

**INTERNATIONAL 14**

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**THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION**

aspects of the

**LATIN**

**AMERICAN  
REVOLUTION**

**Industrial and Student Reports**

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE STUDENT STRUGGLE

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Another factor in this resurgence has been the reactivation of the vanguard, following an ebb and a long, hard debate which clarified perspectives --- though that debate is not yet over. INTERNATIONAL in its next issue will present the various positions in that debate, including its own.

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IN INDOCHINA, the war has spread due to the American operations in Cambodia and due to the advance of the revolutionary forces in Laos.

A situation to watch closely is that in Thailand which is being pushed by the Americans to disastrously enthrall itself in the undeclared, but open and total war against the revolutionary forces fighting across the whole Indo-China peninsula --- including in Thailand.

The big questions posed by the continuance and extension of the Indo-Chinese war are: Does American Imperialism have a plan which aims to draw China into the conflict and what will be the role of the Kremlin in such a case?

In other words: Are the Americans preparing an atomic attack on China at a given moment, with assurances from the Kremlin that it will not interfere? That the extension of the war in Indo-China carries within it the dynamic of a war against China, is a logical, if not certain conclusion to draw. That the Americans could count in such an operation (which would necessarily be an atomic attack) on what would be the complicity of the Kremlin (regardless of how they tried to disguise it), is a less certain conclusion --- though it cannot be excluded.

The fact that the Kremlin has still not recognised Sihanouk is amazing and presages nothing good. It indicates to what extent antagonism with China remains deep, and how this predominates over other "ideological" considerations.

As we have emphasised several times before, the world situation, examined from the point of view of relationship of forces between States, is dominated by the complex relations between the United States, the U.S.S.R., and China.

American imperialism would like to push the USSR and China into a war, then standing aside in order to intervene at the appropriate moment to achieve victory over them both. But the growing power of China also disturbs it, and aware of its impasse externally (in Indo-China) and internally, could itself launch an attack on China.

Such an adventurist policy would not be that of the whole of the American bourgeoisie but of the most reactionary military-industrial section.

As for the Kremlin, subject to the control of the most conservative elements in the Party and Army, it is not out of the question that it fondly promotes projects, the aim of which is to push the U.S. and

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and China into war, in the hope of being the real victor of such a conflict.

One cannot have enough confidence in either the American bourgeoisie or in the high Soviet bureaucracy, to exclude either of these dangers. In the historic impasse in which both find themselves, confronted with the rise of revolutionary forces which imperil them both, an adventure, taking what had been till then, partial wars, to the stage of a great Atomic war, is by no means excluded.

IN THE MIDDLE EAST, the new factor, one long foreseen and already analysed, is the continued radicalisation of the Palestinian Resistance, accentuating its opposition to the different Arab regimes, especially in Jordan and Lebanon.

This radicalisation now constitutes the main obstacle to the search for a compromise between the Arab States and Israel and "pacification" of the Middle East based on such a compromise.

Militarily the relationship of forces between Israel and the Arabs develops in favour of the latter. Soviet aid to Egypt (including the Soviet military personnel taking over defence and the use of military equipment delivered to Egypt) eliminates hopes in Israel of a new surprise operation à la June 1967, and obliges Israel to face the prospect of a "war of attrition". One cannot even exclude the possibility of seeing Egypt, with Soviet assistance installing itself on the right bank of the Suez canal.

For these reasons the Zionist bourgeoisie is now deeply divided, one important section of this class calling for the 'compromise' solution which would consist of almost all the conquered territories being returned. The Arab States, are prepared for this solution, but they have to overcome their own "hawks" and above all they have to overturn the Palestinian Resistance and destroy the hold it has over their own masses.

Even within the Palestinian Resistance, polarisation has become marked: one side are those who would accept a "compromise" with Israel for an eventual "Palestinisation" of Jordan (sacrificing the monarchy) and on the other side are those who refuse to recognise Israel and demand the dissolution of the Zionist state in "a united and democratic Palestine".

Events in Lebanon and Jordan are very significant in this regard: the forces of Arab reaction in these two countries, prodded by American imperialism and with the complicity of other Arab states, strive to crush the Marxist vanguard of the Palestinian Resistance, now dangerously infected with its ideas even the very base of El Fatah.

But each of its attempts so far have met with resistance and a new push forward by the Palestinian revolutionary left. This is what happened in Lebanon in April/May, this is also what happened in Jordan. Provocation by Hussein's Army, manipulated by the CIA agents, resulted in a new capitulation by Hussein.

We have seen Nasser, Kadhafi, Boumedienne and the Kremlin hasten to Hussein's aid, whether directly by attacking the revolutionary left for being "adventurist, irresponsible, etc." or indirectly by supporting Arafat against the left.

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"OCCUPATION ---- New Stage in Strike Strategy"

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Under the above heading, in its issue of June, 1970, "Painter and Docker", official organ of the New South Wales Branch of the Ship Painters and Dockers Union, carries a report which states, inter alia,

"At Cockatoo Island recently, our members were confronted with a contractor employing workers of dubious union attachment, carrying out repairs to the Big Dock.

"... Members at Cockatoo had then to consider whether they would strike over the issue and, if they decided to do so, whether they would just 'walk off'.

"...The painters and dockers at Cockatoo came up with the answer --- the only valid answer! They adjourned their meeting to the 'scene of the crime', and sat down on the job in such a manner that no one could do the job!

"This effectively brought the matter to a head. The contractor decided to 'withdraw' pending some settlement.

"But the next day, Wednesday, 3/6/70, the contractor's men were back on the island. A further occupation of the site took place.... Twenty policemen were brought in to remove 170 painters and dockers. Our members stood their ground despite everything the employer tried on.

