

within a few months. A number of small Castroite “*focos*” were formed in other countries (several times, in fact, in Argentina and Brazil), but they fell apart so quickly that the world press hardly had occasion to note their existence.⁴⁷

The fiasco in Bolivia seems to have been the final straw that convinced Castro of the impracticality of his hopes for a “second Cuba.” Today—some years since the orthodox Communists on the continent were assaulted by Havana for having abandoned guerrilla adventures—Castro himself is under attack by such adherents of the “*foco*” theory as

⁴⁷ A new type of “armed struggle” has sprung up in the last few years, particularly in Uruguay and Brazil, in the form of “urban” guerrilla units; however, they appear to be only indirectly tied to or motivated by Castroism. So far police efforts to curb their activity have had indifferent success; at the same time, it is impossible to imagine that they could achieve genuine revolutionary victories.

Douglas Bravo in Venezuela and Fabio Vasquez Castaño in Colombia. Both have accused Castro of “betrayal of the guerrilla,” indicating that Cuba—presumably because of Soviet pressure as well as domestic economic problems—has now made it clear she can no longer give them assistance.

Castro’s belated realism cannot reverse the mistakes of the past. Let us hope, however, that it has helped to dampen the fervor of those who have glorified guerrilla warfare as the only means to achieve social and economic justice, not seeing that all it has really ever accomplished was to encourage political polarization and extremism on the Right as well as on the Left in the Latin American nations. If the futility of the guerrilla strategy has indeed become recognized, then a small step forward has been taken at least toward the understanding—if not toward the solution—of the complex social, economic and political tensions that characterize Latin American life.

The Communist Parties of Latin America

By Robert J. Alexander

Somewhat like Caesar’s Gaul, Latin American communism is divided, if not into three parts, into three kinds of parties: those which follow Moscow, those which are oriented toward Peking, and those which accept Havana’s leadership.

Mr. Alexander has written a number of books on communism in Latin America, the latest of which is The Communist Party of Venezuela (Stanford, Calif., Hoover Institution Press, 1969). He is a professor at the College of Arts and Sciences at Rutgers University.

At present, orthodox Moscow-oriented Communist parties exist in twenty of the twenty-one Latin American republics, including Guyana, the former British colony which attained independence only last February. The sole exception is Cuba, whose present Fidelista Communist Party takes an ideological position of its own, independent of both Moscow and Peking.

Of the parties aligned with Moscow, several antedate even the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The Communist parties of Chile and Uruguay were originally organized as Socialist parties prior to

1910 and affiliated themselves with the Communist International soon after its establishment in 1919. The Argentinian Communist Party started life as a splinter group of the *Partido Socialista Internacionalista* in 1918 and joined the Communist International at its First Congress in 1919.

Other orthodox Communist parties are of more recent origin. The Brazilian Communist Party was established in 1922 by a group of anarcho-syndicalist unionists, while the Communist parties of El Salvador, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Honduras were not established until the 1940's. The People's Progressive Party of Guyana was formed in the early 1950's but only declared itself to be an orthodox Communist organization at the international conference of "Communist and Workers' Parties" in Moscow in June 1969.

Evolution of the Orthodox Parties

The objectives of the Latin American Communist parties in the early years until 1935 were consistently oriented toward extending their political base by gaining influence over the trade unions, although the tactics employed varied with changes in line decreed by the Communist International. Thus, during most of the 1920's, the Latin American Communists, following Comintern instructions, sought to penetrate the existing labor organizations in order to control them from within. Subsequently, during the period 1928-34, when the Comintern ordered complete non-collaboration with social democratic, anarcho-syndicalist, and other leftist groups, the Latin American Communists organized their own separate labor confederations in various countries, each under the direct control of the national party. These national confederations were brought together in a continent-wide organization, the *Confederacion Sindical Latino-Americana*, founded at Montevideo in 1929.

In 1935, still another change in the Comintern line—this time from political sectarianism to "popular-front" tactics—not only spelled the death of the *Confederacion Sindical Latino-Americana* but led to the dissolution of the national Communist-dominated trade unions and the entrance of their members into labor organizations under the control of Socialists or other moderate left-wing parties.

The popular-front strategy also brought the Communist parties more directly into the political arena, largely as a result of their attempts to fashion

"anti-fascist" coalitions with other leftist parties. In fact, a coalition embracing the Communists, Socialists, (non-Marxist) Radicals, and several minor parties succeeded in electing the Radical Pedro Aguirre Cerda as President of Chile in December 1938; however, the Communists did not take part in his government. In Mexico, the popular-front line led to Communist support of the reformist administration of President Lazaro Cardenas.

