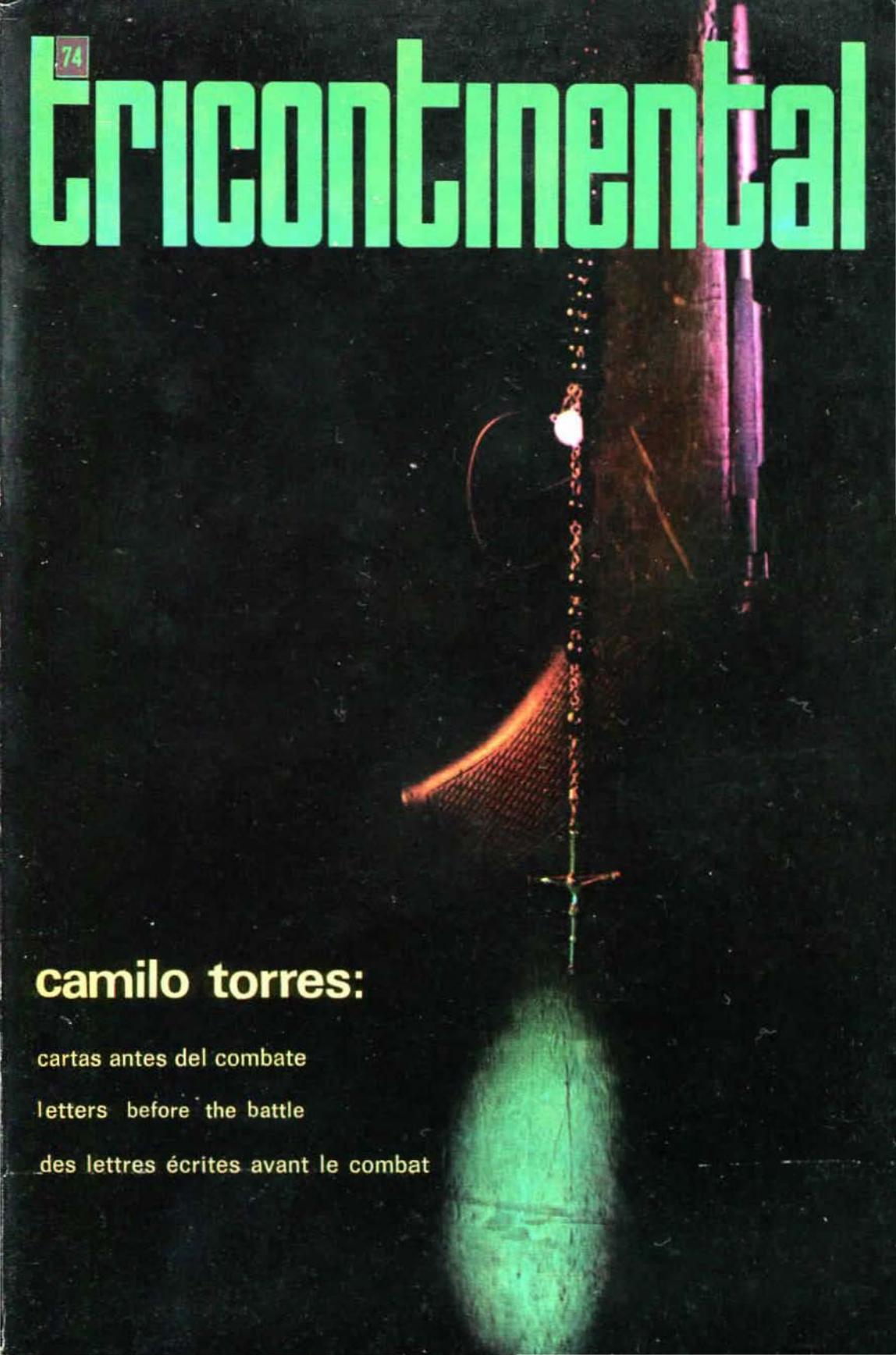


74

TRICONTINENTAL



camilo torres:

cartas antes del combate

letters before the battle

des lettres écrites avant le combat



Talento militar, político y diplomático de Nguyen Trai
The Military, Political and Diplomatic Talent of Nguyen Trai
Talent militaire, politique et diplomatique de Nguyen Trai

TO THE READER

Having just celebrated its 15th anniversary, Tricontinental

enters a new period, projecting changes in structure and content in order to fulfill its mission of providing information on the problems of the underdeveloped countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America.

As we introduce these changes in this and future issues of our magazine, we invite our readers to comment on topics they'd like to see discussed and to express general opinions about Tricontinental

and how it can be improved. We believe that the views of our readers and contributors will help us to reach the goals we've set for the coming year.

In an effort to concentrate all our efforts on improving the magazine, we are discontinuing the publication of the bulletin.

TRICONTINENTAL



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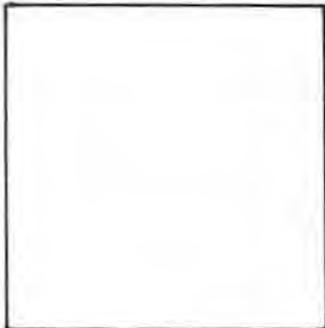
Our opening article in this first issue of the magazine for 1981 is an excerpt from Cuban journalist Alberto Fernández Vera's forthcoming book, "Camilo Torres: Letters before the Battle," which provides an insight into the ideas of that Colombian priest who supported the exploited and oppressed people and, by his example, showed them the way to real freedom.

"Oman: the People's Liberation Front Speaks" describes the colonialists' and imperialists' maneuvers in connivance with the domestic reaction, that have led the Omani people to opt for struggle until the last foreign soldier is expelled from their land. The old theories that doomed Latin America to eternal US domination have been washed down the drain of reality. This is what Cuban journalist Arsenio Rodríguez, a specialist in Latin-American politics, discusses in "From Myths to Realities in Latin America and the Caribbean."

"The Military, Political and Diplomatic Talent of Nguyen Trai" is the title of OSPAAAL's position paper presented at the UNESCO scientific forum on this Vietnamese hero, a legendary fighter of a heroic people, which we publish in this issue.

Colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism — three phenomena historically linked to our peoples' exploitation — are probed in Cuban economist and researcher Fernando Martínez Heredia's study on "Colonialism and Neocolonialism, Historic Forms of Imperialist Domination," the first part of which we present in this issue, and in "The US Military Apparatus in Puerto Rico," by Puerto Rican writers M. Meyn and J. Rodríguez.

MAN AND HIS WORD brings you the second part of Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile Mariam's



*report to the 1st Congress
of the Commission for Organizing the Party
of the Working People of Ethiopia,
entitled "A Chapter in Ethiopian History (II)."
Our concluding section,
NOTES FOR HISTORY, presents
"World Parliament of the Peoples for Peace,"
along with some of the basic documents
approved at that world conference.*

Editorial Department

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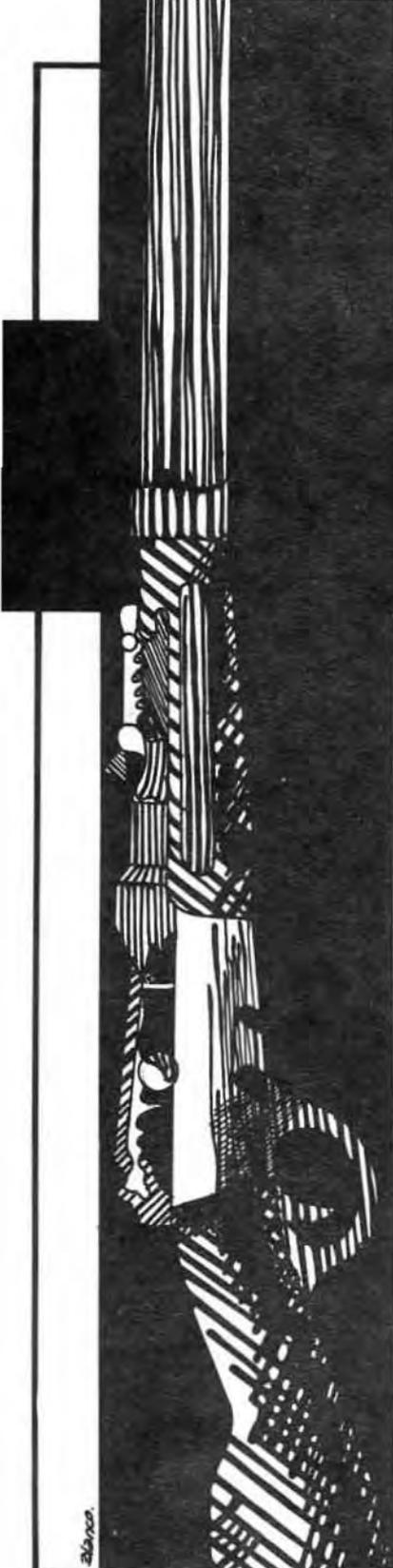
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CAMILO TORRES

LETTERS
BEFORE THE
BATTLE

ALBERTO FERNANDEZ VERA

*Greater love hath no man than this, that
a man lay down his life for his friends*

John 15:13

AT 7 p.m. on October 18, 1965, Camilo Torres left the office of the **Frente Unido** (United Front) newspaper for the last time.

He and two of his friends grabbed a taxi and were driven to a parked car in which two fighters from the National Liberation Army (ELN) were waiting. Camilo embraced his two friends and bade them farewell, saying, "We can always expect to be screwed."¹ All through the early morning hours, under the cold mountain rain, Camilo drove away from Santander, taking the road indicated by the guerrilla commando. All too soon — 120 days later, just before 10 a.m. on February 15, 1966 — he was shot down by the reaction, when two bullets fired by an unknown soldier of the 5th Army Brigade of the Colombian oligarchy penetrated his chest. The most reactionary sectors of the Colombian bourgeoisie had been determined to kill Camilo and bury him in some forsaken spot. Alive, he had been a mortal threat to their class.

Why did this man die? What ideas prompted him to give up his young life, his brilliant intellect, his great love?

Camilo Torres Restrepo was a priest, a sociologist, an astute politician who was aware of his responsibility and devoted himself to his work with genuine revolutionary love. All his energy and ingenuity were expended to change his people's sad past and present to a future of peace, justice and security.

The Republic of Colombia has had a system of representative democracy since December 17, 1819, but the fact is that the people have never had a voice in their own future. A few big names from a handful of families have always control the material and human wealth of this rich country.

Camilo Torres overcame his class background of petit bourgeois intellectualism, for, as he said, "Giving up all those bourgeois impediments will make us much happier, freer and more honest with ourselves."²

He was a devoted Christian and became a priest because he thought that was the best way he could serve others. Many people have tried, without success, to present him as a dreamer or adventurer involved in a series of unconnected episodes, but the essence of his life indicates that he followed a straight course, never detouring or faltering.

Camilo entered the Bogotá Council Seminary in 1947 and, for the next seven years, made a rigorous study of philosophy and theology. On August 29, 1954, he was ordained — "forever," as he said. The next day, he gave his first Mass in

¹ Germán Guzmán Campos, *El padre Camilo* (Father Camilo), Mexico, 1968, p. 254.

² Camilo Torres, *Cristianismo y revolución* (Christianity and Revolution), compiled by Maldonado, et al., Mexico, 1979, p. 455.

the Chapel of the Cervantes Lyceum, in Bogotá. His last Mass was given on June 26, 1956, in the San Diego Temple.

Because of his academic achievements, Cardinal Luque, who was then head of the Colombian Catholic Church, chose him to go on to higher studies in sociology at Catholic University in Louvain, Belgium, which he entered in September 1954.

As soon as he reached that university city, he began talking to other Latin-American students about forming a study group that would concentrate on contemporary Colombian studies; in June 1956, the Colombian Team of Socioeconomic Research (ECISE) was created.

In July of that year he returned to Colombia to collect data for his thesis. He also organized an ECISE section in Bogotá and, when he returned to Louvain in September, he organized similar sections among young Colombian students in Berlin, Paris, Washington and Caracas.

After presenting his thesis on "The Standard of Living in Bogotá," he returned to Colombia in January 1959. In March he was appointed professor of sociology and assistant chaplain at National University.

He immediately set out to acquaint students and teachers with the national situation by organizing the University Movement for Community Improvement (MUNIPROC) to determine community resources and needs and promote programs of collective action that would help to develop membership.

This period had a decisive influence on the evolution of Camilo's political thinking and public life. He delved into an analysis of social phenomena and became a positive revolutionary example for the students — who, a few years later, became the backbone of the great mass movement that led to the establishment of the United Front of the Colombian People in 1965.

More and more, Camilo's teaching became a thorn in the side of the oligarchy. On June 19, 1962, Cardinal Luis Concha Córdoba ordered him fired from his post for supporting the students against the University administration. Camilo stated at the time that.

An interest in politics and political solutions to national problems is perfectly understandable among the student body, just as it is among other national groups; therefore, we praise the students interest in conscientiously and constructively solving national problems.³

Four days after Camilo was fired from National University, the Bogotá newspaper **El Tiempo** (The Times) published an interview with him in which he was asked why he was considered a revolutionary in the university atmosphere. "If I am a true follower of Christ," he replied, "it is impossible for me not to be a revolutionary, just as He was. . . . To be a revolutionary is to try to reform human and social structures. . . ."