"At this stage, other workers entered the fray. The Shop Committee in a body marched to the Management's offices and soon made it clear that use of non-union labour and use of the police to back up the non-unionists, would not be tolerated.

"By 1.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 3/6/70, the non-unionists left the island under police escort...."

The article concludes:

"Cockatoo members have given a lead future disputation with the employer: the strike should be conducted in a manner which ensures that the workers have complete control of the whole situation, whereby scabbery, or smart manoeuvres by the employer can be eliminated...."

The report also indicates that the workers on the job had the

firm backing of their union officials: the Vigilance Officer, I. Wyner, had made it clear that he stood solidly with the workers in their action.

From other sources, it has been learned that the Job Delegate, R. Galleghan, had consulted with officials of his union and received firm support for his proposal to "occupy" the site.

While still not going as far as the students at Sydney University, who had occupied the administrative offices with demands reaching beyond the immediate case of Victoria Lee to university administration generally, the Cockatoo Island development is an important new departure in industry.

It was not conducted as a "protest", but as a direct challenge to which the employer reacted by moving in the State forces, the police. It was not a matter of "sitting-in", but of declaring that the job had been taken over and would remain so until the non-unionists were evacuated.

IN Australia, full-scale occupation, as witnessed in France, still remains an experience to ventured on. And it will require wider participation of the workers in the industry.

Nevertheless, the painters and dockers, who have been in the van of earlier successful struggles by Cockatoo Island workers, have set the stage for further development of occupation as a form of struggle. It will not go unnoticed by other workers in the plant, and will be taken further in each fresh experience.

Occupation, properly applied, calls into question the authority of the boss, challenges what has always appeared as his sole, unfettered position of supremacy, and brings forward the workers' appreciation of what is the central requirement for running industry: elective authority rather than coercive, "divine right" authority.

Thus, any step towards this eventual position is to be welcomed. The painters and dockers have found firm ground under their first step along this road, which leads away from the traditional strike methods of the reformists. They should be encouraged to remain on this road and to call others to follow.

Certainly, such action will not meet with the plaudits of union bureaucracy for, in general, it is directed away from the tight, bureaucratic control of the union apparatus. While, in the particular case of the painters and dockers, at least one union official was prepared to stand solid with the occupation, the same may not apply if other unionists take the same road.

As the occupations broaden out, develop more as a strategy than an isolated tactic, embracing wide layers of workers, the danger will appear of union officialdom seeking to return the struggle to the traditional strike pattern which can be "controlled".

All this, however, is for the future. Meanwhile, a Job Delegate and an official of his union have shown where a new, edifying and unifying road lies for the worker: one which leads away from status quo, reformist struggles and gives a perspective of raising demands related to the place of work throughout its whole spectrum of management and control.

More generalised struggles will indicate further steps to be taken on the occupation road. But the painters and dockers have heralded the new course, and industrial occupation has been officially announced for the Australian scene.

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C H I L E ---

A Difficult Strategy

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We reproduce this analysis of the Chilean situation not only because it takes proper account of Chile's singularity in the Latin-American context --- but more especially because of the applicability of its central thesis to Australia, where the masses have not reached even the level of consciousness of the Chileans.

It urges the necessity for integration of revolutionaries in the mass labor movement just as it is --- as against the pipe-dream of building the revolutionary party from outside.

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If we paraphrase the title of Anibal Pinto's work (Chile: A Difficult Economy) it is not that we go along with this economist's analyses, but we want to call attention to the difficult position the revolutionary movement is in regarding formulating a correct strategy and tactic, without falling into absurd simplifications that sterilize the action of revolutionary Marxists.

In Sous le Drapeau du Socialisme (No.50) is an analysis of the situation of the various political parties and their electoral possibilities. Today the panorama is sufficiently clear to be able to put forward some supplementary precisions on detail. At the same time, it is necessary to separate the electoral aspects from those of the mass mobilisation, as well as from the possibility of a revolutionary victory in Chile in a near future.

As we had foreseen, Salvador Allende was finally proclaimed

presidential candidate of the Popular Unity (Socialist Party, Communist Party, M.A.P.U., Radical Party, Independent, etc...) The general opinion and the one spread by the bourgeois press was that this unity was impossible and that if it did happen it would by no means regroup all the groups who join it, in an enthusiasm difficult to forecast.

For its part, the candidature of Radmiro Tomic of the Christian Democratic Party showed it had an unsuspected vitality. This fact is vital for this party, which is experiencing a difficult electoral situation, but which in this way proceeds to increase its chances of negotiating from a position of strength with the other candidates. Either with the National Party about one candidate for the two formations, or with the left in case no one obtains the absolute majority. Already in Parliament the position of the Christian Democracy is decisive.

For its part the position of the right regrouped in the National Party is difficult enough despite the optimism of its statements. The Almost total domination of the means of mass communication, the immense economic means and means of pressure could not cover the irreversible loss of the peasant votes. The "mini-putsch" of Gral Viaux Marambio, in laying bare the dangers such actions contain, compel this formation to a certain turn. Conscious that adventures of this kind can either escape control, or what is worse, provoke a popular reaction with consequences impossible to foresee, they determine to launch out to thoroughly exploit the electoral possibilities, speculating on an eventual alliance with the Christian Democracy.

The proclamation of the candidature of Jorge Alessandri immediately after the "mini-putsch" is in the same style. The National Party, without any suitable personality with some weight, had to turn to Alessandri, a man of 74 years, passably worn out but of unquestionable personal prestige. The present state of the candidatures obviously is not proceeding in the direction of the anticipations of the right, for whom it is legitimate to count on any type of manoeuvres until the date of the elections, since it would be unsophisticated to expect the big bourgeoisie and imperialism to impassively await Allende's victory without attempting anything, although we consider its room for manoeuvre is limited enough.

