict's chains.

In these conditions of conflict, the oligarchy breaks its own contracts, its own mask of "democracy", and attacks the people, although it always tries to make use of the superstructure it has formed for oppression. At that moment, the question again arises: What is to be done? Our answer is: Violence is not only for the use of the exploiters; the exploited can use it too, and what is more, ought to use it at the opportune moment. Marti said: "He who wages war in a country that can avoid it is a criminal; so is he who fails to wage a war that cannot be avoided."

And Lenin said:

Social-democracy has never taken a sentimental view of war. It unreservedly condemns war as a bestial means of settling conflicts in human society. But Social-democracy knows that so long as society is divided into classes, so long as there is exploitation of man by man, wars are inevitable. This exploitation cannot be destroyed without war, and war is always and everywhere begun by the exploiters, by the ruling and oppressing classes.

He said this in 1905. Later, in "The War Programme of the Proletarian Revolution" in a profound analysis of the nature of class struggle he affirmed:

Whoever recognizes the class struggle cannot fail to recognize civil wars, which in every class society

are the natural, and under certain conditions, inevitable continuation, development and intensification of the class struggle. All the great revolutions prove this. To repudiate civil war, or to forget about it, would mean sinking into extreme opportunism and renouncing the socialist revolution.

That is to say, we should not be afraid of violence, the midwife of new societies; only such violence should be unleashed precisely at the moment when the people's leaders find circumstances most favourable.

What will these be? Subjectively, they depend upon two factors that are complementary and that in turn deepen in the course of the struggle: the consciousness of the necessity of change and the certainty of the possibility of this revolutionary change. These two factors, coupled with the objective conditions—which in nearly all of America are highly favourable for the development of struggle—with the firm will to attain it as well as the new correlation of forces in the world, determine the form of action.

However far away the socialist countries may be, their favourable influence will make itself felt among the fighting peoples who will be given more strength by their enlightening example. On the 26th of July this year, Fidel Castro said:

And the duty of the revolutionaries, especially at this moment, is to know how to recognize and how to take advantage of the changes in the correlation of forces which have taken place in the world, and to understand that these changes facilitate the struggle of the peoples. The duty of revolutionaries, of Latin-American revolutionaries, is not to wait for the change

in the correlation of forces to produce a miracle of social revolutions in Latin America, but to take full advantage of everything in it that is favourable to the revolutionary movement — and to make revolution!

There are people who say: "We admit that in certain specific cases revolutionary war is the proper way to attain political power; but where can we find those great leaders, the Fidel Castros who will lead us to victory?" Fidel Castro, like every human being, is a product of history. The military and political leaders, merged if possible into one man, who may lead risings in America, will learn the art of war in the exercise of war itself. There is no job or profession which can be learned from text-books alone. In this case, struggle is the great teacher.

Naturally the task is not simple, nor is it exempt from serious threats all the way along.

During the development of the armed struggle there appear two moments of extreme danger for the future of the revolution. The first of these arises in the preparatory stage and the way it is dealt with gives the measure of the determination for struggle and clarity of purpose of the people's forces. When the bourgeois state advances against the positions of the people, obviously there must emerge a process of defence against the enemy who attacks in this moment of superiority. If the minimum subjective and objective conditions have already been developed, the defence must be armed but not in such a way that the people's forces become mere recipients of the enemy's blows; nor should the stage of armed defence be transformed into nothing but a last refuge for the pursued. Guerrilla

fighting, though at a given moment it may be a defensive movement of the people, carries within itself the capacity to attack the enemy and must constantly develop it. This capacity is what determines, as time goes on, the cataclysmic character of the people's forces. That is to say, guerrilla fighting is not passive self-defence; it is defence with attack, and from the moment it is recognized as such, it has as a final perspective the winning of political power.