³ *Acta No. 9* (Document No. 9), June 11, 1962, Archives of the Sociology Department, quoted in *Cristianismo y revolución, op. cit.*, pp. 197-198.



Naturally, this attitude could lead only to an open confrontation between Camilo, on the one hand, and the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the privileged, ruling class of Colombia, on the other.

Camilo spent the next two years studying, synthesizing, reorganizing and denouncing the tragic sociopolitical and historical conditions in his country and the rest of the Americas. He also worked as a priest in the Veracruz parish of central Bogotá. Gradually, he became a symbol of opposition to the established social order.

Camilo understood that it wasn't enough to recognize and denounce the system's injustice. It was also necessary to act; to organize and activate the people around a specific political program; to bury the people's political frustration; and

to guide them along clear lines to the seizure of power, mobilizing them and raising their consciousness until it would explode in a great revolutionary torrent releasing their repressed energies. His efforts were guided by the words supposedly spoken to Moses:

And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people ... and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I now their sorrows.... And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians.

Exodus 3:7,8

Colombia's republican history is characterized by frustration. Al

though the people have fought constantly, they have always been divided and betrayed.

The Liberal and Conservative Parties first appeared in 1849 and have held the oligarchy together and divided the peoples ever since.

In 1930, the capitalist economic crisis hit Colombia, ending the Conservatives' political control and bringing the Liberals to power.

The old Conservative order that had held uninterrupted sway for 45 years was attacked by the new capitalist trends that developed after World War II. Coffee production increased when its price went up, becoming the main export item and linking the country ever more closely to imperialist interests and the world capitalist economy.

Factories and shops mushroomed as income and investment increased, leading to anarchistic migration from countryside to city and the emergence of a weak proletariat.

The working class began to play an influential role in the country's political and social life, making its demands felt in struggles waged on the banana plantations and in the mines, oil fields, industries and ports.

Colombia's 1925-29 economic upsurge — a 5.7-percent growth rate for the Gross National Product and \$200 million⁴ in foreign investments, basically from the United States — came to an end with the 1929 crash.

Having laid the socioeconomic bases for power in that five-year period (1925-29), the industrial

bourgeoisie, which had been developing for 30 years, seemed on the point of realizing its dream of organizing the country along lines of the US neocolonial model. Politically, this Liberal bourgeoisie was in a much better economic position than the Conservative feudal landowners to take advantage of what happened to the domestic market and the standard of living when the price of coffee plummeted in 1930.

The Liberal leaders took up the people's demands and turned the great rural and urban social upheaval to their own advantage by having their party politicians make public promises of future reforms and benefits that would wipe out poverty.

In 1930, Liberal candidate Enrique Olaya Herrera was elected President of the republic with the backing of a vast mass movement, but his government failed to meet the people's needs or the national bourgeoisie's reformist aspirations.

He was succeeded by Alfonso López Pumarejo, the bourgeois reformer's greatest hope and leader of the progressive wing of the Liberal Party, whose slogan, "the advancing revolution," was based on a program of reforms that swept him into the Presidency on a wave of popular jubilation in 1934.

An intelligent populist and a magnificent orator, he knew how to lead the crowds and make himself the idol of Colombia's middle-class liberals.

⁴ Antonio Zapata, *Diez años de insurrección en América Latina* (Ten Years of Insurrection in Latin America), Santiago, Chile, 1971, pp. 171 ff.

The national bourgeoisie, represented by the state administration, unsuccessfully sought to shore up the bases of its power and consolidate a modern bourgeois state through simple bourgeois democratic reforms. Its class conditions, its dependency on US imperialism and the historic limitations of its development were all against this effort, however.

What was needed was a real break with the mechanisms that subordinated — and still subordinate — Colombia's socioeconomic structure to the imperialist system: a genuine agrarian reform that would give the land to the peasants and revitalize agricultural production, the dynamization of industry by opening new branches in the domestic and foreign markets and a more even income redistribution — all in a political atmosphere of real democratic freedom.

Of course, López' reforms never reached the point of threatening imperialist and latifundist interests, but they did lead to widespread mass agitation, though this was divided and lacked class goals.

Many justifications have been given for the failure of "the advancing revolution," but the fact is that the Colombian national bourgeoisie was not prepared to run the risk of a people's revolution. It could not be revolutionary or truly nationalist, even if it wanted to.

When Alfonso López finished his term in 1938, the Liberal Party was divided into two factions. The more "radical" one was composed of the intellectuals and petite bourgeoisie, and the other, of tradesmen, landowners and the rising industrialists.

The latter faction had the most economic clout and placed Eduardo

Santos in power, with the political support of the Conservatives headed by the famed and ill-fated Laureano Gómez.

The moderate Liberal Santos promoted bipartisanship and aligned himself with the most reactionary economic groups in the country.

Meanwhile, Alfonso López continued to be a symbol of hope for the Colombian people, in spite of his reformist failure. As a clever politician, he used the people's discontent and launched a great crusade that won him the Presidency again in 1942 — but without the "revolutionary" spirit of his first Presidential period.

The Conservative Party split up into five tendencies and broke away from the masses completely and definitively. Faced with economic difficulties, demands from the people and pressure from the Conservative opposition headed by Laureano Gómez, the President resigned in June 1945, and Alberto Lleras Camargo, representative of the moderate faction of Liberalism, filled out the rest of his term.

Lleras formed a Cabinet made up of both Conservative and Liberal ministers, along the traditional dividing lines of class bipartisanship.

After three Liberal governments, the national bourgeoisie couldn't keep up its party unity and its dishonest, two-faced political game with the people any longer, playing at social revolution by making ineffectual reforms while, at the same time, preserving the old oligarchic order and promoting the concentration of national wealth in

the hands of the big landowners and the dependent, bureaucratic bourgeoisie.

The national bourgeoisie's betrayal and weakness made it possible for the minority Conservative Party to win in 1946.

In the name of national unity, the Conservatives placed Mariano Ospina Pérez in the Presidency, and he launched a counterrevolutionary program based on political terrorism combined with broad socio-economic guarantees for the landowners.

The Conservative triumph was precarious, however, since the Liberal opposition forces controlled Congress and Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, leader of the most advanced sector of Liberalism, capitalized on the national political situation to control the internal working of his party and draw the masses closer together in the embryonic stages of a people's movement that was to reach unprecedented dimensions.

In 1928, Gaitán had distinguished himself in the House of Representatives as a fervent defender of the workers and their demands, against the United Fruit Company. In 1933, he founded a socialist-oriented political organization called the Leftist Revolutionary Union (UNIR), which caused deep divisions within the Liberal Party. In 1942, he opposed Alfonso López' reelection, and, in 1945, the masses in the Liberal Party proclaimed him their candidate for the Presidency — but "He was rejected by the Liberal leadership: the entire machinery

was turned against him; and he got fewer votes than Gabriel Turbay, the representative of the oligarchy."⁵

In March 1943, Gaitán won a large majority in the departmental assemblies; in October of that year, he was undisputed victor in 800 Municipal Council elections, fully supported by the people of both parties.⁶

Threatened by the revolutionary characteristics of Gaitán's movement, Ospina Pérez' counterrevolutionary government engaged in systematic terrorist action to destroy the opposition cadres and demobilize the masses in an effort to consolidate its power. Between August 7, 1946, when the government changed hands, and April 9, 1948, when Gaitán was killed, more than 15 000 people were assassinated — and that was just the beginning of the bloodbath that began with the murder of the leader.

Gaitán's charismatic personality drew the crowds, but his great error, according to Professor Diego Montaña Cuéllar, was that he failed to permit the organic structuring of the huge people's movement that could have led to the rise of a real mass revolutionary party.

On April 8, the *Diario del Pacífico* (Pacific Daily) in Cali referred to Gaitán as a "leader on the verge

⁵ *Cristianismo y revolución, op. cit.*, p. 483.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 470-471.

of death." Indeed, he had only a few hours left as his people's leader: the next morning, he was assassinated on one of Bogota's main streets as the 9th Pan-American Conference, chaired by the infamous George Marshall, met in that city and gave birth to the Organization of American States.

Enraged at the news of their leader's death, the people rose up in all their might against the state power and institutions controlled by the Conservative bourgeoisie. It could have been the beginning of a genuine, radical social revolution, but there was no political force to guide that people's earthquake or lead those anarchistic forces; it therefore degenerated, as Camilo Torres, said, "...into one of the Colombian people's great frustrations."⁷

What happened then was terrible. Bogotá burned for three days with the people's accumulated hatred. It was an act of vengeance. Only betrayal by the Liberal leadership, combined with Army troops, managed to put down the people's uprising.

The oligarchy was energetic, however, and it knew how to defend its class interests. In that situation, the heads of the Liberal Party not only supported the government's decision to crush the people's movement but once again betrayed the principles they had pledged to defend. The only immediate political consequences of this tremendous social ferment, known as the **bogotazo** (Bogotá lashing) were the formation of a new coalition Cabinet composed of Liberals and Conservatives and the launching of a rabid anticommunist campaign.

US Secretary of State George Marshall insisted that the Conference continue during the **bogotazo** and joined President Ospina Pérez in accusing international communism of fostering the April 9 uprising, describing it as the first major communist move in the Western hemisphere since the end of World War II and, therefore, a matter of concern not only to Colombia and Latin America but to the entire world.⁸

Gaitán's murder gave the Colombian counterrevolution a pretext for banning social struggles, demobilizing and breaking up the movement, strengthening the state oligarchy and unleashing a violent anticommunist campaign that served its aims and interests well.

The Communist Party was violently persecuted and had to go underground to continue its struggle. Founded in 1930, the CPC had succeeded in raising the workers' and peasants' social consciousness to a decisive degree through its direct participation in their struggles.

After the **bogotazo**, Colombia degenerated into violence and anarchy. Official repression reached new levels of infamy to ensure the governing party's 1949 electoral victory so it could guide the national economy in a way that suited its interests.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 426.

⁸ Richard Goot, *Las guerrillas en América Latina* (The Guerrillas in Latin America), Santiago, Chile, 1971, p. 217.

The traditional parties encouraged an artificially created party fanaticism among the masses, opening the floodgates to civil war and fratricide.

On November 27, 1949, unopposed candidate Laureano Gómez, won the Presidential election, and the national Liberal Party leadership tacitly called for war. The people's tension erupted in armed struggle, in which the peasants served as cannon fodder while urban leaders who never fought managed them by remote control. "To fight... that is the function of the peasant, the peasant glebe, flesh for demagogy, victim, for whose obscure death the homeland bleeds."⁹

The blow first dealt by the official government forces, plus the Liberal oligarchy's call to war, immediately snowballed into a life-or-death struggle, with the people divided into two political groups that hated each other as a result of the methods used by the Colombian pluriclass parties.

The oligarchy played astutely on party affiliation, which had deep roots in the peasantry, to start the civil war.

What this period (1948-58), which the people called the time of violence, left in its wake was horrendous. Estimates on the number of deaths range upward from 200 000, but the real figure of crimes committed is locked in the collective memory of a divided people, with no emotional or social option but to fight.

The men and women in the Colombian countryside are Liberal or Conservative not because of their

economic status or ideological beliefs but simply because of the artificial division handed down from generation to generation.

It is a traumatizing experience to read the testimonies and reports that Father Germán Guzmán Campos has collected in his book *La violencia en Colombia* (Violence in Colombia): thousands of individuals were shot, tortured, burned to death. Women were raped and massacred. Thousands of families were forced to emigrate to the cities, where they lived in abject poverty. Not even children escaped the collective madness into which the "responsible classes" led the people.

This irrational situation, however, quickly erupted in a class struggle with an economic base. Thousands of small and middle-sized farmers were either murdered or thrown off their land. The oligarchy then organized these landless, impoverished peasants into armed bands along party lines.

The peasant didn't really know why he was persecuted and assassinated, why his wife was raped and his children killed. All he knew was that he had to match violence with violence.

Nevertheless, two guerrilla groups — led by men who had nothing to do with the traditional parties — began to move away from the political sectarianism that lay at the bottom of the violence and to concentrate their struggle in the people's interests.

⁹ Germán Guzmán Campos, *La violencia en Colombia* (Violence in Colombia); Bogotá, 1968, p. 134.

*I am a soldier; I fight in the
fields
of my homeland, that I must
free —
where event the poorest
Colombian
will have land, rights and
peace*¹⁰

sang the guerrillas of Tolima Department in 1953.

"The social revolution follows the guerrillas,"¹¹ Alfonso López admitted, and it was true that a process of politization was occurring within the guerrilla organizations. To avoid the danger posed by this phenomenon, the most diversionistic individuals in the leaderships of both parties were selected to carry out the only action that could tip the scales in favor or their interests: on June 13, 1942, General Gustavo Rojas Pinillas seized power in a military coup d'état.

With Rojas Pinilla came first peace and then war.

Right from the start, the new government waged a strong campaign for peace, based on the slogan "No more bloodshed; peace, justice and freedom for all." Filled with hope, thousands of exhausted guerrillas gave up their arms and promised to forget the bloody war in which they had fought. Unfortunately, they were prevented from doing so by poverty, hunger, abuses by the latifundists and the violence of the soldiers — which was all the guerrillas got for abandoning their commandos. The peasant's only option then was to return to guerrilla warfare.