In several countries, the popular-front strategy was applied in rather peculiar fashion. In Brazil, an organization called the *Alianza Nacional Libertadora* (Alliance for National Liberation) or ANL was formed by the Communists in 1935 with the intention of bringing together most left-wing groups in a popular front against the dictatorial regime of Getulio Vargas. However, in the late 1930's, when Vargas turned against his former allies—the green-shirted, fascistic *Integralistas* with their German and Italian connections—the Communists shifted over to support of his government on the ground that it constituted the most effective guarantee against penetration by the Fascist powers, and they stuck to this line even after Vargas suppressed an attempted revolt by the ANL and jailed most of the country's Communist leaders. In Cuba, as related in detail elsewhere in this issue, the Communists entered into an alliance with the dictator Fulgencio Batista from 1938 to 1944 and, in return for their support, were rewarded with positions in the government as well as full control of the labor movement.

The popular-front line was briefly dropped by the Latin American Communists during the years 1939-41 while the Soviet Union was formally allied with Nazi Germany. Professing to see no difference between the Nazis and the Western powers, the Communists raucously demanded that their respective countries observe strict "neutrality" in the "imperialistic" conflict. However, after the Soviet Union was attacked by the Nazis in September 1941, the Communists again executed an about-face, and for the duration of the war, they pursued a policy of collaborating with any Latin American regime, whatever its political complexion, which supported the Allied cause.

As a result of this policy of collaboration, the Communist parties of Latin America reached what was, in retrospect, the high point of their influence. They came to dominate the labor movements of most of the Latin American countries as well as the only hemisphere-wide labor group, the

Confederacion de Trabajadores de America Latina (Workers' Confederation of Latin America) or CTAL. For a time, they furnished cabinet ministers to the governments of President Jose Maria Velasco Ibarra of Ecuador and President Fulgencio Batista of Cuba. (The two Communist ministers in Batista's government were Juan Marinello and Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, both of whom were to be given important posts after the establishment of Castro's regime).

A third case of Communist participation in a Latin American government occurred in Chile shortly after the war, when President Gabriel Gonzalez Videla, elected in November 1946, gave Communist ministers three out of nine seats in his cabinet. Six months later, however, he asked for their resignations and subsequently outlawed the Communist Party.

Decline of the Orthodox Parties

During the 1950's, with the Cold War in full swing, the influence of the orthodox Communist parties declined drastically, partially because of the Communists' violent and self-defeating opposition to all Latin American governments friendly to the United States, but more importantly because other political movements and leaders—Juan Peron in Argentina, Getulio Vargas in Brazil, and left-wing democratic political parties in Cuba, Colombia, Venezuela and Peru—caught the imagination of the masses.¹ At the same time, the Communists lost their former dominant positions in the national labor movements of the various Latin American countries, and the CTAL was reduced to little more than a general staff guiding the activities of Communist groups active in Latin American labor organizations. Generally speaking, the Communists once again became almost completely isolated from other left-wing political elements in all the Latin American countries, except temporarily in Guatemala. There, during the left-leaning administration of President Jacobo Arbenz (1951-54), the Communists gained control of the labor movement and were moving quickly towards obtaining control of the government when they were thwarted by the

sudden overthrow of the Arbenz regime in June 1954.²

The political isolation of the orthodox Communist parties was temporarily lifted in 1959 as a result of the wave of enthusiasm with which the Latin American Left (and many conservative elements as well) greeted Castro's revolution. The overthrow of what had become one of the most repressive Latin American dictatorships, accomplished through a guerrilla war launched by 13 young men, evoked a hemisphere-wide wave of support in which the Communists were able to join notwithstanding their own past reservations about the correctness of Castro's method; and for a time at least, they were in a position to exploit it for the purpose of building of bridges between themselves and not only the left-democratic parties, which had for years refused to have any dealings with the Communists, but also with a number of far-left extremist groups of recent origin.

However, this readmission of the old-line Communists into the political life of Latin America (or, at least, into its left wing) was relatively short-lived, mainly as a result of the activities of Peking and Havana. In 1960, when Peking began openly to challenge Moscow's hegemony in the world Communist movement, various pro-Chinese splinter groups broke away from the orthodox pro-Soviet parties, primarily because of their dissatisfaction with the latter's adherence to the "peaceful" road to power based on long-term preparation of the urban proletariat via education and organization. Instead, they advocated warfare based on the peasant masses as the only effective path to power. At the same time, Castro in 1961 issued his own challenge to the orthodox Communist line in calling for the immediate spread of the Cuban type of guerrilla revolution to the rest of Latin America, under the leadership not of the Communist Party but of revolutionary *focos* (nuclei) of Castroite guerrilla commanders. (Both the Chinese and the Castroite positions on this issue will be discussed in greater detail below.)

The orthodox Communist parties generally were not attracted to either of these lines, preferring instead to adhere to the relatively moderate and flexible political line prescribed by Moscow. Apart from the ideological differences briefly sketched

¹ For detailed accounts of the history of the orthodox Communist parties in Latin America, see the author's *Communism in Latin America*, Rutgers University Press, 1957; and Rollie Poppino, *International Communism in Latin America: A History of the Movement, 1917-1963*, Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 1964.