However we must acknowledge that Allende's proselytising campaign, of unquestionable success, is intended not for his emergence as first among the candidates, but to obtain the absolute majority. This position shows confidence, in our opinion justified, in victory and the necessity to psychologically push forward and prepare the masses for the possibility of having to confront a single candidate, of transition, issue of an agreement between the Christian Democracy and the National Party.

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From the electoral point of view the panorama is clear enough and we can assert that, at the level of the left in general, the participation is something settled. Apart from small "ultra-leftist" groups who are on a Blanquist position, the agreement is general. But that is only one aspect of the problem and precisely not the main one.

Obviously the revolutionary militant cannot believe in the construction of a socialist state arising from elections in a bourgeois state. What must be done is to understand the implications and effects of these elections and of an eventual victory of the Popular Union.

The dialectical contradiction --- reformism-ultra-leftism --- constantly traverses the problem of the action of the left. Not to fall into any one of the two extremes of a cause is the fundamental theoretical task of revolutionary Marxists. Electoralism - abstentionism are the two extremes. The first is capitulation before the pressure of the milieu, the second, recognition of its impotence to benefit the revolution through all the means to be disposed of in a bourgeois democracy.

We consider that the revolutionary cannot accept dogmas, on creative initiatives depend largely his success or check. In this regard Lenin wrote:

"Marxism is distinguished from all primitive forms of socialism in that it does not alienate the revolutionary movement to any fixed form of struggle. It admits of the most diverse methods of action, without 'inventing' them; it is limited to generalising, organising, giving a conscious direction to the methods of action of the revolutionary classes which spontaneously arise in the course of the revolutionary movement. Resolute enemy of all abstract forms, of all the recipes of doctrinaires, Marxism demands an attentive attitude towards the struggle of the masses, a struggle unceasingly raising up new forms of defence and attack, conforming to the development of events and the consciousness of the masses, and conforming to the aggravation of the economic and political crises. Marxism does not content itself in all cases with existing forms of struggle or forms possible at a given moment; it recognises that new methods of action, still unknown by the present militants, are indispensable when the conjuncture is altered. On this subject it can be affirmed that far from having the pretension of teaching the masses methods of action conceived by the outfitters of systems, cabinet products, Marxism is a permanent school of the practice of the masses.

"... Marxism unconditionally demands the historic study of the problem of the forms of struggle. To pose this problem independently of a concrete historic situation is equivalent to being ignorant of the ABC of dialectical materialism. To different moments of the economic evolution correspond distinct forms of struggle conditioned by the national, political, and cultural situations, as well as by customs modifying 'in their turn' the secondary, auxiliary forms of action."

In Chile, contrary to what happens in nearly all (not to say all) Latin American countries, the illusions of the masses towards elections are far from being dissipated. We can affirm that putschist propaganda aiming to prepare, through discrediting the bourgeois institutions, the road to a military dictatorship, has only a very relative audience and range. And that in the bourgeois milieu. That is why we think the

Chilean masses will participate in the elections and will thus realise an experience that will have a great importance for the revolutionary future of the country. To consider that the parliamentary system is past in Chile and that it is necessary to pass directly to "revolutionary action" is a classical infantilism already condemned "with more or less great confidence we have in the official "leaders" of the Popular Union, but it must depend solely and exclusively on the opportunity the present conjuncture offers us to cause the masses to mature and to prepare them on their road to the socialist revolution. The distrust we must entertain towards its present leadership is only one aspect of the problem and not the most important.

Lenin wrote in The Infantile Disorder:

"It would be agreed that the command of an army would be unreasonable or even criminal which had not learned to handle all arms, all means and operations of struggle of which the enemy disposes or can dispose. However, this truth applies still better to politics than to the military art. In politics one is still less able to foresee which means of struggle will be confirmed, in such or such future situation, as practicable or advantageous for us. Not to know how to make use of all means of struggle is to run the risk of a big defeat --- sometimes even decisive --- if changes independent of our will, happening unexpectedly in the position of other classes, put on the order of the day a form of action in which we were particularly weak. If we know how to use all the means of struggle we are a certainty to triumph, since we express the interests of the truly, truly revolutionary class, even if the circumstances do not allow us to make use of the most dangerous weapon for the enemy, that of bringing most quickly mortal blows. Inexperienced revolutionaries often think that legal means of struggle are tainted with opportunism because on this terrain the bourgeoisie has most often (above all in 'peaceful' non-revolutionary times) triumphed and mystified the workers; and also they think that illegal means of struggle are revolutionary. But this is false. What is true is that the parties and leaders are opportunists and traitors to the working class who do not know how to or do not want (not saying 'we are not able', saying 'we do not want') to use illegal means of struggle in a situation such as, for example, the imperialist war of 1914-18, where the bourgeoisie of the freest democratic countries deceived the workers with a nameless cynicism and frenzy, in refusing to tell the truth about the despoiling character of the war. But revolutionaries who are not able to unite to illegal forms of struggle all the legal forms are bad revolutionaries. It is not difficult to be a revolutionary when the revolution has already blazed out and is in full swing; when everyone rallies to it through simple infatuation, following the fashion, sometimes even to make a career. The proletariat later must pay for 'liberation' from these revolutionary 'fevers', after its victory, by extraordinary efforts, by a painful martyrdom, one could say. It is much more difficult --- and much more valuable --- to prove

oneself revolutionary when the situation does not yet permit the direct, declared, genuinely massive, genuinely revolutionary struggle, to know how to defend the interests of the revolution by propaganda, agitation, organisation in non-revolutionary, even clearly reactionary institutions, in a non-revolutionary atmosphere, among masses unable to understand immediately the necessity for a method of revolutionary action. To be able to find, to feel, to determine exactly the concrete road or the special turn of events, that will lead the masses towards the big, genuine, decisive and final revolutionary struggle; such is the main object of Communism of the present time in Western Europe and in America."