In this second stage of the violence (1953-57), the Army and the people were engaged in a life-or-death struggle. For the first time, the peasants had to face tanks and planes. There were 48 000 political assassinations during General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla's term; 800 000 peasants had to emigrate to the cities, and another 150 000 crossed the border into Venezuela.¹²

The Colombian oligarchy, which had promoted Rojas Pinilla's dictatorship, had always considered it to be a transitional government whose function was to create the social conditions needed for once again reorganizing the country's political life within the "normal democratic mechanisms" of bourgeois bipartisanship, in an atmosphere of détente and mutual understanding between the two powerful traditional political groups. Rojas Pinilla, however, was unable to respond to those bourgeois interests.

The dictator reorganized the nation's economy and politics in line with his own view of things and showed a special interest in remaining in power beyond the period set for his government. Once again,

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 219.

¹¹ Francisco Posada, *Colombia: violencia y subdesarrollo* (Colombia: Violence and Underdevelopment), Bogotá, 1969, p. 154.

¹² Jaime Sierra García, *Colombia: realidad y destino* (Colombia: Reality and Destiny), Medellín, 1968, p. 134.



the voice of the parties rang out through cities and towns calling for unity, peace and harmony.

Between 1946 and 1956, the upper bourgeoisie took over economic and political power from the small producers and the reformist national bourgeoisie. In spite of the violence, the upper bourgeoisie continued its industrial growth and monopolistic concentration and centralization, multiplying the capital of its private companies.

The country's financial and industrial circles, which held much greater economic power than the ruling military clique, rose up in fury when Rojas Pinilla's dictatorship announced, at the beginning of 1957, that it intended to continue running the government in the Presidential period that was to begin in August of that year.

Seriously threatened by the dictator and by the loss of the "guerrilla" leadership, the oligarchy quickly united and identified itself as a class in order to guarantee its own existence and the booty ensured by bureaucratic and political power.

On March 17, 1957, Alberto Lleras Camargo and Laureano Gómez signed the Platform of the National Front. The main points were:

1. The two parties would participate equally in the government during the 16 years that the National Front would exist.
2. The President of the Republic would be selected from the Conservatives and the Liberals in alternating four year periods.
3. The legislative bodies would be elected from lists giving equal participation to both parties.
4. No legal recognition would be given to any other parties.

Thus, the ideological and methodological content of a reactionary dictatorship was given form in a bipartisan "peace" agreement. As a result of the Liberal-Conservative honeymoon, the famous "days of May" occurred with the corporate sector decreeing a general shut-down that ended on May 10 with the overthrow of the ruling military clique.

Violence was the direct result of the failure of the attempts at bourgeois democratic revolution, but the National Front, according to Camilo Torres, was "the national-

zation of a conflict, of the violence and administrative inefficiency of a military government, which led leaders of the traditional parties to put their feelings aside and agree on the bone of contention — namely, the budget and the bureaucracy."¹³

On December 1, a national plebiscite was held in which the deceived Colombian people approved reforms that eliminated all ideological differences between the traditional parties and, for the first time, constitutionalized what had heretofore been a de facto arrangement whenever bourgeois interests were threatened: the creation of a single party of the privileged, oligarchic class, monolithically united against any opposition by the people.

The leaders of the National Front played their most valuable, useful and hypocritical card during their populist campaign: opposition to violence. The same men, the same families and the same political figures that had incited, fed and financed the madness of the violence now became its most fervent opponents.

The tactic of uniting the Liberal and Conservative leaderships not only reorganized the division of economic power through the mechanism of transitional political control but also guaranteed a continuity of sectarianism — which kept the people from effecting the transformations that were needed in Colombia's socioeconomic structures. The priest in the parish of Veracruz understood all this thoroughly.

His letters bear witness to this: letters from a hero going into battle, ready to die; love letters, in which we glimpse the Camilo that

all America has come to know.

The letters are addressed to Isabel Restrepo, the person who, without a doubt, loved Camilo the most. Isabel brought him into the world, educated him, trained him. She was his friend and comrade.

Written in his small, firm handwriting, from the Bogotá Council Seminary Catholic University in Louvain and various cities in Europe, these letters testify to his vision of the world, the brilliance of his political thinking and his love.

As soon as he returned to Colombia, Camilo started trying to find solutions for his country's social problems; he described his work in this regard before mid-1965:

My concern for some time has been to unify the opposition groups and try to organize that great mass of Colombians, most of whom are included in the 70 percent who didn't vote in the last election. I haven't yet found the means for uniting them. First I tried to bring together the heads of the political groups, but they seem to be more interested in their own groups than in people's unity. Then I tried to work with a group of intellectuals and scientists, coordinating the compilation of a book on structural reforms.

That, too, was a failure. Then, after having struggled for six years teaching various subjects at all levels, to anyone from university students to poor peasants, I decided to begin at the other end.¹⁴

The other end was to lead the people, using all his strength and rights to oppose the ruling, exploiting minority.

Camilo realized that a real change would have to be effected in the power structure before there could be any objective answer to the pressing needs of the people; that such a change would require the people's active participation; and that action on their part, which could change the bourgeois order of ownership, production, the services, culture, international relations and the country's political and administrative organization, was impossible within the existing framework.

How, then, could the revolution be made? How could this tremendous people's energy be channeled into a constructive movement? With clear political vision, Camilo understood — perhaps before many other Latin-American revolutionaries — the method that had to be followed. He recognized that the cause of a determined, armed vanguard wasn't enough without the masses behind it; that the guerrilla unit had to be the armed branch of the organized people — not their isolated defender. Thus, this identification had to be achieved in order to unify the people and show them the need for struggle and the probability of victory.

The Platform of the United Front of the Colombian People was the mechanism that Camilo created for starting up the machinery of the people's revolution.

In Medellín, on May 22, 1965, while he was still serving as a priest, Camilo Torres publicly

announced the content of his political platform, which proposed viable objective solutions for existing national problems. The Platform of the United Front was the outcome of a careful, scientific analysis.¹⁵

Then he showed the masses that this program for change could only be attained if there were genuine changes in the power structure. Of course, those who held political and economic control would abandon it only if they were forced to do so. Thus, it became clear that the alternative to the status quo was revolution, that the wrathful gale of people's struggle would be required to topple the structures of exploitation.

Within a few months, Camilo succeeded in capitalizing on the national situation. In the field of political action, the oligarchy's National Front was impotent. Camilo roused more than 300 000 Colombians to the cause in the first two months of people's agitation and mobilization.

The stated final aim of the Platform was to structure a pluralistic political movement that could seize power — one that, from the grass roots to the top leadership, was so constituted as to guarantee the organized action of the masses. Colombia hadn't seen anything like the identification between a leader and his people since Gaitán. While

¹³ *Tercer Mundo*, Bogotá, Colombia, May 13, 1965.

¹⁴ Camilo Torres, Interview in *La Nación*, Santiago, Chile, September 14, 1965.

¹⁵ See Appendix 1.

Gaitán had been a great orator, Camilo surpassed this populist approach with a method of communication that was clear and real, aimed at raising mass consciousness. He used his tremendous popularity to organize and unite the revolutionary movement rather than push any personal interests, "so that, if I should disappear, the revolution won't. . . ."16

His plan was to develop a people's movement linked to the guerrilla groups that were — and still are — fighting in the mountains against the punitive Army forces.

However, his absurd, unpredictable, yet very real death kept him from carrying out his plans. His political tactic had not yet had time to mature completely.

Perhaps Camilo had not planned to join the guerrilla struggle so soon, but shortly before he left for the mountains he said, "Right now, I believe that every moment I waste in the legal struggle is time lost from the revolution."17

On January 7, 1966, the Colombian press published a picture of Camilo in guerrilla uniform, with a gun. It was accompanied by a proclamation to the people, in which he explained the reasons for his action clearly and convincingly. A few days later, he was killed in a clash of minor military importance.

No one can ignore or doubt the fact that the liberation force and its objective political expression in our time meets the aspirations and needs of our peoples.

Underdeveloped capitalism in the Third World countries cannot provide a real and viable solution for the anguish of the masses. The cold statistics list hundreds of millions of men and women in the underde-

veloped world who live and die in abject poverty.

Capitalism is a system based on egotism, the antithesis of love; on the principle of self-benefit, in which man is valued only because of what he has, not because of what he is. It offers no solutions for the majorities that are subjugated to the decisions of the minorities that wield economic power.

Camilo recognized and absorbed this truth and looked for the solution — that of changing the power structures and freeing the country from US imperialist neocolonialism, using the only means that had any real possibility of winning: people's armed revolution.

Fifteen years have passed since Camilo's death for his ideas and his people. The struggle has not ended; many others have also died. Colombia's socioeconomic power structure continues to be based on the concentration of economic power, privilege, conformity and dependency on foreign capital and interests.

The political situation is apparently chaotic. The state has a representative democratic system, but, at the same time, it is basically led by the military, who seek to control the present critical situation, in which a deep economic abyss separates the ruling class from the

¹⁶ *Cristianismo y revolución, op. cit.*, p. 508.

¹⁷ Camilo Torres, letter to ELN leader Fabio Vázquez Castaño, June 6, 1965.



exploited majority, foreigners control the economy and national resources and a rural- and urban-based oligarchy is in constant confrontation with many guerrilla groups and fronts that are waging a revolutionary struggle — in spite of the repression and the state of siege to which the country has been subjected for more than 20 years.

The Colombian bourgeoisie lives in terror of a radicalization of the people's forces.

Camilo's goal was for the masses to become aware of themselves and to seek their only real freedom.

Colombia is an example of the dependency and exploitation that exist in the Third World countries as a whole. As long as this situation continues, neither peace nor development is possible.

As a direct consequence of the existing socioeconomic structure, Colombian political life is characterized by state militarization, collective insecurity, violence and guerrilla actions.

The flexible political tactics of the Program of the United Front of the Colombian People are still valid. Its interpretation of reality is still a symbol of hope and freedom.

The masses are much more politicized now, and the leftist forces, aware of their responsibilities, are seeking the necessary unity in viable ways that go beyond local and sectarian limitations. The constantly growing people's movement against unemployment and inflation and for civil and democratic rights is a specific expression of their concern, and the political organizations are using the most varied forms of struggle against the regime that is steadily handing over the country's wealth to foreign capital.

The Colombian people are engaged in a struggle for a more just society. Camilo Torres' dream that the masses would become aware of themselves and seek freedom is now a reality and a guarantee that the Colombian people will one day attain liberty, democracy and progress.

"Bojetic", June 20/53

17

Mr. Pothoy, querida

Me imagino que cuando es la última estere-
Estando así y ya algunas veces se puede
que la relación con los niños, en otros y otros
casos. Me imagino en posibilidad de estar
estados allí juntos y como te dice, cuanto in-
voluntariamente. También. Me imagino
te con una aboga para ahora para siempre a
justa. El caso en estado natural desde el com-
tes. En algunos que me se a y otros con un-
ta un poco de p por un que fui el que me
que se en algunos otros con un poco de
de la mano de p que me se y en particular
de tanto que pronto se me va a justificar.
El caso de que fui allí tener ya un poco de con-
poco de todo de que poco a poco, por el caso de
de voy a mostrarlo totalmente.

Tu te acordaras en verdad que existía entre
copias y conversaciones y que el agente estaba
con los niños. También concuerda que del lado de
que estabas de agente estabas al poder. Es todo

My Beloved Darling,

I imagine that, by the time this reaches you, Fernando will be there and you will already have received the package I sent with the film, some books and two letters. I know how happy you two will be together, and, as I told you, I'm very envious (the good kind of envy). I'll tell you more about the farm later, because I hope to talk to Laurita. Reports have been going out since Tuesday. I don't think there'll be any money wasted on patching things up, but the overall cost will be \$700, which was the price Dr. Mosquera arranged. I'm very curious to know what plans you have; it seems just fantastic that you may be here soon. You must already have full information about everything that's happened here, but, just in case you don't, I'm going to give you a detailed account.

You will recall that there was a division between the followers of Ospina and Laureano and that the Army was with Ospina. We also commented that whichever side had the Army would have power. There was always one chief, and, since the government knew that, it got rid of the Lieutenant Generals when they began to stand out (Ocampo, Sánchez Amaya, etc.). Lieutenant General Rojas Pinilla apparently annoyed the government and Laureano because of his Ospinist tendencies. Following the tradition started by its predecessors, the government "granted" him the favor of a tourist trip to Germany when he became too popular in the Army. Two Ministers went to the airport and very courteously bade him farewell, but, when it was time to board the plane, he decided not to — probably because of warnings he had received — and returned. This made the government very wary, and, against all normal procedures, it named Régulo Gaitán, a firm Laureano follower, Lieutenant General (though there can only be one) and began transferring the pro-Ospina officers to the sticks. Because of Rojas Pinilla's popularity, tension mounted to the point where Laureano decided to urge Urdameta to sign his dismissal from office. Urdameta thought that was a dangerous move and refused, so Laureano took command and held it for about seven hours. Then he went to get Pabón Núñez, as Minister of War, to sign the dismissal decree; when he refused, Laureano fired him, jailed him and replaced him with Leiva. Then he tried to get Albornoz, another Minister, to sign the decree — and he, too, refused. Meanwhile, Rojas Pinilla's friends flew to Girardot and brought him back from his estate in Melgar around 4 p.m. While this was going on, Leiva went to the Caldas battalion for recognition, accompanied by three officers: Régulo Gaitán, Ospina Rodríguez and Willy Hollmann. There, as you know, the four of them were arrested. Rojas Pinilla arrived and offered Urdameta power, but he declined. Then Rojas Pinilla telephoned Laureano at the Palace and told him he was taking over the Presidency of the Republic. Laureano said that was fine and fled. Rojas took over with the backing of Urdaneta, Ospina Pérez, the Con-

servative leadership and the Army. At midnight he went on national radio and said he had made his decision in order to save the country and guarantee a fair and peaceful election. He repeated this to the legislature.