² For a thorough discussion of the role of the Guatemalan Communists during the Arevalo and Arbenz administrations, see Ronald Schneider, *Communism in Guatemala, 1944-1954*, New York, Frederick A. Praeger, 1958.

above, there are several further reasons which explain both the moderate stance of these parties and their continued loyalty to Moscow.

For one thing, most of the higher and middle-level leaders of the old-line Communist parties had been trained in the USSR and Eastern Europe, where they had been thoroughly indoctrinated with the idea that the Soviet Union was the "workers' fatherland" and their duty was to defend it. Hence it was exceedingly difficult for them to oppose the Soviet line inasmuch as this would mean renouncing the image of the USSR and the conception of their own role which they had cultivated for most of their adult lives. For another, the leadership of the pro-Moscow parties was middle-aged or older and consequently little attracted to a revolutionary strategy requiring the waging of guerrilla war in rural areas, jungles, and mountain terrain. Finally, the orthodox parties had a good deal to lose by

adopting the guerrilla road to power as advocated by Mao and Castro. As things stood, they enjoyed varying degrees of influence in the various national labor movements; several of them had representatives sitting in national or regional legislatures; almost all owned newspapers and periodicals as well other property; and most were recognized political parties with a clearly delineated place in the political spectrum of their respective countries. It is not surprising, therefore, that their leaders were loath to risk all this on the dubious chance of gaining power by armed warfare.

For all these reasons, the traditional Communist parties in Latin America have generally remained loyal to Moscow. Only a few have experimented with the different types of guerrilla warfare advocated by Peking and Havana, and their experiences have provided an additional argument against the adoption of "adventurist" policies.

The best-known example of an orthodox Communist party engaging in guerrilla warfare has been provided by the Venezuelan CP. In 1962, it joined with the extremist pro-Castro *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (Movement of the Revolutionary Left), or MIR, in launching a combined rural guerrilla war and urban terror campaign against the reform regime of President Romulo Betancourt. During the first phase of the campaign, which lasted until late 1963, the emphasis was primarily on urban guerrilla warfare, featuring bank robberies, setting fire to warehouses and factories, assassinations of policemen, and kidnappings. However, these efforts proved more of a nuisance than a serious threat to the regime, and after the failure of their most ambitious undertaking—an attempt to frighten the Venezuelan population (especially the urban population) into staying away from the polls during the December 1963 elections—the insurrectionists shifted over mainly to rural insurgency. For about a year and a half, rural guerrilla warfare constituted a troublesome problem for the reformist government of President Raoul Leoni, who had succeeded Betancourt in 1963. However, by the middle of 1965, it became obvious that this, too, was a failure.³

Before and After

As regards the general strategic road in Latin America, there exists practically complete unanimity: armed struggle here is the rule, and the peaceful way the exception.

—Francisco Mieres, member of the CPV Central Committee, "Lessons of October and Contemporary Revolutionary Movements in Latin America," *World Marxist Review* (Toronto), November 1967, p. 80.

The legalization of the party is the result partly of its decision to revise its tactical line following a series of military and political reverses. . . . The Communist Party of Venezuela will continue its firm and militant opposition to the regime, while at the same time using all legal avenues to rally the working class and all other exploited sections of the population to fight for their liberation, for true revolutionary changes, for the abolition of imperialist domination, for democracy and socialism in our country.

—Juan Rodriguez, member of the CPV Central Committee, "Venezuela: Communist Party Regains its Legality," *World Marxist Review* (Toronto), May 1969, p. 41.

³ For an extended discussion of the Venezuelan Communist Party's experiment with guerrilla warfare, see the author's *The Communist Party of Venezuela*, Stanford, Calif., Hoover Institution Press, 1969.

Moreover, the PCV had to pay a severe penalty for its part in the attempt to overthrow the government by force. The party was declared illegal in June 1962 and lost its representation in the Venezuelan legislature, where it had had a senator and half a dozen deputies. It also lost virtually all of its influence among organized labor (in the early 1960's it had controlled 25 percent of the Venezuelan labor movement), as well as much of its once extensive influence in various professional organizations; and it once again found itself shunned by other political groups. Membership declined to a fraction of its former size.