We give this quotation not so as to support ourselves on Lenin's personality, but because we believe that no one can say with more distinctiveness what we want to express.

It is necessary to exploit to the maximum the conjuncture these elections and an eventual victory of the Popular Union offers, demanding elaboration of a whole strategy. At the same time it is necessary to be opposed forcefully to electoralist illusions and to the belief that a victory of Allende would open the road to socialism without social revolution.

Two factors merit a special analysis in the present conjuncture: (1) the situation of the masses, (2) the class character of the Popular Union. This analysis made, it will be easier, in putting it back again into the international and Latin-American context, to elaborate the bases of a revolutionary strategy for Chile.

(1) The most important factor in the present Chilean situation is without any doubt the mobilisation of the masses on specific objectives. Occupations of lands by the peasants follow one after another where armed confrontations are on the order of the day. The same thing is happening with workers' struggles, the virulence of which increases from day to day. This fundamental fact must not be lost sight of. The mobilisation of the masses occurs independently of the elections. The character of the latter will be deeply marked by the mobilisation of the masses and will determine also their reactions in face of the government of the Popular Union in case it attains power.

(2) Some elements in the clouds attempted to liken the Popular Union to the sorrowfully celebrated Popular Fronts.

The Popular Fronts, especially about the 'thirties were bastard ... and counter-revolutionary attempts to check the reactionary offensive in moments of retreat of the masses on the international scale. The character of this alliance with sectors of the liberal bourgeoisie was conditioned by the interests of these sectors. That is to say, the bourgeoisie determined the economic and social policy to be followed, giving the responsibility to the Communist Parties to curb the masses in exchange for this "holy alliance". It was evident that the bourgeois sectors which entered the "Front" came there to the extent that they did not put the bourgeois system itself in danger. The woeful

character of such a "Front" does not need explanations.

The Popular Union "started up" with peculiar characteristics and in a different international and national context. Let us explain that in more detail. The bases of the Popular Union are formed by:

1) The pro-Soviet Communist Party, by long tradition reformist, but of fundamentally worker "root", with a very combative youth, and decidedly much to the left of the party leadership. 2) The Socialist Party, on a semi-Castroist position, purged of its apparatus as a consequence of the Ampuro (general secretary) and his team's split with the base. Allende and his group have with them practically the base of the party. The socialist youth is openly revolutionary and of a passably heavy weight in the party. 3) The M.A.P.U. is the result of the left split of the Christian Democracy. It is notorious that the youth in its majority is aligned on the positions of this group; the youth of the Christian Democracy is, consequently, practically non-existent. The platform of this formation is the most left of all, which demonstrates and emphasises the quality of the M.A.P.U. youth. 4) The Radical Party, grouping petty-bourgeois layers, has also undergone a process of division, the right having separated to form the Radical Democracy which supports Alessandri; this fact, joined with the radicalisation of the petty bourgeoisie allows us to affirm that we are not confronting a classical bourgeois party. 5) Some independent groups, as the one gravitating around Senator Rafael Tarud, regrouping elements of all layers of the population, bourgeois, peasants, etc.

In this front it is obvious that the specific weight occupied by the left is amply preponderant. At the same time it must be pointed out that the common programme adopted is "advanced". A programme which in the present conjuncture is necessarily other than a simple enunciation of demands.

In brief we can assert that we find ourselves before a Front of the Lefts, with a programme of revolutionary transformation and a reformist leadership of which the revolutionary vanguard must take account

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The mobilisation of the masses on class demands, added to the electoral mobilisation, create conditions for wide activity by the revolutionary sectors.

The creation of thousands of committees, in which large sectors of the masses will participate, afford the possibility of activity which, if fulfilled properly, will allow preparation of the masses for the inevitable social confrontations of the immediate future. The masses will interpret an Allende victory as their victory. And the latter will see himself obliged to really orientate in all spheres in a revolutionary way.



We consider an Allende victory, independently of his and his teams' intentions, will not bring the social contradictions to a point of over-voltage. The polarisation of forces will lead inevitably to a confrontation of classes. It is unsophisticated to believe that the masses will be led in this struggle by their present leaderships, but we cannot deny them the possibility of carrying out, impelled by the objective situation, a whole series of movements which will accelerate these confrontations.

One of the most dangerous illusions of some vanguard elements is to believe in the possibility of the construction of the revolutionary party in advance of the revolution. The necessary unity of action of the various revolutionary groups is above all necessary, but there must not be forgotten the specific and numerical weight, as well as the quality and organisation of the revolutionary elements working in the classical parties. The revolution will smash all the old structures and from them create new ones, better corresponding to the necessities. But at the present time we must use the existing structures, trying to exert influence on them in order to deepen the politicalisation of their militants, and through them, the whole of the masses.

A strategy, just as the tactic derived from it, formulated without taking account of these facts, could create nothing but confusion, allowing an open field for the electoralists and reformists of all colours. Only the revolutionary vanguard, by participating politically and in this campaign, accompanying the masses in all their struggles and experiences, preparing them politically and organisationally to confront the inevitable hesitations of their present leaderships, as also the class enemy's offensive, can accomplish a revolutionary function. Those who devote themselves to criticism from the outside, trying in a Blanquist way to convert themselves into a "vanguard" of the revolution, will not attain, despite all their goodwill, advancement of the revolution by one millimetre; after all they will have demonstrated their ignorance of the objective process which is on the way to unfolding in Chile, and of the situation of the masses.