This moment is important. In social processes the difference between violence and non-violence cannot be measured by the number of shots exchanged; it depends on concrete and fluctuating situations. And one must know how to recognize the exact moment when the people's forces, conscious of their relative weakness but at the same time of their strategic strength, should take the initiative so that the situation does not worsen. The balance between the oligarchic dictatorship and the pressure of the people must be upset. The dictatorship constantly tries to function without resorting to force. Being obliged to appear without disguise, that is to say, in its true aspect as a violent dictatorship of the reactionary classes, will contribute to its unmasking, and this will deepen the struggle to such an extent that it will not be able to turn back. The resolute beginning of long-range armed action depends on how the people's forces fulfil their function, which amounts to the task of forcing a decision on the dictatorship — to draw back or to unleash the struggle.

The skilful avoidance of the other moment of danger depends on the ability to develop the growth of the people's forces. Marx always advised that once the revolutionary process has begun, the proletariat must

strike and strike without rest. A revolution that does not constantly deepen is a revolution that goes back. The combatants, once wearied, begin to lose faith, and then some of the bourgeois manoeuvres to which we have been so accustomed may bear fruit. These can be the holding of elections to hand over the government to some other gentleman with a more honeyed voice, and a more angelic face than the outgoing dictator, or the staging of a coup by reactionaries, generally headed by the army and supported, directly or indirectly, by progressive forces. There are others as well, but it is not our intention to analyse such tactical stratagems.

Let us focus our main attention on the operation of the military coup mentioned above. What can militarists contribute to true democracy? What kind of loyalty can be asked of them, if they are mere instruments of domination by the reactionary classes and imperialist monopolies and, as a caste whose worth rests only on the weapons in their hands, they aspire only to maintain their prerogatives?

When in situations difficult for the oppressors the military men conspire to overthrow a dictator, who in fact is finished, it can be taken for granted that they do so because they are unable to preserve their class prerogatives without extreme violence, a procedure which generally does not coincide with the interests of the oligarchies at that moment.

This statement certainly does not mean rejecting the services of military men as individual fighters who, separated from the society they have served, have, in fact, rebelled against it. And they should be made use of in accordance with the revolutionary line they adopt as fighters and not as representatives of a caste.

Long ago, Engels, in the preface to the third edition of "The Civil War in France", remarked:

The workers were armed after every revolution; ". . . therefore the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeois at the helm of the stage. Hence after every revolution won by the workers, a new struggle, ending with the defeat of the workers." (Quoted by Lenin, "The State and Revolution")

This play of continuous struggles in which some formal change is brought about and then strategically withdrawn, has been repeated for decades in the capitalist world. But the continuous deception of the proletariat along these lines has been practised periodically for more than a century.

There is also a danger, that the leaders of the progressive parties, desiring to prolong conditions more favourable for revolutionary action by using certain aspects of bourgeois legality, lose sight of the goal, something that is very common in the course of action, and forget the definite strategic objective: *the seizure of power.*

These two difficult moments of the revolution which we have briefly analysed can be surmounted when the Marxist-Leninist party leaders are capable of clearly seeing the implications of the moment and of mobilizing the masses to the maximum, leading them on to the correct path of resolving fundamental contradictions.

In elaborating the thesis, we have assumed that eventually the idea of armed struggle as well as the formula of guerrilla warfare as a method of fighting will be accepted. Why do we think that guerrilla

warfare is the correct way in the present situation in America? There are fundamental arguments which in our opinion determine the necessity of guerrilla action as the central axis of the struggle in America.

First, accepting as true that the enemy will struggle to maintain itself in power, it is necessary to consider destroying the oppressor-army. To do this, it is necessary to confront it with a people's army. This army is not born spontaneously, it must be armed from the enemy's arsenal and this demands a long hard struggle in which the people's forces and their leaders will always be exposed to attack by superior forces and be without adequate conditions of defence and manoeuvrability.

On the other hand, the guerrilla nucleus, established in areas suitable for fighting, ensures the security and continuity of the revolutionary command. The urban forces commanded by the general staff of the people's army can perform actions of the utmost importance. But the eventual destruction of these groups would not kill the soul of the revolution, its leadership. This would continue to spark the revolutionary spirit of the masses from its rural stronghold, organizing new forces for other battles.