Laureano remained "under guard" in his house until he left the country. Those arrested at the Caldas battalion were released, and the officers were demoted. Naturally, I called Willy to see how he was. I've been told that they've been at him again, but I haven't been able to check it out, and I don't like to call him because, if it isn't true, I will have stuck my foot in it.

In general, the change caused great rejoicing all over the country and in all political circles.

The legislature met and declared (in a very arbitrary manner, in my opinion) that the Presidency of the Republic had been vacant on the 13th and that the current President was Lieutenant General Rojas Pini-lla, by virtue of the powers of the Senate of the Republic, as provided by the Constitution.

The Church's attitude has been perfect. Except for one case (there's always one) of a priest who spoke from the Palace in support of the new government, everything has gone well.

You can understand how critical the situation is for the Cardinal, who has to weigh the morality of the matter. You know that a government can be overthrown if certain conditions are met: if it is considered to be a despotic government and all peaceful means for dislodging it have been exhausted; if public opinion, truly represented by a select group, testifies to the need for its overthrow; and if the evils that follow are not greater than those that came before. The exact fulfillment of these conditions can't really be adequately judged until all the data have been recorded and a weighty opinion has been handed down some time after the turmoil of the moment has passed. Thus, the Church never judges political events except historically. But there is another principle in all this: that a de facto government rather than a legal government should be recognized if the evils arising from nonrecognition are worse than those from recognition.

Specifically, the evil that has to be faced now is the scandalous violation of the Constitution and the laws. At least, before, the appearances of legality were observed (with very poor results). Now it is clear that whoever has the backing of the Armed Forces can seize power. Thus, if Rojas Pinilla fails to reestablish legality, the day he becomes unpopular (as always happens with rulers), another officer can overthrow him without right or justice, if he has the Army behind him. We're in the same state as all the other South American countries that have more revolutions than a plane has propellers. At the same time, the coup took place without a single shot being fired; with great equanimity regarding the conquered; and with the promise of guarantees that the Constitution, laws, peace and impartiality will prevail. To oppose this government would mean to lose what little remains of our homeland.

Considering all this, the Cardinal called together ten well-known jurists, five Conservatives and five Liberals, and this group decided that, in view of all the circumstances (in addition to the implicit unanimous approval of the people), while the present government had violated constitutional law, as a *de facto* government, after the fact, it should be considered legitimate. This decision was published yesterday by Dr. Acosta in the editorial in *Catolicismo*, the Archbishopric's official publication.

For the rest, aside from random opposition outbursts, such as the case of the detectives — in which 40 detectives went to jail for having rebelled against the new chief — all is quiet. I forgot to add that *Catolicismo* says the legitimacy of the present government depends, to a great extent, on its future attitude (if the change is for the worse, it won't be legitimate). Now comes the comedy:

In a single day, Pabón Núñez served as Minister of War; was sent off to jail; was released to make room for Leiva, his successor (in jail and in the Ministry); and became a Minister in the new Cabinet.

When Laureano reached home after fleeing from the Palace, someone asked him why he was in such a state, and he said, "The fact is, they had me pressed flat, and I had to escape like steam from an iron." There are lots of other good stories, but, if I were to include them all, I wouldn't be able to pay the postage on this letter.

I talked with Laurita, and she told me the bank had given her a note saying the farm couldn't be leased unless a number of changes were made to meet health standards. I made out a budget which was around \$700 and told her to go ahead because we had no alternative but would have to figure some way to get the money. You'll see whether or not we make it, as planned, with what is still due from Rosita. I'm telling you this because Laurita says you're raising money. I ask you, as a favor, to send the rates of that great hotel in Miami, the Hispano-American Residency, with discounts for groups of 15 and maybe a few more things I don't know about. It would be a good idea to talk to the taxi drivers and the tourist agencies and offer them a percentage. Think about your trip very carefully, and don't spend too much for a project that isn't off the ground yet.

Well, my darling, you can't complain about this letter.

A thousand kisses and much love from your son, who adores you and asks for your benediction.

My best to Torres and greetings to everyone,

Camilo

Louvain, February 21, 1956

My Beloved Darling,

I received your news of the tragic events in Colombia the day after I had read about them (without any details) in Time magazine. As I said to Dad, it's incredible that decent people, no matter what political party they belong to, don't unite in a common effort for a genuine "moral restoration" of the country. I believe what they say is true, that the people get the government they deserve. The rulers do as they please there, everyone screams, but nobody makes up his mind to do anything about it. The best people think only of resorting to violence, a solution as utopian as it is ineffectual (at this time). Violence only breeds violence. No one is thinking about educating the people, the future subjects and rulers, for a rational political struggle. No one is thinking about creating cells that will serve as a source of moral ferment. Every day I become more convinced of the essential need to form selective nuclei, from both the technical and ethical points of view. Honest older people should be directing their honesty toward something more effective than complaining, scolding and talking but never acting in a basic, positive way.

That is why the project for our lay team, so filled with mysticism and technology, is increasingly important to me.

Your willingness to help us is very important, since I've already written the Cardinal about it — at the same time that I asked his permission to return to Colombia during the summer. Now, however, the project for the institute I mentioned depends on the bishops, and there's nothing definite. It is, therefore, very difficult to request authorization to collect money. While this is being set up and I'm trying to get you a letter, perhaps you might be able to talk to some industrialists.

I don't know whether or not El Mercurio is a government paper. If it is, we can't accept anything from it. In Latin America, everything that is economically dependent on the government is ideologically dependent, too, and, when a government's ideology is expressed in the kind of barbarity our government has shown, we certainly can't accept any dependency on it. In any case, we should take advantage of this situation, for I imagine all honorable people want to react and do something positive.

Please keep me informed about the appointment of new priests and ask Monsignor Díaz to forgive me for not having written him and ask where the \$20 he sent me came from.

Greetings to all. Everyone here always sends you greetings. All my love, from your son who adores you and asks for your benediction.

Camilo

Platform of the United Front of the Colombian People

To all Colombians: the masses, community action organizations, trade unions, cooperatives, mutual aid societies, peasant leagues, Indian communities and workers' organizations; to all nonconformists; and to all those who are not aligned with the traditional political parties, we present the following Platform in order to unify the Colombian people around specific goals.

Motives:

1. The decisions required for Colombian policy to be oriented to benefit the majority rather than the minority must emanate from those who hold power.

2. Those who presently hold real power constitute an economic minority that makes all the basic decisions regarding national policy.

3. This minority will never make decisions that may adversely affect its own interests and the foreign interests to which it is linked.

4. The decisions required for socioeconomic development to benefit the majority through national independence will necessarily hurt the interests of the economic minority.

5. These circumstances make it essential to change the structure of political power so that decision-making rests with the majority.

6. The majority currently rejects the political parties and the existing system but has no mechanism for taking power.

7. The political apparatus that is organized should seek maximum mass support, be technically planned and be set up around principles of action rather than a leader, so as to avoid the danger of cliques, demagoguery and personal influence.

Objectives: I. Agrarian Reform

The land will belong to those who work it.

The government will assign agricultural inspectors to hand over title to the land to the peasants who work it, and a system of cooperatives and communities will be set up to exploit the land, in line with a national agricultural plan that will include credit and technical assistance.

Nobody may purchase land. Whatever is considered necessary for the common good will be expropriated without indemnity.

The Indian councils will take real possession of the land that belongs to them. Development and improvement of the Indian communities will be promoted.

II. Urban reform

A. Ownership of houses in towns and cities will pass to their inhabitants. Those whose only income comes from a rental unit may retain that unit whether or not they live in it, if they prove that situation.

B. If the government determines that a dwelling is underutilized, it will fine the owner and incorporate the dwelling in its housing plans.

III. Planning

An obligatory plan will be drawn up to replace imports, increase exports and industrialize the country.

All public or private investments will be subject to the national investment plan. Operations involving foreign money will be handled exclusively by the state.

IV. Tax policy

A graduated tax will be imposed on those who receive incomes above what is required for an average Colombian family to live decently (for

example, 5000 pesos in 1965). Any income above that limit that is not invested in the sectors indicated in the official investment plan will be turned over to the state. No institution will be tax exempt. Wages up to a given limit (such as 5000 pesos a month in 1965) will not be taxed.

V. *Nationalization*

Banks, insurance companies, hospitals, clinics, pharmaceutical houses, public transportation, radio and television and the exploitation of natural resources will be in the hands of the state.

The state will gradually provide education for all Colombians, respecting the ideology of the head of the family through junior high school and the ideology of the student thereafter.

Education will be compulsory through junior high school or technical school. Parents who fail to meet the obligation of seeing to it that their children are educated will be sent to prison. Education will be financed through public investments, by raising taxes.

The subsoil will belong to the state; oil will be exploited for the purpose of serving the national economy.

Foreign oil concessions will be granted only if

1. state participation is at least 70 percent;
2. oil refining, distribution and production are public services under state control;
3. all enterprises, equipment and installations are returned to the state without charge within a period of 25 years; and
4. the wages paid Colombian blue- and white-collar workers are at least equal to those paid foreigners in the same category.

VI. *International relations*

Colombia will have relations with all countries in the world and will establish trade and cultural relations on a basis of equality and mutual benefit.

VII. *Social security and public health*

The state will implement a progressive integral social security plan that will guarantee the people free access to health care and medicine (without prejudicing the right to private practice) and will deal with all aspects related to unemployment, illness, old age and death. All health personnel will be government employees and will be paid according to the number of families who request their care (up to a limit fixed by law).

VIII. *Family policy*

Parents who abandon their children will be punished. Protection for mothers and children will be guaranteed by law, through effective penalties.

IX. *Armed forces*

The budget for the armed forces will be adequate for its mission without infringing on Colombians' health and education needs. Defense of national sovereignty will be a responsibility of all the Colombian people. Women will be required to do civic service when they reach the age of 18.

X. *Women's rights*

Women will participate in economic, political and social activities on an equal footing with men. ●

OMAN, THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION FRONT SPEAKS

Speech given by a leader of this revolutionary organization on the 15th anniversary of the beginning of the struggle.

The strategic importance of the Arab Gulf

BEFORE analyzing the present situation of Oman, we should first refer to the strategic importance that the Arab Gulf region — especially Oman — has had in the history of colonialism in the area.

Ever since the early 16th century, the Arab Gulf region has been the scene of colonial rivalries and ambitions.

All the important colonialist powers had their eye on it during the various stages of international conflicts. As for Oman itself, its strategic importance is based on its geographic position, at the entrance to the Gulf, controlling the Strait of Ormuz and hundreds of miles of coastline along the Gulf and the Arabian Sea, and its possession of good seaports.

Several colonialist powers were interested in the area — especially Great Britain and Portugal, which quickly became aware of its strategic importance. The Portuguese invaded the region early in the 16th century and subjected its inhabitants to the most horrible kinds of violence and cruelty. Following a bitter, bloody struggle that lasted for decades, the Omani people managed to expel the Portuguese from their territory, the Gulf area and the coasts of the Indian Ocean and to unite the Omani territories under the rule of Nassir b Murshid (1624-1741).

English colonialists came fast on the heels of the Portuguese, seeking to exploit and plunder the peoples of the Levant and

to establish their military and political rule. The English pushed their claims against the Portuguese, Dutch, Ottoman Turks, Iranians, French, Germans and Czarist Russians.

Great Britain emerged victorious from this struggle at the end of the 18th century, when it cemented its occupation of the area with the Treaty of 1798, signed with Ben Ahmed, Sultan of Oman. British influence spread to the Sultanate of Muscat and then, through a series of pacts and treaties, to the area controlled by the sheiks of the Omani coast. Great Britain divided them into seven emirates — the so-called emirates of the coast of Oman or of the coast of reconciliation (now the United Arab Emirates).

After the Allies' victory in World War II, oil was discovered — and extracted in enormous quantities — in Oman, dramatically altering the political and economic life of the region. A new era of competition and rivalry was ushered in — rivalry among many of the capitalist countries, that sought to grab control of this new resource so vital to modern industrial life. This was aside from the strategic military importance of the area as an inseparable part of the main issue: oil.

After World War II, the principal rivalry was between the British colonialists and the US interlopers, who considered themselves the legitimate heirs to the British colonies. US interests wasted no time in consolidating their power in the Omani region and the Arab Gulf as soon as it became apparent that the British Empire was on the wane, rocked by political and economic crises, especially after the Suez wars, which dealt the coup de grace to British influence in the area. These conflicts between the two powers continued for many years.