The Guatemalan Communist Party, the *Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo* (Guatemalan Labor Party) or PGT, had a similar experience. Forced by its radical members to join in a guerrilla movement during the mid-1960's, the party became disillusioned with the lack of results and eventually decided in 1968 to withdraw from the struggle. This decision provoked a violent attack on the party by Castro, as had the similar decision taken by the Communist Party of Venezuela.⁴

The Pro-Peking Parties

All of the pro-Chinese Communist parties in Latin America came into being as result of schisms in the established pro-Soviet parties over the fundamental issue of the most effective strategy for the conquest of power. The refusal of the orthodox party leaderships to contemplate abandonment of the peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism in favor of the militant strategy preached by the Chinese Communists aroused dissatisfaction among the more radical elements in the party ranks, with the result that some of these disaffected groups broke away to form splinter Communist parties supporting the doctrines of Mao Tse-tung.

As a general rule, the leaders of the pro-Peking splinter parties were former dissidents within the top echelons of the old-line parties. Frustrated by the adherence of the old-guard leaderships to a Moscow-dictated strategy line which offered no prospect of an early acquisition of power, they saw a welcome alternative in the rival Maoist doctrine of revolutionary militancy and sought to capitalize

on the Sino-Soviet rift by splitting away from the orthodox parties and setting up their own organizations aligned ideologically with Peking. Some of the secondary leaders of these splinter parties and a large part of their rank-and-file members were drawn from among the younger elements and youth organizations of the pro-Moscow parties, similarly disillusioned by the non-militant conservatism of the old-line leaderships.

By 1968, the Chinese claimed that there were ten Communist parties in Latin America aligned with Peking.⁵ Actually there were eleven pro-Maoist party organizations: in Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil (the Chinese may have left out Puerto Rico in their calculations). Comments on a few of the more important of these parties are in order.

The oldest pro-Chinese party is the so-called *Partido Comunista do Brasil* (Communist Party of Brazil), which originated from a struggle for control of the traditional pro-Moscow *Partido Comunista Brasileiro* (Brazilian Communist Party). The latter had been outlawed in 1947, and for a dozen years thereafter, its secretary-general, Luis Carlos Prestes, remained in hiding, losing virtually all contact with the secondary leaders and general membership of the party. Effective control of the party apparatus thus fell into the hands of a small group including ex-trade-union leader Joao Amazonas, ex-deputy Mauricio Grabois, and Diogenes Arruda. In 1959, however, Prestes came out of hiding and was subsequently tried and cleared of charges that had been brought against him at the time of his removal from the Senate in 1948. This enabled him to resume contact with the lower party leadership as well as the rank-and-file membership, and he eventually succeeded in regaining effective leadership of the party, thanks largely to the fact that he still enjoyed far greater personal popularity both within the party and among the general public than the bureaucrats who had dominated the party in his absence and who were now his rivals for the leadership. In addition, Prestes had the advantage of enjoying the confidence and support of Moscow. Grabois, Amazonas and their associates tried to block Prestes' resumption of party control, but when a showdown came in 1961, Prestes emerged victorious. The defeated leaders then withdrew from the party and established the

⁴For a discussion of Communist participation in guerrilla warfare in Guatemala, see Eduardo Galeano, *Guatemala: Occupied Country*, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1969.

⁵See *Peking Review*, January 19, 1968.

rival Communist Party of Brazil, which adopted pro-Chinese ideological positions.⁶

The great majority of the Communist rank and file stayed with Prestes' Brazilian Communist Party, which between 1961 and 1964 was closely allied with the government of President Joao Goulart. The pro-Peking Party, on the other hand, opposed any kind of collaboration with the "petty bourgeois" Goulart government as a betrayal of Marxism-Leninism. After the overthrow of Goulart in April 1964, both Communist parties were driven underground by the succeeding military regime. The pro-Moscow party has since continued to oppose any attempt at the forcible overthrow of the regime and urges instead the formation of a popular democratic front of all opposition elements, but important segments of the party have broken away to engage in urban guerrilla activities against the military government. One such terrorist group was organized and led by Carlos Marighella, a onetime Communist member of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies (1945-48), who was killed in a clash with the police in 1969. On the other hand, there is no concrete evidence that the pro-Peking Communist Party of Brazil, though formally committed to the violent road to power, has participated seriously in such guerrilla activities.

A somewhat similar split occurred in the old-line Communist Party of Ecuador as a result of growing dissatisfaction inside the party with the conservative leadership of Pedro Saad, who had been the principal figure in the party since the early 1940's. During the fourth administration of President Jose Maria Velasco Ibarra, which began in 1960, Saad's opponents within the party urged that the leadership should prepare for the likelihood of a military *coup d'état*, but Saad refused to believe that this would occur, with the result that when the *coup* actually took place, Saad and many of his subordinates fell victim to arrest by the new military regime. The oppositionists, on the other hand, had gone into hiding and thus were able to assume temporary leadership of the party. The end result of the conflict was the emergence of two separate parties, both calling themselves the Communist Party of Ecuador. The party that remained under Saad's leadership maintained its loyalty to Moscow, while the rival party aligned itself with Peking. The latter group evidently planned to launch a

guerrilla war with the aid of funds supplied from abroad, but the plan was thwarted when the courier carrying the money was arrested upon arriving in the country by air from China.