Moreover, in this area begins the construction of the future state apparatus entrusted with leading the class dictatorship efficiently during the whole period of transition. The longer the struggle, the greater and more complicated the administrative problems, and to solve them cadres will be trained for the difficult task of consolidating power and economic development at a later stage.

Secondly, the general situation of the Latin American peasantry and the increasingly explosive character of its

struggle against feudal rule in the framework of an alliance between local and foreigner exploiters.

Returning to the Second Declaration of Havana:

At the outset of the past century, the peoples of America freed themselves from Spanish colonialism, but they did not free themselves from exploitation. The feudal landlords assumed the authority of the governing Spaniards, the Indians continued in their painful serfdom, the Latin American man remained a slave one way or another, and the minimum hopes of the peoples died under the power of the oligarchies and the tyranny of foreign capital. This is the truth of America, to one or another degree of variation. Latin America today is under a more ferocious imperialism, more powerful and ruthless than the Spanish colonial empire.

What is Yankee imperialism's attitude confronting the objective and historically inexorable reality of the Latin American revolution? To prepare to fight a colonial war against the peoples of Latin America; to create an apparatus of force to establish the political pretexts and the pseudo-legal instruments underwritten by the representatives of the reactionary oligarchies, in order to curb, by blood and by iron, the struggle of the Latin American peoples.

This objective situation demonstrates the latent, unused strength in our peasants and the necessity to utilize it for the liberation of America.

Thirdly, the continental character of the struggle.

Could this new stage of the emancipation of America be conceived as a confrontation of two local forces struggling for power in a given territory? Hardly. The

struggle between all the forces of the people and all the forces of repression will be a struggle to the death. This too is forecast by the passages quoted above.

The Yankees will intervene because of solidarity of interests and because the struggle in America is decisive. In fact, they are already intervening in the preparation of repressive forces and the organization of a continental apparatus of struggle. But from now on they will do so with all their energy; they will strike the people's forces with all the destructive weapons at their disposal. They will try to prevent the consolidation of revolutionary power; and if it should be successful anywhere, they will renew their attack. They will not recognize it. They will try to divide the revolutionary forces. They will introduce all types of saboteurs, create frontier problems, engage other reactionary states to oppose it, and will try to strangle the new state economically—in a word, to annihilate it.

This being the picture in America, it is difficult to achieve and consolidate victory in a country that is isolated. The unity of the repressive forces must encounter the unity of the people's forces. In all the countries in which oppression becomes unbearable, the banner of rebellion must be raised, and this banner of historical necessity will have a continental character. As Fidel said, the Andes will be the Sierra Maestra of America, and all the immense territories that make up this Continent will become the scene of a life-and-death struggle against the power of imperialism.

We cannot tell when this struggle will acquire a continental character nor how long it will last; but we can predict its advent and its triumph, because it is the inevitable result of historical, economic and political

conditions and its direction cannot be changed. It is the task of the revolutionary force in each country to initiate it when the conditions are present, regardless of the situation in other countries. The general strategy will emerge as the struggle develops. The prediction of the continental character of the struggle is borne out by analysis of the strength of each contender, but this does not in the least exclude independent outbreaks. Just as the beginning of the struggle in one part of a country is bound to develop it throughout its area, the beginning of a revolutionary war contributes to the development of new conditions in the neighbouring countries.

The development of revolution has normally produced high and low tides in inverse proportion; to the revolutionary high tide corresponds the counter-revolutionary low tide and conversely; at moments of revolutionary decline, there is a counter-revolutionary ascendancy. At such moments the situation of the people's forces becomes difficult, and they should resort to the best defense measures in order to suffer the least loss. The enemy is extremely powerful, continental in stature. Therefore the relative weaknesses of the local bourgeoisie cannot be analysed with a view to making decisions within restricted limits. Still less can one think of an eventual alliance of these oligarchies with an armed people. The Cuban Revolution has sounded the alarm. The polarization of forces is becoming complete: exploiters on one side and exploited on the other. The mass of the petty bourgeoisie will lean to one side or the other according to their interests and the political skill with which it is handled; neutrality will be an exception. This is how revolutionary war will be.