The coordination of the policy for the area was carried out within the framework of a new period of détente between the two powers, in spite of their conflicts. The main guidelines of this policy were

1. the proclamation of formal political independence for some of the area's regimes;
2. partial British military withdrawal from some regions, except for the Sultanate of Oman;
3. the opening of the area to monopoly companies and capitalist products; and
4. the creation of a national repressive force and its military preparation for protecting imperialist interests in the area, as seen clearly in the case of the Shah.

The imperialists are always ready to gloss over their secondary differences, as long as their common interests are not endangered. Moreover, they know how important the region's oil and its

strategic position are. They are always ready to experiment with the most terrible invasion methods and repress the peoples to protect their own interests.

A part of this strategy consisted of a flood of statements from Washington concerning the security of the region as an inseparable part of the security of the United States, its inclusion within the strategy of US security and Washington's avowed aim of occupying the oil wells whenever it deemed this necessary. In addition, it began training special forces for this mission and has been increasing its military presence in the region on an unprecedented scale. The lackey regime of Muscat has already made plans to open up Oman and its strategic possibilities.

As we have already said, all this clearly shows the aggressive plans that US imperialism has been concocting against the people of the region — plans that take the shape of the US-Israeli-Egyptian and other aggressive military pacts or overtly aggressive campaigns, as happened in April last year, when a US commando unit invaded Iran.

The chain of imperialist acts of intervention to control the Arab Gulf region since the beginning of the 16th century has weighed heavily on the peoples of the region, who have been subjected to great suffering and have fought against their invaders and for freedom and national dignity.

Throughout their history, the Omani people have made great sacrifices and played an outstanding role in the process of confrontation, first opposing the Portuguese aggressors, in the early decades of the 16th century, and then throwing back an Iranian invasion.

Before going into the struggle our people waged against the English colonialists, we would like to list some of the crimes the colonizers committed against our people.

The Treaty of 1798 spread English influence and perpetuated their rule in our country — which was not limited to the political-military sphere and the theft of our country's goods and resources but also included a policy of destroying our national economy and isolating our people, cutting off all communication with other countries. It also imposed restrictions even on the relations between different regions within Oman, thus limiting our citizens' freedom to engage in trade and move from one part of the country to another.

In collaboration with the chiefs of the traitorous Abu-Said family, the British opposed progress and imposed repression and terror, depriving the people of even the most basic human rights for more than 170 years and subjecting them to the most extreme forms of ignorance, poverty and unsanitary conditions.

The British used the Abu-Said family to oppose the Omani people's legitimate aspirations and imposed a reign of terror, with an extensive network of jails, turning Oman itself into one big prison.

The English also took great pains to apply a policy of divide and conquer. They broke the region up into small tribal entities, each of which was chained by a number of bilateral agreements. This facilitated their policy of subjugating our people to their rule, seizing our goods and resources and imposing a policy of isolation and the most horrible underdevelopment.

When oil was discovered in Oman, Arabia and the Arab Gulf, the British increased their greedy colonialist schemes to plunder our region's resources; tightened their restrictions and control over the area; enlarged their military bases in various parts of Arabia and the Gulf — especially in Oman, Bahrain and Aden — and engaged in all kinds of terror and repression against the masses, trying to gain complete control over the oil resources, which have played such an important role in the development of capitalist civilization and industry. Colonialist competition was also stepped up in the area, especially between the United States and England, in a struggle that clearly brought out all their aggressive aspects.

The people of Oman stood up bravely against the British colonialists, making all kinds of sacrifices. The history of Oman includes several rebellions and revolutions against the foreign invaders, the most outstanding of which were:

the resistance of Kawasem, in northern Oman, to the British invaders at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries;

the rebellions of Ra'as Al Khaima, in 1809-20;

the rebellion of Yoalán, in 1820;

the second rebellion of Yoalán, in 1830;

the Omani revolution of 1913-20, the longest and most important of the Arab revolutions against the British at that time; and

the revolution of 1957-59, led by the emirate of Oman.

In all these revolutions and rebellions, many of our people were martyred, and various aspects of their life were destroyed by the brutal policy of aggression of the British and their reactionary lackeys.

These circumstances gave our people valuable practical experience in various aspects of struggle and a clearer view of how to expel the invaders and obtain freedom, independence and national sovereignty.

At the same time, the imperialists realized that, if the Omani people managed to wage a prolonged people's armed war, this

could constitute a real danger to their political, military and economic interests. Therefore, they set about intensifying their control over our country, creating military bases, jails and prisons in many regions and sowing death and destruction. This increased the misery of the people and led to wholesale emigration to neighboring countries.

Thus, the objective conditions were created for the revolution that was begun on the morning of June 9, 1965 — the most important event in the Omani people's history. With it, our people entered a new stage in their bitter struggle against their colonialist enemies and the reactionary, traitorous, lackey Abu-Said family.

June 9 symbolized the bright future which our people sought — an independent, free Oman with no aggressive military bases, colonial rule or reactionary lackeys. The 15 years that have passed since the revolution of June 9 have shown the great heroism of our people, who have overcome tremendous difficulties in their determination to protect the revolution and achieve their main aims.

The revolution's military, political and social victories and its progressive nationalist influence throughout the Arab Gulf area have created an anti-imperialist, revolutionary spirit opposed to the dynasties there. This has been especially true since the Front's 2nd Congress (the Congress of Hamrain), held in 1968.

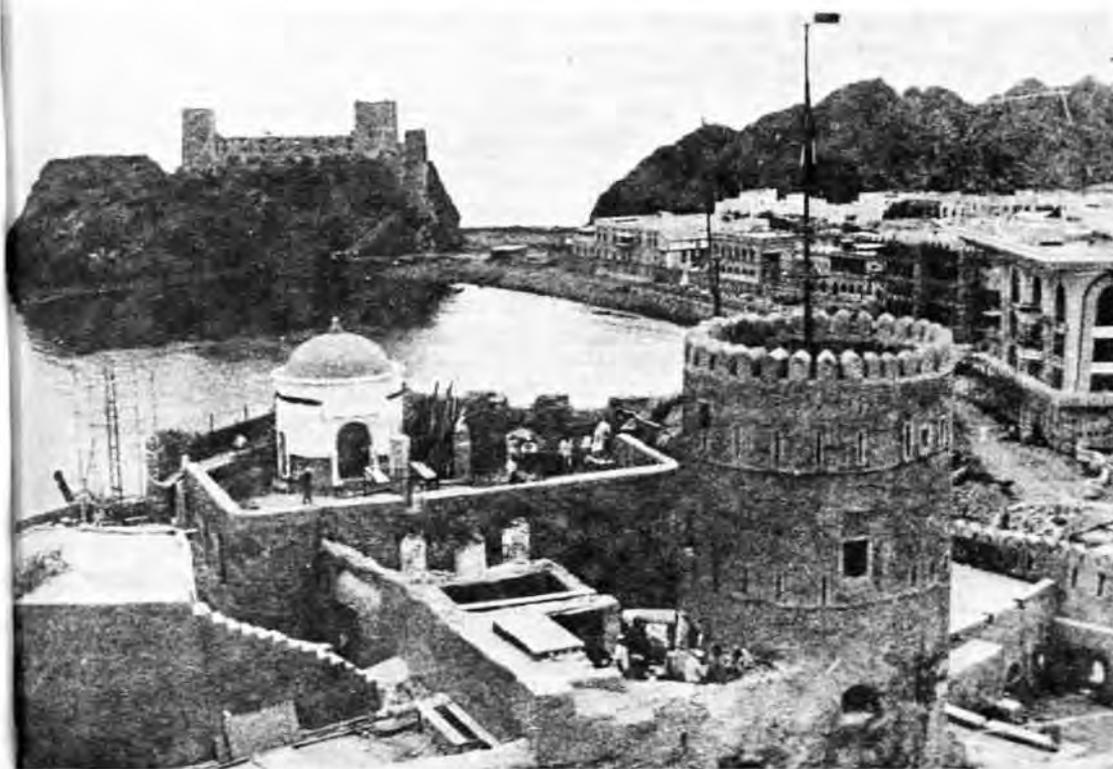
The imperialists have recognized that the revolution of June 9 constitutes a real threat to their vital interests in the region and have drawn up several plans for wiping it out, smoothing over their interimperialist discrepancies as of secondary importance when faced with this threat. Thus, the British and US forces drew up joint plans for opposing the new events and the armed revolution. These plans had three main guidelines:

first, the British communiqué set forth the British withdrawal from the territories and the granting of formal political independence to the local governments — which, naturally, were expected to hew to the policy laid down by the colonialists. Moreover, political figures were changed when necessary, as in Kabus' simulated coup in 1970;

second, the military forces that opposed the Omani revolution were increased in an attempt to destroy our people's determination to resist and to wipe the revolution out militarily. In addition to the British forces and brigades of mercenaries, great importance was given to the forces of the Jordanian regime, and then came the Iranian invasion of Oman on December 20, 1973 — all part of the imperialists' plans to wipe out the revolution; and

third, several plans were made for granting concessions and making political and economic reforms that would wipe out some of the forms of underdevelopment, in order to calm the indignation of the masses and draw them away from armed revolution and the national movement. In addition, attempts are constantly made to sabotage the revolution and the national movement. The action carried out on September 12, 1970, by the divisionist movement in the eastern area of the Dabar (Iklim Al-Dabar) district, which was put down by the masses of our people and their heroic revolutionaries, was an example of this.

Our people have fought the enemy on these three fronts throughout 15 years of bitter struggle. In spite of the great difference in our resources and the difficulties that beset the revolutionary process, the revolution managed to destabilize the enemy



front and deal a telling blow to its policy of killing our people's fighting spirit. Moreover, the revolution led the masses to join in the struggle and increased their hatred of the colonialists and the traitorous lackey Abu-Said family. It also instilled a deep love of freedom and independence in the hearts of our people and won important victories in the bloody struggle, which is a source of great pride. Our most important victories include,

1. instilling the Omani people with progressive concepts and values on the various liberating patriotic and nationalist causes;
2. ending the relations of servitude, especially in the areas occupied by the revolution;
3. establishing the rights and duties of women on an equal basis with men;
4. abolishing some of the bad tribal relations and customs, replacing them with new, progressive concepts and relations;
5. creating a national People's Liberation Army;
6. arming the masses and creating people's militias;
7. founding revolutionary schools;
8. establishing people's councils in the liberated areas; and
9. setting up mass organizations of workers, young people, women and students.

In addition to these achievements — which, though modest in size, are very important — our people reaffirmed their heroism and courage in confrontations with their powerful enemy, beating back the October-November 1971 campaign of the British commandos and that of the Iranian aggressors and causing them many losses — thus contributing to the overthrow of the Shah.

Standing firm against the destructive scorched earth policy of the British colonialist army, the Jordanian regime, the Shah's army and the mercenaries, our people have shown that they are stronger than all their enemies' equipment and arms and have reaffirmed their willingness to resist and make as many sacrifices as may be needed.

It is very difficult for a poor, underdeveloped people such as ours, led by a revolution that has nothing but a deep faith in its cause and the willingness to give its all, to oppose a powerful enemy on many fronts without incurring dangerous deviations and ups and downs and without making mistakes that may be quite dangerous. This is the general law that has governed all revolutions that have taken place in the world and that also applied in the case of the Omani revolution. As a result, we made a series of errors — mainly in political tactics, military planning and our choice of slogans. We have also been deficient in the practical application of our united front, in our creative coordina-

tion of the various forms of struggle and in understanding the relations among the members of the front.

All these subjective errors, plus the broad imperialist-reactionary conspiracy, pushed the revolution back, especially on the military plane, forcing us to abandon the western part of the Dafar (Iklim Al-Dafar) district and permitting the enemy to maintain several military bases and centers in areas where it had previously encountered great difficulties. The enemy also used its vast information apparatus to exploit the revolution's internal problems and influence a part of local, Arab and world public opinion by presenting a distorted image of the revolution in an attempt to destroy it and spread hopelessness and lack of confidence in victory among the fighters and patriots and the masses in general. It has also tried to sow doubt among the Arab and world allies of our revolution so they would withdraw their moral and material support.

While we must admit that the enemy managed to win some important victories in this field, he himself admits that he failed to achieve his main aim of exterminating the revolution or drawing it into the field of political negotiations, so as to achieve on the political plane what he couldn't do militarily. Our imperialist enemy is aware that the political presence of the revolution and the existence of a strategy of armed struggle pose a serious threat to its possessions in this sensitive area of the world which is sitting on a sea of oil — in which it never stops trying to drown the revolution.

These years of struggle in the People's Liberation Front of Oman have shown us that our great objective of freedom and national sovereignty can only be achieved through physical sacrifice and a long, hard, multifaceted war. We are determined to prepare for this and anything else we may have to face. We are not intimidated by our enemy's strength, because we know we are right and that we are defending a just cause. This was the basis for the program of the central leadership of the People's Liberation Front of Oman, which was drawn up in 1976 in order to apply the knowledge obtained. The program sums up the tasks of this stage in a single watchword: "Let us struggle and prepare ourselves ideologically, politically and militarily to continue the revolutionary war."

Strongly and with determination, we will continue being revolutionary, in spite of the difficulties that still beset us. We will follow the path of subjective preparation with complete confidence and unwavering faith in our people's and our revolution's ability to pull us out of the stagnation in which events beyond our control had bogged us down. We have taken some

important steps along this difficult path and have acquired greater capacity for confronting our problems and a deeper, clearer view of the nature of the events that have taken place in the area and of the methods for confronting them. By using our methods of struggle correctly and scientifically, we can overcome all difficulties.