The only Maoist Latin American party which has had a limited measure of success in establishing a guerrilla front has been the self-styled Communist Party of Colombia (Marxist-Leninist). This party, which was established by disaffected elements of the Communist youth organization, controls one of several groups carrying on anti-government guerrilla activities in the countryside, but it has not been able to gain any significant support among the general population or in the labor movement. The regular Communist Party of Colombia, aligned with Moscow, remains in control of a significant segment of organized labor and ran candidates in the April 1970 general elections.

Thus, the pro-Peking Communist parties have so far remained a relatively small and inconsequential element in the Latin American extreme Left. It is doubtful that these parties anywhere in the hemisphere can compare with their pro-Moscow rivals in size and influence, and they are little more than a nuisance to some of the regular pro-Moscow parties.

Castro and the Communists

Since coming to power in January 1959, Castro has played a kind of cat-and-mouse game with Cuba's pro-Soviet orthodox Communists. During the first months of his regime, he allowed them to function and did not object to giving them some fairly important secondary positions in the new government. Nine months after seizing power, he formed an open alliance with them, and early in 1961 he proclaimed his regime to be "Marxist-Leninist." In July of the same year, he announced the merger of his own "July 26 movement" with the old-line Communist *Partido Socialista Popular* (PSP).

Immediately following the merger, Castro entrusted the organization of the new unified party (first named the Integrated Revolutionary Organization) to Anibal Escalante, one of the most experienced leaders of the old PSP. Escalante proceeded to place his former PSP colleagues in charge of virtually all local and regional units of the new party, and old-line Communists also moved into control of the powerful National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA), the Cuban Confederation of Workers, and the University of Havana.

⁶ For a thorough account of the internal struggles in the Brazilian Communist Party, see Osvaldo Peralva's *O Retrato*, Rio de Janeiro, Editora O Globo, 1962.

In March 1962, Castro forcefully reasserted his authority. In a series of speeches, he denounced the old-line Communists, removed Escalante, and took over the secretary-generalship of the party himself. Escalante went into exile for several years.

Since then, the domination of the Castro group over the old-line Communists has been steadily strengthened. The latter were deprived of most of the key government posts they had been given before Escalante's removal, and early in 1965 Castro again cracked down on them in conjunction with the trial of an ex-member of the Communist Youth organization on charges of treason against the Revolution in 1957. The chief victim this time was Joaquín Ordoqui, who was removed as Vice-Minister of Defense and put in jail, where he died some time later.⁷

Castro's last major onslaught on the old-line Communists occurred in 1968, with the public trial of a "microfaction" of former PSP members, headed again by Escalante, who were condemned largely on the ground of their close associations with Moscow.⁸ The trial served to underscore the fact that Cuba's veteran pro-Soviet Communists have been reduced to the status of very minor partners of the Fidelista Communists.

The relations of the Castro regime with the pro-Moscow Communist parties in other Latin American countries have zigzagged erratically during the last decade. The course of these relations has been profoundly influenced by Castro's desire to export his revolution to the Latin American continent and to be recognized as a world leader; it has also depended at any given moment on Castro's current standing with the USSR.

Havana's relations with the pro-Moscow parties have passed through several phases. At first, these parties were enthusiastic about Castro's Revolution; however, it took them several years to regard him as anything more than a "petty bourgeois" leader, despite his proclamation of the Marxist-Leninist nature of the Cuban Revolution in 1961. Their relations with him took a turn for the worse in 1962 and 1963, after he had quarreled with the orthodox Cuban Communists. During this period, Castro tended to associate more closely with Fidelista or

"Jacobin Left" groups than with orthodox Communist parties in the other Latin American countries.

In 1964 there was again a turn toward a rapprochement. Toward the end of that year a conference of pro-Moscow parties was held in Havana, and Castro seems to have agreed to work chiefly with them. However, he certainly did not break off relations with other groups.

The Tricontinental Congress in Havana in January 1966 marked the beginning of a new period of severely strained relations. Then and for some time afterward, Castro appeared to be trying to establish himself as the leader of a kind of "third force" in world communism. At the Congress itself, he bitterly denounced the "big-power chauvinism" of the Chinese; but in subsequent months he made several attacks against the Soviet Union in thinly-veiled language. At the same time, he engaged in polemics with the leaders of several Latin American parties, including those of Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, and most particularly Venezuela. In an all-out effort to export the Cuban Revolution to the continent, he sought to stimulate guerrilla wars in a number of countries and declared that the only "true Communists" were those ready to undertake guerrilla struggles against their national governments.⁹

Castro's attitude changed again rather dramatically during 1968-69. Probably because of several factors—including the failure of guerrilla war in several countries, Soviet pressure, and his preoccupation with the campaign to produce 10 million tons of sugar—his posture began to mellow not only toward the Soviet Union, but also toward the pro-Moscow Latin American parties. For the last year, these relations appear to have been most cordial.