Let us consider the way how a guerrilla centre can start.

Nuclei of relatively few persons choose places favourable for guerrilla warfare, sometimes with the intention of launching a counter-attack or to weather a storm, and there they begin to take action. But the following must be made clear: At the beginning, the relative weakness of the guerrilla fighters is such that they should only endeavour to pay attention to the terrain, in order to become acquainted with the surroundings, establish connections with the population and fortify the places which eventually will be converted into bases.

A guerrilla unit can survive only if it starts by basing its development on the three following conditions: constant mobility, constant vigilance, constant wariness. Without the adequate use of these elements of military tactics, the unit will find it hard to survive. It must be remembered that the heroism of the guerrilla fighter at such times consists in the scope of the planned objective and the long series of sacrifices that must be made in order to attain it.

These sacrifices will not mean daily combat or face-to-face struggle with the enemy; they will assume forms more subtle and difficult for the individual guerrilla fighter to endure physically and mentally.

The guerrillas will perhaps suffer heavily from the attacks of enemy armies, at times be split up while those taken prisoner will be martyred. They will be pursued like hunted animals in the areas they have chosen to operate in, with the constant anxiety of having the enemy on their track, and on top of all this with the constant doubt that in some cases the terrorized peasants will give

them away to the repressive troops in order to save their own skins. They have no alternative but death or victory, at times when death is a concept a thousand times present, and victory a myth that only a revolutionary can dream of.

That is the heroism of the guerrilla. That is why it is said that to be on the march is also a form of fighting and to avoid combat at a given moment is another form. Faced with the general superiority of the enemy, the way to act is to find a form of tactics with which to gain a relative superiority at a chosen point, either by being able to concentrate more troops than the enemy or by making the best use of the terrain to secure advantages that upset the correlation of forces. In these conditions tactical victory is assured; if relative superiority is not clear, it is preferable not to take action. As long as one is in a position to choose the "how" and the "when", no battle should be fought which will not end in victory.

Guerrilla forces will grow and be consolidated within the framework of the great politico-military action of which they are a part. And within this framework they will go on forming the bases, which are essential for their success. These bases are points which the enemy can penetrate only at the cost of heavy losses; they are bastions of the revolution, both shelters and starting points for bolder and more distant raids.

Such a time will come if the difficulties of both tactical and political discipline have been overcome. The guerrillas must never forget their function as vanguard of the people, the mandate entrusted to their care, and therefore they should create the necessary political conditions for the establishment of a revolutionary power based on the full support of the masses. The main demands of the

peasantry should be met to the degree and in the form which circumstances permit, so as to bring about the unity and solidarity of the whole population.

If the military situation is difficult from the first moments, the political situation will be no less delicate; and if a single military error can wipe out the guerrillas, a political error can check their development for a long period.

The struggle is politico-military; so it must develop, and so it must be understood.

In the course of its growth guerrilla fighting reaches a point at which its capacity for action covers a given region, for which there are too many men and too great a concentration. Then begins the bee-hive action, in which one of the commanding officers, a distinguished guerrilla, hops to another region and repeats the chain development of guerrilla warfare, but still subject to a central command.

Now, it is necessary to point out that one cannot hope for victory without the formation of a people's army. The guerrilla forces can be expanded to a certain size; the people's forces, in the cities and in other enemy-occupied zones can inflict losses, but the military potential of the reactionaries would remain intact. It must always be remembered that the final outcome should be the annihilation of the enemy. Therefore all these new zones that have been created, as well as the penetrated zones behind the enemy lines and the forces operating in the principal cities should be under a unified command. It cannot be claimed that there exists among guerrilla forces the closely-lined chain of command that characterizes an army, but there is a strategic command. Within certain conditions of freedom of action, the guerrillas

should carry out all the strategic orders of the central command, which is set up in one of the safest and strongest areas, preparing conditions for the union of the forces at a given moment.