Our years of struggle have shown us that the people's united front — which includes all the nationalist forces, groups and individuals (with various lines and ideological and class positions), supported by the masses — is one of the elements needed for victory. This is especially so in our country, where tyrannical forces of various nationalities and a great power are conspiring against us.

We have also learned that armed confrontation, the most advanced form of struggle, should be carried out in close and intelligent coordination with political and mass struggles and should be closely linked to them by the clear political understanding and correct scientific planning of a strong vanguard political organization. We believe that one of our most important duties for developing our revolutionary practice, achieving our strategic objective of obtaining our people's freedom and independence and establishing a national democratic system in Oman is to study both our own and other peoples' struggles.

In view of the upsurge in the masses' struggle in the Arab Gulf and peninsula and the backing given it by the Omani revolution, the imperialists have been forced — to protect their vital interests, as we have already pointed out — to adopt new policies that guarantee their economic privileges and their political and military influence. This policy was first seen in Oman when they removed Said Ben Taimur and replaced him with his son Kabus, in order to save the regime by decking it out in false nationalism and independence. At the same time, they engineered some political, economic and administrative amendments that opened Oman up to foreign monopolies, which obtained great concessions in the field of oil, other minerals, agriculture, fishing, communications and construction. The foreign investors and banks mushroomed, as did the intervention of foreign experts in the political, economic and military spheres — first British, then U.S. Other forces, such as the Jordanian regime and the decrepit Shah, were pushed into a confrontation with the Omani revolution, exposing the incapacity of Kabus' regime.

Two different forms of colonialism survive cheek by jowl among our people: the old, represented by dozens of British and US military bases and centers and hundreds of military advisers and experts, and the new, represented by the puppet regime and the

reactionaries tied to it. There is a program of reforms, and new fields have been opened to foreign monopolies, companies and banks, which plunder and steal our people's wealth for imperialism and its reactionary agents.

The growing concentration of the British and US military bases and forces and, more recently, of the forces of the lackey Sadat constitutes a real danger to our people's security and political future and a direct threat to the security and stability of the peoples in the Gulf area and Arabia — especially their nationalist forces and the progressive regimes.

All this has led us to demand that all these forces leave our country and that their aggressive bases be dismantled. Now more than ever before, this is a basic, necessary demand of our people that coincides with the desires and aspirations of the other peoples of the region to strengthen their political and economic independence and achieve prosperity — which is a far cry from the imperialist policy of intervention, threats and aggression.

The present regime in our country considers itself to be the only Arab regime in all the area that publicly proclaims the existence of US and British aggressive forces, since our waters and territories have been turned into bases where they live as they please and from which they carry out their campaigns of repression against our people — who are resisting them in the cities, hamlets and countryside — and their attacks on neighboring peoples, as when a US commando unit invaded Iranian territory, using the facilities of the bases in Oman and Bahrain. They also play a role in conspiracies and espionage against the territory of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.

The lackey regime of Muscat, with its policy of support for Sadat's regime, the Zionist state, the traitorous Camp David Agreements, the most savage types of repression and the imprisonment of hundreds of citizens without bringing them to trial or even charging them, has been isolated politically both inside and outside the country.

As for the level of the confrontation between the revolution and this traitorous regime that daily gives new proof of its scorn for national and patriotic causes, our country is witness to the desperation and anger of the masses, who are uniting around their vanguard: the People's Liberation Front of Oman.

The period since early 1979 has seen a series of hard-fought battles between the revolutionary forces and the foreign and lackey regime's forces in the southern part of the country. These combats have reaffirmed the revolution's ability to rise up anew, especially now, when the imperialists and the Muscat regime are trying to fool Arab and international public opinion and are

telling our masses that the revolution has been wiped out as an armed fighting force.

The value of these battles may also be seen in the fact that they have been waged with the support of the masses, who have allied themselves with the revolution. The time and place were carefully chosen, and they were aimed mainly against the foreign leaders and military centers. They were effected in regions that are very important to the enemy, which sowed confusion in its ranks and led to broad, hysterical campaigns to imprison the people, including urban and rural raids in the southern zone. The popular discontent was expressed in protest marches and demonstrations against the arbitrary arrests and searches of homes and groups and in the plunder of their property — which the henchmen and mercenaries of the lackey regime of Muscat simply grabbed.

Two alternatives

The present situation in our country is characterized by overt military occupation, political and economic control of our people's wealth by the British and US occupiers and the existence of a reactionary lackey regime tied hand and foot to the foreign occupiers. This situation offers our people only two alternatives: either to surrender or to continue the struggle until definitive victory is won.

Our people's choice is very clear, since we stopped surrendering a long time ago and refuse to be subjugated by the colonialists and their reactionary lackeys. Our people unhesitatingly made this historic decision on June 9, 1965, fully aware of all the suffering and sacrifices that would be required on the long road to liberation.

Our people and our armed revolution have continued along this path, in spite of the quantitative and qualitative strength of the enemy and all the difficulties, pitfalls and temporary setbacks. This expresses their great conviction of the justice and correctness of our line, that is based on armed struggle, supported by all other forms of struggle. We will continue to fight, led by revolutionary thinking, until the last foreign soldier has been expelled from our beloved land and all the traitorous fortresses that are used against our people are destroyed.

The revolution of June 9, which has continued during 15 years of fighting, has established relations of struggle with all the other national, democratic and revolutionary forces in the Arab region and also with all progressive democracy-, freedom- and peace-loving forces throughout the world.



Our people and the People's Liberation Front of Oman, their vanguard, have relations with the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen at the party, government and people's levels. These relations have a special place in our struggle against the enemy and in our efforts to achieve the great objectives of both our revolutions — of October 24 and June 9. The relations between our peoples and revolutions have been cemented by the blood shed on Omani and Yemeni soil and are the most sincere expression of the alliance that has existed, still exists and will continue to guide our fighters and the masses toward achieving ever greater triumphs and successes.

Just as we esteem the positions of the people and government of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, we fully support the Yemeni masses, led by their Socialist Party, in their struggle to defend the Yemeni revolution and its unity. We reaffirm our staunch support for the National Front and the Yemeni people in their struggle to achieve Yemeni unity on democratic, progressive bases.

We also firmly support the Palestinian revolution and warmly salute the growing triumphs of the Palestinian people, led by the Palestine Liberation Organization, their sole legitimate representative, both inside and outside the occupied territories.

We reaffirm the importance of the fighting alliance between the Lebanese National Movement, vanguard of the militant Lebanese people, and the Palestinian revolution, aimed at defeating the imperialists, Zionists and Falangists who seek to wipe out the Palestinian resistance in Lebanese territory, hit the LNM hard and split the Lebanese homeland.

Our revolution supports the Saharawi Arab people's struggle, led by the POLISARIO Front, against the lackey Moroccan regime and for liberation and self-determination.

We support the Egyptian national movement and the Egyptian people in their opposition to Sadat's plans, that are moving along the path of betrayal and complete surrender to the imperialists and Zionists, enemies of the peoples of our Arab nation.

We are sure the day will come when Egypt will once again play an important role in the Arab nation's struggle for the great national objectives of freedom, democracy, unity and social progress.

Our people's revolution supports the Steadfastness and Confrontation Front. I believe that the main mission of this Front in today's conditions is to implement the resolutions of its conferences, which will constitute a decisive historic reply by the peoples of our Arab nation for defeating the sell-out plans that include the extension of US hegemony in the area.

The history-making triumph of the Iranian people's revolution dealt a telling blow to imperialism's interests and influence in the region. Our people, who fought against and beat back the forces of the Shah, support the Iranian people's struggle. We are sure that the Iranian revolution will advance from one triumph to another and will achieve its people's great objectives of true freedom and independence as it is radicalized and strengthened by the democratic, progressive forces.

We support the people of Afghanistan in their struggle to defend their revolution and progressive government against the intervention and sabotage planned and carried out by US imperialism and its allies in the region.

One of our main tasks in the sphere of international relations is to strengthen and develop our relations with the community of socialist countries, headed by the friendly Soviet Union, and with all the other democratic, peaceful forces of liberation in the world. We will work constantly to develop lasting ties between our struggle and those of other freedom-, peace- and progress-loving peoples and forces. ●

FROM MYTHS TO REALITIES IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

ARSENIO RODRIGUEZ





THE explosive political situation in Latin America and the Caribbean in the last 20 years has swept away the myths and concepts that sought to hold back the Latin-American peoples' revolutionary struggle.

First the Cuban Revolution did away with geographic fatalism, which tried to deny the possibility of any revolutionary process in the "backyard" of the most powerful imperialism of all time.

Then the Nicaraguan Revolution, two decades later and in the same area, showed that the Cuban experience was no "exception that proves the rule," for victory was achieved as the result of a revolutionary war with broad backing by the people.

The revolutionary triumph in Grenada brought that country a

people's, progressive government for the first time in its history, shattering the supposed tranquility of that subregion.

The appearance of these victorious processes even demolished a much older myth, dating from the '30s, which said that "A revolution can be effected either with or without the army but never against it." Suffice it to say that the armies of Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada were created, armed and advised by the United States, just like the others that exist in nearly all the rest of the Latin-American countries.

The decisive aspect of the revolutionary movement during the decade that has just ended was its anti-imperialist character and the gradual recovery from the ebb caused by the repression and the political maneuvers of regional reactionary regimes and US imperialism. These maneuvers sought

to block the progressive processes in the area by sabotaging the Canal agreements in Panama, pressuring Mexico in its oil negotiations and carrying out destabilizing actions against Jamaica.

The rise in the political struggle in El Salvador and Guatemala shows that revolutionary action is still moving to qualitatively higher forms of struggle for achieving true and total independence in Central America.

The Salvadoran people provide a heroic example of this, for they are ready to pay whatever price may be required for their independence, struggling daily against the repressive, genocidal regime imposed on them by the US government and its acolytes in the continent.

In the face of this reality, the reaction has done everything it could to halt the rising political feeling that has swept the continent in the last few years. Neither fascist coups nor the reformist or pseudodemocratic projects hurriedly thrown together by the US administration, however, have managed to halt the activity of the masses — much less now that they have become aware of their real strength in direct combat and are ready to demand their rights with arms in hand.

All this has taken place within a historic framework of cause and effect in which the world capitalist crisis and its repercussions in the deformed, dependent Latin-American economies have given rise to action by political vanguards that mobilize the vast masses of their countries.

It is not strange, therefore, that the so-called policy of "viable democracy" that created expectations and, even some confusion among some progressive sectors in 1977 should turn out to be a resounding flop. An obvious recent example of this was the bloody coup pulled in Bolivia in spite of the desperate efforts that were made to protect the fledgling representative democracy in that country.

Even before this, however, the policy had already been torn to pieces by its creators, the present US administration, when — in spite of its democratizing siren songs, it openly supported the most reactionary regimes in Latin America, including those in Uruguay, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Guatemala and El Salvador.

It comes as no surprise, therefore, that US foreign policy toward Latin America should be characterized by aggressive, hostile positions of force — implemented, in the last few years, by the Carter administration's threats of open intervention; creation of operational commands of mixed forces in Florida; and other, no less bellicose measures.

Along with this, the theme song of human rights has been kept up, in spite of aid to Somoza, the Salvadoran Junta and other regimes that violate human rights with the weapons and technology provided them by US imperialism.

These actions threaten peace in the Caribbean, for plans are being drawn up to intervene in Central

America against the progressive Salvadoran forces and a cold war policy is once more being espoused by the spokesmen of imperialism.

There is nothing new about these positions. The pharisaical nature of US foreign policy is no secret, even to the US people.

The earlier offensive unleashed against the peoples' movements only strengthened our vanguards' determination to free themselves and adopt various options of struggle in their confrontation with the ruling classes; now, these positions of force oblige the Latin-American patriots to radicalize their struggle much more.

The advance of the revolutionary struggles in their classical confrontation reveals an undeniable truth which the reactionaries — or, in most cases, confused sectors — have tried to hide: that armed struggle was, is and will be the guarantee of all political processes for achieving national liberation within the historic reality of Latin America and the Caribbean and attaining real power for the masses.

The equation of masses, arms and unity is the distinguishing sign of the revolutionary triumphs that are the result of concrete historic practice.

The panorama of poverty, illiteracy, squalor, denial of the most basic human rights, the arbitrary limitation of national decision-making power and economic dependency on the imperialist countries remain constants in the Latin Amer-



ican countries — even in those with some economic advances.

Paralleling the revolutionary struggle, the people's movement has increased its activities, calling for recognition of social, political and economic demands. Strikes are on the rise, as are work stoppages, protest demonstrations and other activities by the workers, farmers and students who oppose the imposed status quo, for, even though it may seem paradoxical, nearly 400 million Latin Americans are reduced to want in a continent rich in natural resources.



It is no coincidence that the statistics of some specialized agencies list Latin America and the Caribbean as the most-strike-torn area, measured in terms of the number of strikers compared to the total number of white- and blue-collar workers. Moreover, they state that nearly 18 million people in this part of the world go out on strike every year.