Havana's relations with the pro-Peking parties have been much less complex; in fact, for the most part, the Cubans have ignored them, although a few delegates from the pro-Chinese parties did attend the OLAS (Organization of Latin American Solidarity) Conference in Havana in mid-1967. Régis Debray, in his semi-official statement of Fidelista ideology, *Revolution in the Revolution*, published early in 1967, made it clear that the Castroites did not hold the pro-Chinese parties in

⁷For a fictionalized but accurate account of the fall of Joaquín Ordoqui, see Carlos Manuel Pellicer, *Útiles Después de Muertos*, Mexico City, B. Costa-Amic, 1966.

⁸An extensive account of the trial of the "microfaction" of Anibal Escalante can be found in *World Outlook*, a publication of the Trotskyite Socialist Workers' Party of the United States, in its issue for the month of March 1968.

⁹For an extensive account of Castro's relations with the orthodox Communist parties, see Bruce Jackson, *Castro, The Kremlin and Communism in Latin America*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1969.

Latin America in particular regard: specifically, he charged them with having the same bureaucratic weaknesses as the stronger pro-Moscow parties. For their part, the pro-Peking parties have engaged in bitter polemics with Fidelista groups in their respective countries, and sometimes with Castro himself. These verbal battles have been attributable at least in part to the pro-Chinese Communists' need to "differentiate their product" from that of Castro and his followers.

The Fidelista Communists

Castro has received his most loyal and continuous support from the Latin American "Jacobin Leftists." These are groups which sprang up for the most part among the more radical elements of the Democratic Left parties during the 1950's and early 1960's. They were spurred mainly by disillusionment over what seemed to them the slowness of the new regimes created following the overthrow of a series of Latin American dictatorships in the late 1950's to proceed with serious reforms, as well as over the apparent lack of concern on the part of the United States about Latin American problems of economic development and military usurpations of power. What strength they had tended to be concentrated among students and young professional people generally drawn from the upper and upper-middle classes. They had little backing either in the urban labor movement or among the peasantry.

A series of Jacobin Leftist organizations came into being in a number of Latin American countries. In Venezuela, Peru, Chile, and perhaps one or two other countries, they took the name of *Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria* (Revolutionary Left Movement), or MIR; elsewhere they adopted other titles. In addition to these more or less distinct, organized and disciplined parties, Jacobin Leftist elements were to be found in several Socialist parties—notably those of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay—and even in some Christian Democratic groups. In several countries, they were divided among several small groups which often were in competition with one another.

In Fidel Castro the Jacobin Leftists found a catalyst. They were enthusiastic about his revolution from the very beginning, and his *ex post facto* proclamation of faith in Marxism-Leninism did not lessen their enthusiasm since they, too, were avowed believers in the same ideology. Nor was their faith

in Fidel diminished by the violence of his methods, the dictatorial character of his rule, and his xenophobia.

It was these Jacobin Leftist groups which were most willing to respond to Castro's call for armed guerrilla struggle to spread the revolution. During the 1960's, they launched such struggles in Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, but nowhere did these campaigns succeed in becoming more than a nuisance to the established governments. In most cases, the guerrilla movements were virtually or completely obliterated.

In any event, by the mid-1960's, the Jacobin Leftists had become the staunchest and most consistent adherents of Castro and his special brand of Marxism-Leninism. Together with Castro's purged and reformed Cuban Communist Party, they thus have come to constitute a third element in the Communist movement in Latin America, as opposed to the pro-Moscow and pro-Peking varieties.¹⁰ They may best be labeled the Fidelista Communists.

There is no question that Castro and his followers have developed their own distinctive Fidelista brand of Communist ideology. Since Castro himself has never been a theorist, however, the essential features of the Fidelista ideology owe most to Ernesto "Che" Guevara and the young French Marxist-Leninist Régis Debray, who attached himself to Castro and his retinue during the middle 1960's.

In this writer's view, Debray's *Revolution in the Revolution* can be regarded as a more or less official statement of the Fidelista ideology. It has been widely distributed by the Cuban regime throughout Latin America, and perhaps elsewhere as well, and no authoritative Cuban spokesman, to the writer's knowledge, has ever taken issue with its content. The work elaborates a number of ideas at variance with orthodox Marxist-Leninist doctrine, principally with regard to the strategy and tactics for attaining power. Debray posits guerrilla war as the only effective way to achieve Communist victory, at least in the underdeveloped countries. Moreover, he goes on to argue that it is not necessary to wait for the maturing of objective revolutionary conditions before launching a guerilla struggle. It is possible, he maintains, for a group of determined revolutionaries to establish "nuclei" (*focos*) of revolu-

¹⁰ For a more extensive discussion of the Jacobin Leftists and their relationship to Castro, see "Fidelismo—and the State of Revolution" in the March 25, 1968, issue of *Current Affairs Bulletin*, published by the University of Sydney, Australia.

tion in isolated parts of the countryside and from there begin to undermine the authority of the existing government.