"A difficult strategy", we wrote in our heading. And we consider it such, not intrinsically, but because it is necessary to defeat a whole series of iron collars on thought which in fact have only little to do with Marxism. The dialectical contradiction: reformism-ultra-leftism, shows itself in practice as a unity.

We consider that, in the present conditions of Chile, we can hope that the possibilities of victory of the socialist revolution are in view. It will depend on the understanding the vanguard sectors will have of this process for this to be so. The revolutionary deepening of the mobilisation, active participation in the whole development, together with clear precise explanation to the masses of the process they endure is indispensable to reach this objective. To profit to the maximum from all the possibilities a given situation offers does not mean tying the hands. On the contrary, it is necessary to be alert in face of all the enemy's manoeuvres, as well as to those of their own

(concluded on page 22)

## THE REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION IN GUATEMALA

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### (A) NEO-COLONIALISM - GUATEMALA - PERMANENT REVOLUTION

A common feature of nearly all third-world countries is the role played by their bourgeoisie; unlike Europe (or USA) their bourgeoisies are not fulfilling their historic purpose. Frantz Fanon, in his book, Wretched of the Earth, describes the situation as follows:

"The national bourgeoisie of under-developed countries is not engaged in production, nor in invention, nor building, nor labour; it is completely canalised into activities of the intermediary type. Its innermost vocation seems to be to keep in the running and to be part of the racket."(1)

The bourgeoisie of under-developed countries fails to accumulate capital and organise industry on a wide scale, rather they continue to organise the economies of their countries in past fashion, leaving them subject to the commercial domination of Europe or the USA (now joined to Japan.)

Latin-American countries as well as nearly all newly independent Asian or African countries fit this pattern, for their bourgeoisies have fulfilled this limited role, not for ten-twenty years, but for one hundred and fifty years. The various national economies of Latin America have been left at the level of suppliers of raw material and small farmers, since the 1820's. Since the Spanish and Portuguese colonialists were driven out, the only real changes which have taken place are: foreign officials have been replaced by nationals, and Spain and Portugal have been replaced by the UK, then the USA as the metropolitan country. In effect, since no qualitative change has occurred in the economies of Latin America, they are worse off when compared with the much more developed countries than they were in the past. The bourgeoisie of the Third World is incapable of directing the nations' resources and carrying out industrialisation --- for that a socialist revolution is necessary.

Guatemala has the general characteristic of a neo-colonialist economy. The country is dependent upon two basic commodities: coffee and bananas. Production of these two commodities is tightly organised by two companies: United Fruit Corporation (bananas), and Grace Company (coffee). As well as the companies' directly-owned plantations there are locally-owned plantations, known as *latifundia*. These plantations are, in very few cases, mechanised, and in all cases are dependent on cheap unskilled labour supplied by the Indian (descendants of Mayas) population. Living standards are kept at an abysmally low level in order to avoid the problem of mechanisation or industrialisation, which would be expensive and would require risks to be taken that the native bourgeoisie are determined to avoid.

Land distribution is a gauge of the type of society in Guatemala; two per cent of the population own seventy percent of the land (the latifundia). This land is not fully utilised and in certain cases no more than 6-7% of it is used (the degree of under-utilisation can be gauged in similar circumstances by comparing Cuba, pre-1959, to Cuba post-1959). (2) Given very unequal land distribution and low mechanisation, it is necessary to have a low-priced labour supply. This is produced in practice by having a counter system of "minifundia" or small land holdings. The minifundia is a small amount of land (the last census showed 74,269 were no bigger than an acre). This land is inadequate to support a family, so that the men in the family are forced to work on the "latifundia".

Apart from the period, 1944-1954, with which I will deal later, the national bourgeoisie has restricted itself to serving the interests of United Fruit and Grace, so much so that Guatemala has no state-owned port. Both ports in Guatemala are owned by the Americans: Puerto Barrios, on the Atlantic, by United Fruit; San Jose, on the Pacific, by Grace.

The electricity generation industry is run by Grace, under the most obnoxious agreement which forces the government to guarantee profits and yet prohibits it from electrifying any area of the country which Grace does not agree to (in other words, an American firm absolutely controls the country's electrification.) The railways belong to associates of United Fruit.

It would be fatal for us to imagine that it is just the idea that foreign ownership is bad. The central fact which emerges is that development is in fact arrested and reversed. What development occurs is designed to serve commercial interests in the metropolitan country, not the native population. Actual living conditions have deteriorated, infant mortality is 120 per 1000 before the age of four; by the year 2000, 97% of the population will be illiterate. These figures give a good idea of which way life is heading for the mass of the population.

Fanon has accurately described the situation in his "Wretched of the Earth".

"The struggle against the bourgeoisie of under-developed countries is far from being a theoretical one. It is not concerned with making out its condemnation as laid down by the judgment of history. The national bourgeoisie of under-developed countries must not be opposed because it threatens to slow down the total, harmonious development of the nation. It must simply be stoutly opposed because, literally it is good for nothing.... The bourgeoisie which turns its back more and more on the people as a whole does not succeed in extracting spectacular concessions from the West, such as investments which would be of value for the country's economy or the setting up of certain industries. On the contrary, assembly plants spring up and consecrate the type of neo-colonialist industrialisation in which the country's economy flounders." (3)

Very little real industrialisation has occurred, although the country can boast of a perfume factory that adds distilled water to imported essences. Real contributions to industrialisation such as oil refineries and petro-chemical industry are not made because local ruling circles gave Standard Oil leases of what are now proved oil areas. Standard Oil is keeping these areas for later development, thus preventing the creation of large amounts of capital which could be utilised for the country's development. Guatemala is not on the list of Standard Oil's considerations and nor should it be, because Standard Oil is interested in money, not people's welfare.