Any observer of the Latin-American scene should take into account the fact that most of these people's mobilizations coincided timewise with a so-called return to constitu-

tional regimes and that the call for elections, democratic promises and other electoral refrains might have neutralized the masses' demands.

This isn't the only thing to keep in mind, however. The general tendency of these struggles was to present political elements in their programs — a determining factor, since the people's movement as a whole constitutes the key for support for any revolutionary process that tries to seriously change the old structures inherited from the

metropolis and then deformed by capitalism.

In this regard, our most recent history is nothing but the logical result of four centuries of exploitation, that are turning the Latin-American peoples into potential explosives, which only the correct instrumentation of subjective elements can set off socially to give rise to deep radical changes.

These changes must be imposed, since the Latin-American bourgeoisie and oligarchies will not graciously cede their privileges, and US imperialism, that really controls the continent's riches, is even less willing to do so.

This reality has been borne out more and more for the vast masses, who have learned that, the more victims a reactionary dictatorship creates, the greater are the possibilities a war of liberation has for defeating it.

The earthquake that struck Nicaragua in 1972 killed 10 000 Nicaraguans, but the Somoza dynasty multiplied that figure fivefold and caused more mourning and grief among the population than any natural disaster.

What can we say of the murders, the disappearances and the violations of all kinds carried out by the Christian Democratic Junta in El Salvador?

How many victims were massacred by the Guatemalan, Chilean, Uruguayan, Paraguayan and other fascist regimes in the last five years?



What can we say about Bolivia, where more than 1000 people had been killed by the repression in the first month after the military coup of July 1979?

The people learn, however; they learn quickly. The example of triumphant revolutions shows what path must be taken to be rid of all these ills.

Cuba and Nicaragua managed to end illiteracy only after the triumph of the revolution. It couldn't be done before then.

One year after the Sandinista triumph, the epicenter of the social turmoil that is shaking Central America is in El Salvador, where the struggle is acquiring dimensions that worry the United States.

It is no coincidence, then, that there is more and more talk of coups, of possible intervention (it doesn't matter what form it may take) and more aid for the Junta, even though history shows that all these measures are useless against a people that has decided to pay



whatever price may be necessary for its independence.

An eloquent example of what a people can do is shown by the struggle in Nicaragua, where, almost without weapons, the people wiped out one of the best trained and armed armies in Central America.

Moreover, the Nicaraguan experience showed the tendency of the progressive, revolutionary movement to coordinate efforts, making it possible to achieve unity among the forces in the region — that, at a given moment, managed to block the US attempts to intervene in Nicaragua and can now stop the plans directed against El Salvador.

The recently initiated decade of the '80s marks a turning point in the situation in Latin America, showing a rise in the peoples' struggles, since the struggle for national liberation and economic independence is linked to an intense class struggle against capitalist exploitation and mainly against the foreign monopolies.

At the beginning of this century, the decisive factor in the growth

of the proletariat's class awareness, the development of its struggles for liberation and the strengthening of its international ties was the great October Revolution; in the same way, since World War II, the radicalization and real class awakening of the Latin-American masses has developed with the triumph and example of the Cuban Revolution, whose consolidation and development has demonstrated in practice the possibility of achieving revolutionary people's power in the western hemisphere.

Concrete examples show what path must be taken to throw off the oligarchy, the reaction and imperialism, and the peoples are learning the lessons of Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada.

They are also learning from the experiences of Bolivia, Guatemala, El Salvador, Chile, Uruguay and all the other countries where the reaction is using assassination and repression to maintain itself in power.

The struggle will not be an easy one, but victory is assured. ●

*The Military, Political and
Diplomatic Talent of Nguyen Trai*



Any understanding of the Vietnamese people's current struggles and victory must be based on their history, explaining the present in terms of the past, today's victories as reflections of their long tradition of struggle, for their resolute, triumphant resistance against the French colonialists and then against the Yankee imperialists is the continuation of a tradition that began long ago.

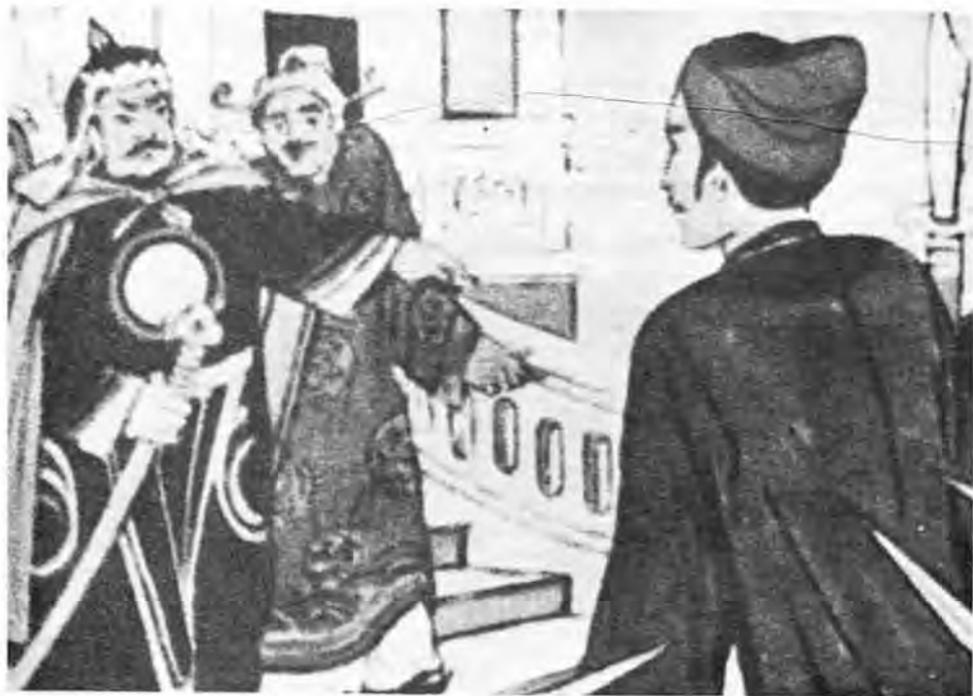
Soon after the founding of Au Lac, that important kingdom of ancient Vietnam had to confront the ambitions of the Chinese feudal lords and fell under the control of a "man of war" in 180 B.C.

Resistance continued throughout the 1000 years of Chinese rule, expressed in insurrections such as the one led by the Trung sisters in A.D. 40. These rebellions culminated in a prolonged period of insurrection that led to the attainment of independence in 939.

In 1407, however, the Ming dynasty of China once again seized Vietnam, which was then liberated mainly through the efforts of Nguyen Trai, hero and master strategist who managed to free all of Vietnamese territory between 1418 and 1427.

Who was Nguyen Trai? What was his political and military thinking? The following pages present some data on the life and activities of this hero who laid the bases of Vietnamese military strategy in principles that proved so effective against French colonialism in 1954 and the most powerful imperialist military machine of our time in 1975.

For these reasons, UNESCO held a scientific forum in Hanoi last October to study the thoughts of Nguyen Trai — at which OSPAAAL presented the following paper.



In 1407, the Ming invaded the country and tried to win over Nguyen Trai, but he refused to collaborate with them, even when threatened.

The Vietnamese people were in a terrible situation after the Ming dynasty invaded their territory early in the 15th century. Their national liberation struggle required able military, political and diplomatic leadership to prevent Vietnam from being turned into a province of China and to keep alive the identity of the Great Viet, a land with an ancient culture.

There were many great leaders in that battle, but Vietnamese national hero Nguyen Trai was particularly outstanding because of his multifaceted talents and readiness to serve the people on various fronts of the struggle.

His knowledge of military strategy and tactics brought his homeland victory, for he employed methods that were entirely new for his time and that enabled the Vietnamese to act more dynamically and effectively against the enemy.

Nguyen Trai's military theories, which involved using few to defeat many, were implemented by General Le Loi, whom he advised.

Several uprisings had already taken place against the Ming dynasty prior to

Le Loi's appearance on the military scene. Rebelliousness — in both thought and deed — was an integral part of the Vietnamese people, but these actions did not achieve the desired results. Many rebel chiefs were captured, and the Vietnamese princes failed to lead the resistance effectively. Nguyen Trai's advice in the struggle waged by Le Loi resulted in an increase in guerrilla actions in the mountains, actions which successfully opposed a numerically superior enemy. Advancing and retreating, harassing and engaging in a counteroffensive, the guerrillas kept the Ming imperial troops off balance.

The inhabitants of the provinces where the guerrillas operated welcomed the fighters. When the southern provinces were liberated, they constituted a vast rearguard for Nguyen Trai and Le Loi. The people joined the struggle; it was a people's war. All the troops the Chinese brought up as reinforcements — 50 000 at one time, in addition to the 50 000 normally stationed in Vietnam — were useless, for they were immobilized in the capital, surrounded by the people's army.

Victory was total, and Nguyen Trai's idea of defeating many with few was proved successful.

That tactic and strategy were responsible for incredible victories even hundreds of years ago. As was stated then, "We are the wind of the tempests that scatters the dry leaves.... We are the ants that make the dikes crumble...."¹

Political aspects were combined with armed struggle in Nguyen Trai's thoughts and actions. His strategy was based on the principle of "winning hearts" and "eliminating violence" as the first role of the fighters.

This may be seen in his "Writings to the Army," consisting of letters addressed to enemy generals, and orders and proclamations of the fighters throughout the struggle against the Ming invaders. In these writings, Nguyen Trai described the art of war as part of the great virtues of humanity and justice — which, he said, provided strength for great deeds and guidance for good generals.

He denounced guile and deception and praised the fulfillment of agreements and promises. His letters to the enemy generals show that he was ahead of his time in brilliantly combining elements

of persuasion with tactical military objectivity.

In the letter addressed to enemy General Vuong Truong, for example, he described the art of war as a question of time and circumstance, then went on to make a brilliant analysis of the inevitable defeat of the enemy.

Respect for the vanquished, without taking reprisals or engaging in unnecessary cruelty, were other ideas he applied in the struggle. His intrinsic humanity was always present.

He lived in a feudal era, yet he brought the peasants into the struggle and was pained by their suffering. In this sense, he anticipated the most advanced political ideas of the 16th century, claiming that those who held sinecures should think of those who worked hard.

Another of his advanced ideas concerned the duty to strictly observe all rules for safeguarding the national patrimony, which, in his time, rested with the feudal lords.

All his works, of great aesthetic value and deeply humane content, contain an



He defended humanity and justice. He believed that humane, fair treatment was more effective than harsh punishment for reforming a man.

¹ Huu Ngoc and Vu Khieu, *Nguyen Trai, l'une de plus belles figures de l'histoire de la littérature vietnamiennes* (Nguyen Trai, One of the Most Beautiful Figures in the History of Vietnamese Literature), Foreign Language Editions, Hanoi, 1980, p. 29.



In Con Son, Nguyen Trai advised the people and taught the children.

aspect of enormous importance: his role as a teacher. Nguyen Trai was a teacher of his people from the classroom to the government, fulfilling the greatest duty of any teacher by setting a good example.

His life and work were dedicated to the Vietnamese people, nation and homeland, as is expressed in his literary work when he states that the most noble manifestation of humanity and justice consists of struggle to overcome aggression and barbarism, in order to achieve independence for one's homeland and happiness for its people.

This explains his constant concern over how to serve the people, how to win their hearts, how to be generous to them and gain their consent, laying the bases for humanity and justice in the people's happiness and peace.

All his political thinking reflects his dedication to his homeland, his nation and its struggles for independence — which was only achieved later on.

His high ethics were expressed when, after retiring, he stated that he had

nothing to offer his homeland but his heart.

Nguyen Trai, who dealt a crushing defeat to the Chinese aggressors and demonstrated his tremendous military ability, was a champion of peace. The struggle for peace and friendship among the peoples is a constant theme in his work. Every victory was immediately followed by an appeal for peace, reflecting the deep aspirations of the Vietnamese people. This deep belief in peace infused his diplomatic activity and rounded out his brilliant military and political victories. Nguyen Trai made an important contribution to the Vietnamese people's tradition of diplomatic wisdom.

His diplomatic work was inspired by the principles of humanity and justice which prevailed in China, Vietnam and other Asian countries at the time. According to this philosophy, men should be cultured and show it in the correct organization of the family and in able handling of state affairs — which would lead to universal peace and harmony.

This was the ideal of *Ta-Hsueh*, the book of great wisdom attributed to Kung Chi, the grandson of Confucius. Likewise, the ideal of "Ta-tung," or the great

community or great unity of nations which Confucius preached, left its imprint on those peoples. The writings and actions of Nguyen Trai sum up all this philosophy, both as regards the organization of society in his country and in its international projection, applied in a creative way to the conditions in Vietnam, for their popular nature vastly improved on the thinking of Confucius and his disciples.

He stated, "Peace and happiness for the people — that is the basis of the virtues of humanity and justice." In the historic context of a Vietnam occupied by the Ming dynasty, humanity and justice meant national independence; peace and well-being for the people; and peaceful, friendly relations with their powerful, expansionist neighbor to the north.