The guerrilla war or war of liberation will generally have three stages: First, the strategic defensive when a small force nibbles at the enemy and makes off, not to shelter in passive defence within a small circumference, but rather to defend itself by limited attacks which it can carry out successfully. After this, comes a state of equilibrium, during which the possibilities of action on the part of both the enemy and the guerrillas are established; then comes the final stage of overrunning the repressive army, ending in the capture of the big cities, large-scale decisive encounters and the total annihilation of the enemy.

After reaching a state of equilibrium, when both sides are on guard against each other, in the ensuing development guerrilla war acquires new characteristics. The concept of manoeuvre is introduced: big columns attack strong points; and mobile warfare with the shifting of forces and of considerable means of attack. But owing to the capacity of resistance and counter-attack that the enemy still retains, this war of manoeuvre does not entirely replace guerrilla fighting; it is only one form of action taken by the larger guerrilla forces until finally they crystallize into a people's army with army corps. Even at this time, the guerrillas will play their "original" guerrilla role, moving ahead of the actions of the main forces, destroying communications and sabotaging the whole defensive apparatus of the enemy.

We have predicted that the war will be continental. This means it will be protracted; it will have many fronts,

and will cost much blood and countless lives over a long period. But besides this, the phenomena of polarization of forces that are occurring in America, the clear division between exploiters and exploited that will exist in future revolutionary war, mean that when the armed vanguard of the people seize power, the country or countries that attain it will of one and the same time liquidate both their imperialist and national exploiting class oppressor. The first stage of the socialist revolution will have crystallized; the people will be ready to staunch their wounds and begin to build socialism.

Will there be other possibilities less bloody?

Some time ago, there took place the last dividing up of the world, in which the United States took the lion's share of our continent; today the imperialists of the Old World are developing anew and the might of the European Common Market is threatening the United States itself. All this might lead to the belief that it will be possible to watch as spectators the inter-imperialist struggle in order to attain further advances, perhaps in alliance with the stronger national bourgeoisie. Apart from the consideration that in class struggle a passive policy never brings good results and that alliances with the bourgeoisie, however revolutionary they may appear at a given moment have only a transitory character, the time factor will induce us to take another path. The sharpening of the fundamental contradiction in America appears to be so rapid that it upsets the "normal" development of the contradictions within the imperialist camp in its struggle for markets.

The national bourgeoisie is for the most part united with United States imperialism and has to throw in its lot with the latter in each country. Even cases of agree-

ments or coincidences of contradictions between the U.S. and the national bourgeoisie and other imperialists, happen within the framework of a fundamental struggle that in the course of its development inevitably embraces *all the exploited and all the exploiters*. The polarization of antagonistic forces among class enemies is so far more rapid than the development of the contradictions among exploiters over the division of the spoils. There are two camps: the alternative becomes clearer for every individual and for every particular stratum of the population.

The Alliance for Progress is a design to check what cannot be checked.

But if the advance of the European Common Market, or any other imperialist group on the American market, were more rapid than the development of the fundamental contradiction, the people's forces would only have to be introduced as a wedge into the open breach, carrying on this whole struggle and utilizing the new intruders with a clear consciousness of their final intentions.

Not a single position, not a single weapon, not a single secret should be given up to the class enemy, under penalty of losing all.

The eruption of the struggle in America has actually begun. Will its storm-centre be in Venezuela, Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador? . . . Are these present skirmishes only a manifestation of a restlessness that has not come to fruition? It does not matter what will be the result of today's struggles. It does not matter, so far as the final result is concerned, whether one or another movement is temporarily defeated. What is certain is the determination to struggle which ripens day by day; the consciousness of the necessity for revolutionary change, the certainty that it is possible.

This is a prediction. We make it with the conviction that history will prove us right. An analysis of the subjective and objective factors in America and in the imperialist world points to us the accuracy of these assertions based on the Second Declaration of Havana.

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