Fanon continues

"thus it must not be said that the national bourgeoisie retards the country's evolution, that it makes it lose time or that it threatens to lead the nation up blind alleys. In fact, the bourgeois phase in the history of under-developed countries is a completely useless phase." (4)

All evidence in Third World countries points to this inability of the national bourgeoisie to lead or organise the country, and only brings home the fallacy of the idea of multi-phase revolutions. It is only by a combination of national and social revolutions that any real alternative can be offered to the broad masses. Connolly recognised this in Ireland in 1916 when he stated that the English (and Irish) capitalists could just as effectively use a green flag as they had used a red, white and blue one. It was certainly realised by Trotsky when he wrote The Permanent Revolution in 1930 and used the following:

"With regard to countries with a belated bourgeois development, especially the colonial and semi-colonial countries, the theory of the permanent revolution signifies that the complete and genuine solution of their tasks of achieving democracy and national emancipation is conceivable only through the dictatorship of the proletariat as the leader of the subjugated nation, above all of its peasant masses." (5)

There is additional evidence of the bankruptcy of capitalist development for Guatemala in the period 1944-1954, the period of bourgeois national revolution. The failure of this revolution has basic causes which only bear out the above conclusions.

#### (B) 1944-1954 --- PERIOD OF NATIONAL BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION

In 1944, the last of a series of backward-looking dictators was toppled from power and a bourgeois democratic regime under Arevalo was established. This regime consisted of bourgeois elements who could see that their country was making no progress. They were also aware of the frightful poverty which surrounded them. Arevalo, and later Arbenz, then had as their task to set Guatemala on the road to a capitalist society in place of its existing semi-feudal society.

Land reform was the major innovation carried out by Arevalo, and

more particularly Arbenz. Legislation gave the government power to resume unutilised land and redistribute it among the peasantry. Compensation was to be paid at taxation values given by the landowners in 1952; also extensive finance was to be arranged to finance the peasants during the development of their land. As well as land reform, extensive development work was to be done on the infrastructure of the country, development of a third port, electrification and industrialisation.

All this assumed that the democratic regime would suffer from no outside interference. The Arbenz government assumed that because it was capitalist and was not altering the system, the United States would not intervene to protect its economic interests and maintain its hegemony throughout Central America. Arbenz had in fact overstepped what US interests considered the legitimate interests of a client bourgeoisie. In effect by altering the pattern of agriculture in Guatemala, Arbenz ran the risk of instigating widespread reform throughout Central America.

Other changes brought about by Arevalo and Arbenz were legalisation of trade unions and agreement to use of Guatemala as the Latin-American bureau of the Communist movement. The latter gave the US administration the psychological reason for moving against Arbenz. However, the main cause was that he had visions of economic development that went against the narrow interests of United Fruit.

Certain very interesting connections of personality are obvious at this point. The Dulles brothers were Secretary of State and head of the CIA at this time. The President of Honduras (from where the invasion was launched), Dr. Juan Manuel Galvez, was the local legal representative of United Fruit. The Dulles brothers law firm were the major US lawyers for Latin-American operations of United Fruit, and had drawn up the 1936 agreement with Guatemala. US intervention would have occurred without these people. I only mention them to show the power of United Fruit in ruling circles.

Expropriation of 234,000 acres of uncultivated land owned by United Fruit in the Tiquioste area, on the Pacific coast, was commenced in March 1953. United Fruit considered that the compensation offered was inadequate (the government offered bonds to the value of the figure given by the company for taxation purposes.) The US government issued a diplomatic note demanding proper compensation. This situation was made worse later in the year by the expropriation of a further 173,000 acres of uncultivated land at Bananera (near the Atlantic). To back up the diplomatic note, the US government organised an arms embargo and also withdrew its limited technical assistance.

In the succeeding months the United States' took the required steps to isolate Guatemala inside the Organisation of American States --- the pretext being international Communism (10th Congress, March 1954). At this time Guatemala had responded to the earlier arms embargo by importing a shipment of Czech and Polish munitions. The US government replied by sending enough equipment to equip a full division to both Honduras and Nicaragua. The arms sent by the US were not for the legal government, however, but for anti-Arbenz exiles lead by Castillo

Armas. Arbenz claimed that it was only when he learnt of these groups that he ordered guns from Czechoslovakia.

The actual invasion of Guatemala by the Castillo Armas force took place on 18th June 1954. Arbenz responded with hesitancy and did not take strong measures to arm the workers and peasants. Frantic negotiation with the US Embassy did no good for Arbenz, who gave way on June 25th (6)

Obviously, the lesson to be learnt from this period is that even given the exceptional circumstances where the native bourgeoisie awakens to its historic task, the dominant metropolitan power will not tolerate it. Such a role can only be carried out by a victorious social revolution (e.g. Cuba.)

#### (C) 1954-1960 --- PERIOD OF REACTION

The CIA coup was organised as an invasion led by Castillo Armas, who, as an army officer, had his career shortened by Arbenz following an abortive coup in 1950. Castillo Armas was judged by the CIA to have the necessary qualifications --- he was above all subservient to US interests.

Guatemala, in the period 1954-1960, had six years of unchallenged reaction. Rural trade unions were suppressed, land was taken from the peasantry and handed back to the large estates. Development projects were stopped, or handed over to US interests. In 1954, Guatemala had no external debt --- by the early 1960's, one-third of her export earnings was being used to service external debts.

Six years were all that were required to reverse again the economic growth of Guatemala and restore it to the past tradition of stagnation. Once again the native bourgeoisie was happily fulfilling its role as intermediaries between western advanced capitalism and the native masses.