Debray shares the orthodox Leninist's scorn for the inertia and insufficient revolutionary consciousness of the masses, both urban and peasant, who he says will come over to the revolution only when they sense that it is going to succeed. However—and most heretical of all from the Leninist viewpoint—he contends that there is no need for a party to assume leadership of the guerrilla struggle, and that, on the contrary, the party will evolve out of the guerrilla army. He sees the leadership of the revolutionary “nuclei” as coming from the middle and upper-class youth. These young leaders, he argues, need have no “proletarian class consciousness” to begin with, because they will gradually acquire it through association with peasants and workers in the guerrilla struggle.

Another deviant element in the Fidelista Communist ideology is the contribution of Che Guevara—namely, his emphasis on “moral incentives.” Guevara rejects the Soviet idea that during the period of “socialism” workers must be stimulated to produce more by means of material rewards, arguing that such a policy is “immoral” and only serves to perpetuate a capitalist mentality. Instead, he maintains, the “new Communist man” must be developed during the socialist phase through a process of teaching the workers to respond to moral rather than material incentives. Since 1966, this has been official dogma in Castro's Cuba. In practical terms, it has meant forced labor for a major proportion of the Cuban people, who—for example—were mobilized by the regime for an all-out (though unsuccessful) effort to produce 10 million tons of sugar in 1970. (On this subject, see Mr. Gonzalez's article on p. 12—Ed.)

Ideological Differences

Pro-Soviet and pro-Chinese Communists in Latin America have been highly critical of the ideological positions of the Fidelistas. The principal objection of the pro-Moscow Communists has been to the attempt of Castro and his followers to transform their own path to power in Cuba into a hard-and-fast model for all of Latin America. Perhaps the clearest statement of this position came from the Venezuelan Communist Party during its polemic with Castro after it had abandoned its ill-starred experiment with guerrilla tactics. The Venezuelan

— To Fight and/or Not to Fight —

The party, then, while working to promote the mass struggle for vital economic, political and democratic demands, is at the same time calling for arming the masses. It advocates people's self-defense groups to resist the violence and terror of the regime [and] the setting up of the first armed groups of peasants with a view to gradually building a guerrilla movement on a nationwide scale. . . .

We must take a resolute stand against, and rout, all the adventuristic trends of toying with guerrilla warfare and insurrection.

—Gustavo Corvalan, candidate member of the Central Committee of the Paraguayan CP, *World Marxist Review*, September 1967, p. 73.

party accused Castro not only of trying to set himself up as an arbiter of Communist orthodoxy for the whole hemisphere, but also of attempting to impose on the other Communist parties of the area a strategy which he himself had not carried out under similar conditions. More specifically, it taunted him with the fact that during his guerrilla war of two years against Batista he had never proclaimed himself a Communist, and asked rhetorically what would have happened to his revolution if he had done so. The Venezuelan Communists reasserted the right of every Communist party to determine for itself the correct revolutionary strategy for its own country. This stand has been repeated by the pro-Moscow Communist parties in a number of other Latin American countries including Chile and Guatemala.

The pro-Peking Communists have, if anything, been even more bitter in their denunciations of the Fidelista ideology. Despite the fact that the Chinese were the originators of the guerrilla warfare strategy used by Castro and later advocated by him for the rest of Latin America, they and their Latin American followers have gone out of their way to stress that Mao Tse-tung always taught the necessity to wait until the “objective conditions” for revolutionary action had developed. Accordingly, the pro-Peking groups have emphasized the need to carry out intensive advance political work among

the peasants in regions where a guerrilla war is to be launched. They completely repudiate the "foco" theory of Guevara, Debray and others.

Future Prospects

It is hazardous to predict the future of the rival Latin American Communist camps. However, there are a number of factors that will obviously have an important bearing on their prospects in the foreseeable future.

First, it is clear that in virtually all the countries of Latin America (excluding Cuba) no Communist Party—of whatever brand—is at present a real threat to the government in power. Of the pro-Soviet Communist parties, only that of Chile can, by any stretch of the imagination, be described as a major party. There is an outside chance that a coalition including the Communists might come to power in Chile as a result of the elections scheduled for September 1970, but this is extremely unlikely, and Chile is the only Latin American country in which such a development is even a remote possibility.

Secondly, the Maoist Communists are of little importance anywhere in Latin America. Although Peking has been able to recruit followers in at least ten countries, nowhere have they been able to establish a party capable of making a serious bid for power—or even of acquiring major influence in the labor or peasant movement.