Castro and the victorious Cuban Revolution shattered this period of quiescence in Guatemala. The successive reforms in Cuba only served to illustrate Guatemala's hopeless position (it served the same function in several other Latin-American countries.) On 13th November, 1960, an abortive revolutionary coup was staged by several army officers, including Yon Sosa, Turcios and Cesar Montes. The coup was easily suppressed, but it led directly to the establishment of two guerilla formations.

#### (D) REVOLUTIONARY WARFARE AND CUBAN INFLUENCE

Two guerilla fronts have survived and developed. They are Rebel Armed Forces (FAR) and Revolutionary Movement of 13th November (MR-13). FAR operates at the southern and western ends of a mountain range called Sierra de las Minas, in the provinces of Zacapa, El Progreso and Alta Verapaz. MR-13 operates at the northern end of the Sierra de las Minas in the province of Izabel.

Both revolutionary movements have had a unified command only since 1968, and subsequent to this they developed in a different manner.

FAR had direct links with the clandestine Communist Party (PGT) and also was more favourably disposed to Cuban influence and methods. MR-13 had links with the Posadist Trotskyist International (7). Both organisations broke these external links prior to their unification, but they still retain the characteristics of earlier years. I will deal with these differences later. At this point I will deal with the theoretical context of the guerilla organisation.

Debray, in his book, Revolution in the Revolution, writes:

"If one judges by <sup>the</sup> history of Cuba and certain other Latin-American countries, guerilla warfare seems to pass through the following stages: first, the stage of establishment; second, the stage of development, marked by enemy offensives carried out with all available means (operational and tactical encirclements, air-borne troops, bombardments, etc.); finally the stage of revolutionary offensive, at once political and military." (8)

Activity on the two fronts, "Alejandro de Leon" (FAR) and "Edgar Ibarra" (MR-13), is at the second stage described by Debray, although the movement is still somewhat insecure. Organisation of the fronts follows Cuban experience in that all matters are subordinated to the military requirements. In their original development the guerillas were largely independent of Cuba physically, although heavily dependent upon Cuba for ideology (e.g., to obtain arms, medicine, etc. they simply used extortion and kidnapping of large landlords, using the money so obtained to bribe officials into supplying the required goodies --- little importation from Cuba being required.)

Because the objective conditions required for revolution exist in Guatemala, i.e., (a) the ruling class is incompetent (in the sense that it is incapable of taking the country forward); (b) the population as a whole is in a deprived condition; and (c) a clear alternative, showing the way forward, exists in Cuba's example, the guerillas were successfully able to launch their struggle. However some of the limitations of the Cuban experience have been realised and it is in this sphere that greater emphasis on armed propaganda work has been made in Guatemala.

Differences exist between FAR and MR-13 in respect to armed propaganda, both guerilla groups must have as their immediate aim their own survival, and this means in effect that they cannot guarantee the protection of any openly supporting them. In FAR occupied areas, an initial village meeting is called and the aims of the guerillas are explained. No open structure is set up, all organisational work is done by the guerillas, although secret cells are created to arrange physical help to the guerillas. The MR-13 has a much different idea. After the armed propaganda meeting has been called they endeavour to form a village committee in addition to any cell formed.

The purpose of these "peasant committees" encouraged by MR-13 is

"to dispute the real authority in each village with the military commissioners and the auxiliary mayors, impart justice (outside the framework of bourgeois justice), co-ordinate the efforts to repair the damage the army provokes in its incursions into the zone, and economically sustain the families of comrades incorporated in the guerilla struggle or killed by the army." (9)

These committees have a public existence and are appointed by a general meeting of all the villagers. They do not carry out propaganda work. It is in the development of these village committees that will be determined the type of socialist society Guatemala will have. If the military arm is allowed to develop with no counter-force in the peasant masses, there will be no limitation upon them later (i.e., the entire future of Guatemala will be dependent on the desires of the guerilla leaders.)

#### (E) VILLAGE COMMITTEES --- STATE SOCIALISM --- THE TRANSITIONAL STATE

To understand the role that village committees will play in the development of socialism, it is necessary to look at the immediate perspectives of the Guatemalan revolution. I have already dealt with the inability of the national bourgeoisie to fulfil its historic task. Obviously then it is an immediate and pressing task of the revolutionary forces to free the productive forces that are latent in Guatemala. In this sense of full economic development, Engels wrote that it is not possible to conceive of a freedom which is not based on economic abundance.

Examination of past revolutions (Russia, Yugoslavia, China and Cuba) shows that it is possible to solve the problem of economic development without really touching the question of working class liberation. In Russia, a vast bureaucracy arose which had different interests --- sometimes coinciding with the working class --- and effectively captured state power. Similar degeneration has occurred in the remaining workers' states. To assess the future of the revolution in Guatemala, it is essential to examine the concept of the state that is held by the revolutionary movement, and the means to be employed in attaining the implementation of that state.

Lenin wrote that

"The proletariat needs only a dying state, that is, a state constructed in such a way that it immediately begins to die away and cannot help dying away." (10)

Trotsky wrote,

"The proletarian dictatorship is a bridge between the bourgeois and the socialist society. In its very essence, therefore, it bears a temporary character. An incidental but very essential task of the state which realises the dictatorship consists in preparing for its own dissolution. The degree of realisation of this 'incidental' task is, to some extent, a measure of its

succeeds in the fulfilment of its fundamental mission: the construction of a society without classes and without material contradictions. Bureaucracy and social harmony are inversely proportional to each other." (11)

The unrestricted growth of the guerilla movement is essential for it to conquer State power; the unrestricted concentration of power and governmental ability restricts the scope of the revolution. It is the fostering and development of self-management units in the villages that provides the necessary bridge, during progress of the revolution, to the transitional state.