Thirdly, although the guerrilla road to power has so far not been successful as a Communist tactic in any Latin American country, this strategy is not to be completely ruled out. Its efficacy will depend upon the attitudes and policies of the governments of the various Latin American countries. There are unfortunately some countries where conditions appear to be such as to offer a favorable environment for a guerrilla war under Communist leadership. This may be because the ruling economic group is so extremely conservative that it will not permit any kind of social reform, even a moderate income tax, creating a situation in which the hope of democratic reform by peaceful means may be abandoned even by those who believe most strongly in it. Or it may be the case where an authoritarian military regime has increasingly isolated itself from the civilian population and has all but eliminated the possibilities of legitimate and peaceful opposition, thus driving even those who would normally abhor violence to support the elements

which preach the strategy of revolutionary guerrilla warfare.

Fourthly, the guerrilla groups are evolving new tactics of violence which could pose a serious threat to some Latin American governments. With the failure of the rural guerrillas, urban terrorism has become an increasingly popular weapon of the extremist groups. Assassinations, kidnappings, bank robberies, and other forms of terrorism can disorient and discredit the government in power, unless it enjoys really broad and firm support among the population at large. The failure of such terrorist tactics in Venezuela in 1962-63 was mainly due to the fact that the regime *did* have the backing of the great majority of the population.

Fifthly, the appearance of left-wing military governments—a relatively new phenomenon which seems to be spreading on the continent—may present new opportunities to Communist groups, especially of the pro-Moscow variety. If the new military leaders should prove to be politically unsophisticated, they might well enter into collaboration with the Communists, thus opening new areas of influence to the latter. On the other hand, it seems quite likely that the socialist orientation and economic nationalism of the military leaders may tend to draw away support from the Communists, particularly among the young.

Sixthly, it seems unlikely that any Communist regime—of whatever brand—that might come to power by violence could stay in power very long without the support of the Soviet Union. Hence, the policy of the USSR with regard to backing other Castros in Latin America will be a key factor in determining the future prospects of Communist movements in the hemisphere.

Finally, the attitude of the United States is bound to be of crucial importance in determining these prospects. The experience of the last decade points to the conclusion that the best "preventive measure" against the growth of Communist influence in Latin America lies in the fulfillment of the aspirations of the Latin American masses for fundamental social reform, for rising levels of living, and for political freedom. To the degree that the United States effectively supports programs and policies designed to secure these objectives, it will be making the greatest possible contribution to thwarting the advance of communism in the area. To the extent that it might rely only on preserving the status quo, it could well contribute to the further advance of communism, of one variety or another, in the Latin American republics.

The Red and the Black

JOHN GERASSI, Ed.: *Venceremos! The Speeches and Writings of Ernesto Che Guevara*.
New York, Macmillan, 1968.

JOHN CLYTUS: *Black Man in Red Cuba*.
Coral Gables, University of Miami Press, 1970.

ELIZABETH SUTHERLAND: *The Youngest Revolution: A Personal Report on Cuba*.
New York, Dial Press, 1969.

Reviewed by William J. Parente

THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE of the Cuban Revolution in coming to grips with the historic problem of race relations has significance throughout the hemisphere. As North American educators can testify, the attraction of Communist Cuba as a "new" society is very great for an increasing number of college-age radicals. Unlike all other Communist states, Cuba is a truly multiracial country, with a black population numbering between 35 and 45 percent of the total. As one Cuban haughtily puts it in the Sutherland volume, ". . . the Cuban Revolution is the only one worth watching right now except for China—and Cuba is even more interesting than China because the population is more racially mixed."

The racial situation in Cuba, then, approaches the dimensions of that in the United States and other American republics. Friend and foe alike must inevitably ask whether the Cuban form of socialism can significantly improve race relations. Similarly, it is apparent that the militant revolutionary strategy for Latin America espoused by the Cuban regime and personified by Che Guevara continues to stress racial inequality as a fundamental justification for rebellion, and its elimination as a

primary goal of any new revolutionary government. The three books reviewed here shed considerable light both upon the nature of this militant racial propaganda and upon the Castro regime's efforts to resolve Cuba's own racial problem.

AS EARLY AS 1921, the newly-established Soviet journal on nationality problems, *Zhizn natsional-nostei*, foresaw that the collapse of colonial empires would serve to "arouse nationalist passions among the peoples of the yellow and dark continents even more than the defeat of the Entente's counter-revolutionary plans against Soviet Russia." Indeed, the author—M. Pavlovich—specifically urged ". . . the awakening of the dark tribes of the Sudan, South Africa, and South America."¹

It was Castro's Second Declaration of Havana (February 4, 1962) which most effectively raised this theme again—and this time from within the American hemisphere. In attacking the "neo-

¹ No. 14 (112), July 16, 1921, p. 1.