Years of semi-slavery, grinding poverty and force have served to reduce the Guatemalan peasantry, who have had absolutely no tradition of management or government at any level, to a servile position. It is an essential task to alter this mentality before the seizure of power. Lenin wrote

"Under socialism much of 'primitive' democracy will inevitably be revived, since, for the first time in the history of civilised society, the mass of the population will rise to taking an independent part, not only in voting and elections, but also in the everyday administration of the state. Under socialism all will govern in turn and will soon become accustomed to no one governing." (12)

Traditionally, the self-management ability of the masses has been seen as a task for after the revolution. But it is not the illusion of socialism we are interested in. It is the reality of socialism we are after. There is vast backwardness in culture, technology and politics, that must be overcome. Although many more resources will be available for the task of overcoming this backwardness after the seizure of state power. It must be tackled now to shape the future of the revolution.

"The party should be the direct expression of the masses. The party is not an administration responsible for transmitting governmental orders; it is the energetic spokesman and the incorruptible defender of the masses. In order to arrive at this conception of the party, we must above all rid ourselves of the very Western, very bourgeois and therefore contemptuous attitude that the masses are incapable of governing themselves." (13)

Given this conception, then the role of the vanguard is to train and educate the masses in self-management (and self-rule) not to rule for them; it is to seize state power for the masses, not on their behalf.

Practical experience has shown (e.g., Spain 1936-1937, Algeria and more recently in the Portuguese colonies) that great improvements can be made in agriculture and the rural service industries under actual revolutionary conditions. It is in these industries, which

affect the masses most, that changes in the real life of the country will be reflected. By effecting simple changes, that increase productivity at the base level, the peasant begins to comprehend the difference between slavery and work, and together with campaigns to destroy illiteracy, etc., becomes capable of deciding in a conscious way his priorities for social development.

The value of the village committees set up by MR-13, then, is that they provide the dynamic among the peasants for social revolution. The central shortcoming in Guevarrist ideology, <sup>1961</sup> is that it builds a revolutionary military clique in place of the civilian one (e.g., Soviet Union) but that it involves the masses only superficially during the revolutionary process.

#### (F) INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

An important task for Australian socialists exists in the need to spread knowledge of the anti-imperialist struggle in the third world. A parallel task involves the development of a solidarity movement in this country. In this context Guatemala must be seen as only one of many revolutions in progress. Vietnam is of course the most immediate of the revolutions and it is within the framework of the peace movement (on the Vietnam war) that we can most effectively raise the general issues of imperialism and socialist revolution.

Considerable work needs to be done by revolutionary socialists to inject a consciousness into the mass peace movement, a consciousness that takes account of the revolutionary struggles in Southern Africa, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, the Persian Gulf, Palestine, Guatemala, etc.

Despite its different perspectives and certain weaknesses the guerilla movement in the Third World countries must be given every assistance possible by the revolutionary movement in this country. This aid should be of the same nature as unspecified aid to the NLF, i.e., Give a Guerilla a Gun.

T.L.

- (1) Frantz Fanon, "The Wretched of the Earth", Penguin 1969, p.120
- (2) Increase in cultivated land by 1961 of 2,000,000 acres: Edward Boorstein, "The Economic Transformation of Cuba".
- (3) Fanon, Ibid, p.141
- (4) Ibid, p.141
- (5) Leon Trotsky, "Permanent Revolution", Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1965, p.152
- (6) Details taken from D.Horowitz, "From Yalta to Vietnam", Penguin 1967, pp.160-182
- (7) Posadist International based in Argentina, split from the Fourth International in 1962. Led by Posadas, previous secretary of the

C H I L E (continued from page 12)

The maturity of broad layers of the masses, just as the level reached by important left sectors, permit us to assert that the confidence that broad masses have in the victory of Allende, is the confidence of their own victory, not that of a candidate, but that of socialism in Chile.

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INTERNATIONAL REPORT (continued from page 3)

Arafat himself, representing the right wing of Al Fatah, finds himself caught between protectors who are both constricting yet indispensable and of whom he is a prisoner, and the base of his own organisation which fights in the streets of Amman with the Left and is effectively under its political leadership.

For several days, Amman had its own Commune, the town having completely passed under the control of the revolutionary vanguard of the Palestinian Revolutionary leadership assumed by the PDPFLP and increasingly this time by the PFLP. The progressive evolution of the latter should be carefully noted.

The resulting compromise maintains a very unstable equilibrium on the basis of a "dual power" situation, the "power" of the King emerging from this test very much weakened. It cannot last long.

This situation poses very difficult problems for the Marxist Revolutionary Arab vanguard, on the successful solution of which its future depends. It must avoid both sectarianism and opportunism. It would be sectarian to refuse to employ the United Front tactic towards other Palestinian organisations, the best way of exerting continuous pressure on their leaderships and engaging their rank and file in daily revolutionary activity. It would be opportunist to adjust to the present status quo, to fail through an excess of prudence ideologically and organisationally to act (concluded on page 1)

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GUATEMALA - Footnotes (continued)

"Latin American Bureau". Bitterly opposed to Castro, against guerilla struggle, counterposing worker struggle and armed self-defence.

- (8) Regio Debray, "Revolution in the Revolution", Pelican 1968 p.31
- (9) Galaeno, "Guatemala - Occupied Country", Monthly Review, New York '69
- (10) Lenin, "State and Revolution", Moscow 1969, p.24
- (11) Trotsky, "Revolution Betrayed", Merit Publishers, New York 1965 p'52
- (12) Lenin, "State & Revolution", Moscow 1969, p. 106
- (13) Fanon, Ibid, p.151