The Chinese began their aggression against Vietnam in 1406 under the pretext of reestablishing the Tran dynasty, which had been overthrown by a coup. This was an internal affair of Vietnam's, but the Ming dynasty made use of that circumstance to try to fulfill its territorial ambitions regarding that country and all of Southeast Asia. Nguyen Trai denounced this stratagem in a letter that he wrote to enemy General Phuong Chinh, in which he said,

Making use of the errors of the Ho dynasty, your government, under the pretext of "saving the people and punishing the guilty," has used violence, attacked and invaded our homeland, devastated our nation, imposed extortionate taxes and caused it great duress. The poor people in the most isolated hamlets do not know what peace is. Is this humanity and justice?²

During that war of independence, the main objectives of Vietnamese diplomacy were to end the war and to establish friendly relations with China.

As part of his diplomatic work, Nguyen Trai served as Ambassador to China, where he applied his abilities to defend his homeland's interests in the international arena.

As a dignitary on a mission abroad, he knew just what plenipotentiary functions diplomats had and so unmasked the tricks of the Chinese representatives in Vietnam who prolonged the war even after they had lost it, claiming that they couldn't sign a peace treaty without consulting Peiping.

He also exhibited his rare diplomatic talent in the variety of means he used for negotiating with the enemy. In almost all his letters to the Ming generals, he



Nguyen Trai's integrity brought him fame.

² Ibid., p. 68.

proposed the immediate withdrawal of their troops from Vietnam and offered guarantees that they and their horses, junks and supplies would not be harassed while they were withdrawing. Moreover, he ably engaged in proselytizing among the occupation soldiers. His famous offensive of hearts consisted in winning over hearts and minds, so as to win the battle without fighting. In this, he used several methods. He referred to the Chin, Han and Tang dynasties in China, whose territorial ambitions regarding their neighbors always led them to disaster. He also spoke of the serious problems that faced the Mings inside China as additional reasons why they would inevitably be defeated in Vietnam.

In his writings, the great humanist clearly explained why the Chinese had unleashed the war against his country, declaring that it was to plunder its wealth and seize adjoining territories. Replying to a message from General Vuong Truong in which the General had said that the people wouldn't be hurt by losing a little bit of land, Nguyen Trai said ironically, "What fair words! If all the world were to be inspired by those noble

sentiments, there would be peace."³ This penetrating analysis reminds us of the historic appeal by Comrade Fidel Castro for an end to imperialist plunder in order to end wars and establish a world of peace, when, in 1960, he told the General Assembly of the United Nations, "Let the philosophy of plunder disappear, and the philosophy of war will have disappeared along with it."⁴

The military, political and diplomatic projection of Nguyen Trai was expressed in his philosophy of humanity and justice — that, in the conditions of an invaded Vietnam, served the cause of national liberation, peace and happiness for the people and helped to achieve peaceful coexistence among nations. That is the legacy of Nguyen Trai.

His wisdom of how to overcome many with few — large armies with small people's armies — constitutes a basic contribution to the military concepts of his time, enriched in more recent times by Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap and put into practice by the armed propaganda group of the '40s, which went on to



Nguyen Trai witnessed the crimes committed by the Ming invaders, which influenced his writing of **Strategy for Victory over the Wus**.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁴ Fidel Castro, speech at the 15th session of the United Nations, published in **Bohemia** magazine, no. 40, p. 69.



Le Lol won many victories following the strategic principles of guerrilla warfare outlined by Nguyen Trai.

become the powerful Vietnamese people's army.

Nguyen Trai's combination of guerrilla struggle with conventional warfare and attacks on fortified positions was like the guerrilla struggle in South Vietnam in the '60s, with its progressive development into the battles of the Tet Offensive and the great culmination of the Ho Chi Minh Operation in the spring of 1975.

Nguyen Trai combined armed struggle with political action. We are reminded of the creation in our time of the NLF and the People's Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, the parallel struggles at the conference table in Paris, the hard-fought battles in the South and the heroic resistance of the North.

His love for the people and his deep appreciation of men who created material wealth with their hands are impressive. He was filled with the thought of how to be useful to the people and how to win their hearts and their support. In short, society is developed by those who create material goods; just wars are won with the participation of the people; governments may stay in power only if they have popular support.

His concept of the people, which fills his works and struggles and is a corner-

stone of his political thinking, was ahead of his time.

In his international struggle against the policy of the Ming monarchs, Nguyen Trai applied the functions and methods of diplomacy with great intelligence. He understood that territorial expansion and the plunder of other people's wealth were the root causes of all wars. This is why he was such an ardent champion of peace. His activities on this front constitute one of the most solid factors underlying the Vietnamese nation's tradition of diplomatic wisdom.

The similarity between the Chinese rulers' policies then and now is startling. Then, as now, they used lies as weapons in trying to implement their expansionist, chauvinistic, hegemonistic great-power foreign policies. Just as, in 1406, there was talk of "punishing the guilty" for an internal affair of Vietnam's that was completely unrelated to China's sovereignty, so in 1979 Deng Xiaoping and other Beijing leaders twisted the facts concerning the fall of the genocidal government of Kampuchea and Vietnam's aid to the Khmer people in order to make a brutal



Five hundred and twenty years after his birth, a monument to this national hero was built in Vietnam.

attack on Vietnam, later stating that their criminal action had been carried out in order to "teach Vietnam a lesson" and "punish" it. In fact, China's intentions haven't changed: it still seeks to annex Vietnam and rule all of Southeast Asia.

An analysis of the thoughts and military, political and diplomatic activities of Nguyen Trai reveals his tremendous contributions to the Vietnamese people's fighting tradition. One of President Ho Chi Minh's most outstanding merits was his use of the best fighting traditions from the past, enriched with a scientific understanding of the world and the best

of current political thought: Marxism-Leninism. Vietnam's history from Nguyen Trai to Ho Chi Minh gives us the key to the Vietnamese people's infinite defense possibilities, as shown in their victories during the last 40 years over Japanese, French, US and Chinese aggressors.

The example that Nguyen Trai set with his firm position against the aggressor's policy of plunder and destruction, neither vacillating nor selling out, is a true reflection of what he was: a real Vietnamese who, like Vietnamese in other times, loved his people, fought for them and led them to victory. ●

COLONIALISM AND NEOCOLONIALISM, HISTORIC FORMS OF IMPERIALIST DOMINATION (I)

FERNANDO MARTINEZ HEREDIA



It is now completely clear, not only to revolutionaries but also to the progressive organizations and governments interested in national development, that imperialist capitalism is constantly trying to breathe life into the neocolonialist aspects of its relations with other countries in the world capitalist system.

There are two reasons for this dominant trend; and, even though the two usually appear together, in differing degrees, depending on the specific case, it is useful to separate them for purposes of study. One involves the world revolutionary movement's harassment of the capitalist system; the other, imperialism's own development and contradictions.

Here we will attempt to analyze a specific case of neocolonial relations, viewing them mainly in terms of their role in the economic structure of the neocolonialist powers. In so doing, we will consider the second reason mentioned above. Thus, the nature and aim of this work is to analyze imperialism's economic policy, with the understanding that it is inseparable from imperialist political, ideological and military action — effective extraeconomic actions in its economic policy — in the countries it controls and influences and that it is also inseparable from the level of the anti-imperialist national and international class struggles.

Neocolonialism and imperialism

Neocolonialism is generally accepted to mean the more or less total subjection of a formally independent state entity by one or several capitalist states whose economic forces are vastly superior to those of the neocolonized state and constitute the basic means for generalizing and continuing that subjection, though political, ideological and even military force may be used to bolster them.

Neocolonialism is characteristic of the unequal development and worldwide expansion of the capitalist social formation and is conditioned by two basic factors:

1. The level of the neocolonizing power's capitalist development and power in the international correlation of forces among capitalist nations allows it to subject another state to its interests and use its mechanisms of repression and domination as intermediaries in so doing. Thus, the "free play" of its economic forces is more important than the permanent use of political-military force.

2. The level of development of the neocolonized country's national social formation forces its state and institutions to represent the interests of its ruling (and ruled) class, including its desire for national self-determination. The fact that the neocolonial regime engages in "decolonization" or is installed in power following independence (which may be effected through a different power than the one that was the colonialist metropolis) is an important difference, but it does not change the

essential fact, which is the impossibility or extreme undesirability of using colonial methods to exploit this country — so neocolonization is used, instead.

This dividing line for neocolonialism is so generic that it must be adapted to each period in the capitalist history of neocolonialists and neocolonialized (which includes the characteristics and the means by which any previous colonial relations were terminated), while also establishing national and regional characteristics and the various powers' positions in the existing correlation of forces.

Colonialism's very important role in the primitive accumulation of capital is well known. In *Capital*, Marx described the basic implications of this, while Lenin provided us with a more detailed exposition of the fact that the expansion of European industrial capitalism and its transformation into imperialism marked a qualitatively new stage in the history of colonialism as part of the history of capitalism, one involving the division and colonial occupation of Africa and most of Asia in the struggle for a new world division as a basic aspect of interimperialist rivalries. The place and function of neocolonialism in the evolution of the capitalist social formation has not been as precise, nor has its study been fully developed.

In *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin says that

finance capital and its corresponding foreign policy.... give rise to a number of transitional forms of state dependence. Typical of this epoch is not only the two main groups of countries: those owning colonies, and colonies, but also the diverse forms of dependent countries which, politically, are formally independent, but in fact, are enmeshed in the net of financial and diplomatic dependence. We have already referred to one form of dependence — the semicolony. An example of another is provided by Argentina.¹

Lenin also discusses the matter of echelons among the imperialist powers, comparing France with Russia (two great powers) and Great Britain with Portugal. In the latter case, he points out that, while relations of subjection have always existed

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, p. 144. With regard to Argentina, H. S. Ferns, in *Gran Bretaña y Argentina en el siglo XIX* (Great Britain and Argentina in the 19th Century), Buenos Aires, Argentina, Solar Hachette, 1968, p. 11, says "...About 1914, as a country of British trade and investments, Argentina could be compared to Australia and Canada in that only Britain's trade with the United States and India was greater. Up to World War II, there were few communities more important to the British than the Argentine Republic, in terms of both investments and consumers."

between big and little states, "in the epoch of capitalist imperialism they become a general system, they form part of the sum total of 'divide the world' relations, become links in the chain of operations of world finance capital."²

Colonialism and neocolonialism coexist and are interrelated in the history of capitalism. The advances made in specific studies of economic history, country by country — plus those that must still be made, especially of the underdeveloped countries — need to be more integrated in terms of specific general analyses of the role neocolonialism has played in the history and the basic social relations of the world capitalist system and its national expressions.

Marx clearly showed how the bourgeoisie used the most savage methods and imposed the most archaic of the institutions that, in theory, matched its mode of production, if they could be used to obtain the capitalist profits that were its main motivating force. Imperialist colonialism, according to Marx's criticism, showed just what the bourgeoisie could become and what it made its workers become wherever it was able to mold the world at will in its image and likeness.³ It is essential, however, to keep in mind the nature of social processes and their trends, which is Marx's scientific contribution to guiding the revolutionary action of all who feel the need to struggle against the inequities that he denounced.

In this regard, we must ask: In view of the unequal development of societies, is colonialism the predominant form of international integration in the imperialist phase? Isn't the colonialism of the imperialist era the usual barbaric use of the most archaic methods and institutions to attain capitalistic goals which, with the general development of imperialist productive and social forces, are necessarily replaced by neocolonialism? If this is the case — as is my contention — then neocolonialism is the basic form of world capitalist integration in the imperialist phase, the mode of general domination that corresponds to control by monopoly capitalism.

Imperialism established its worldwide domination in many places using colonialism and open violence — the same open violence and cruelty that led to the establishment of capitalism in Europe, forcing the expropriated masses to sell their labor voluntarily — but its full-scale operation is also based on the "natural laws of production," meaning that capitalism prevails. From this we deduce that, the greater the capitalist productive forces in a developed country are, the greater and "more natural" are the possibilities it has to establish neocolonialist relations.

I would like to go back to something I stated at the beginning of this essay: modern neocolonialism cannot be understood without taking into account its harassment by the world revo-

² *Ibid.*, p. 146.

³ *El Capital*, vol. I, p. 689.

lutionary movement's advances. Any analysis that isolates one aspect of the operation of a social process in trying to understand it must necessarily reestablish, at the end, the link between that aspect and others relevant to the process — with the additional factor of having now obtained an overall grasp of the process. If it fails to do so, the limited scope of the study must be stressed. If we probe deeper into the meaning of neocolonialism and its role in the internal structure and functioning of modern imperialism, we will be identifying **one of its vital points** — which, after all, is something for those engaged in the modest task of studying the anti-imperialist struggle.

The study of neocolonialism is, therefore, ever more closely related to the internationalization of capital; state monopoly capital; counterrevolutionary imperialist policies in ideology, in the state and the military; interimperialist coordination and rivalries; national revolutionary movements; the confrontation between the socialist and capitalist systems; matters of international détente; and, in short, the general Marxist-Leninist theory of modern capitalism and how to eliminate it by means of revolution and socialism.

We don't pretend to contribute to this very necessary task, which is related to the crucial problems in the world today. Rather, we will simply deal with specific aspects of the theme we have selected.

European colonialism and neocolonialism

The metropolises that participated in the colonialist division of the world were in Europe. "Where the interests are is where the control should be" was their motto. There was a difference, however, between the expansionism of Great Britain — which built an empire based on the Industrial Revolution, the imposition of an unequal exchange of manufactured goods for raw materials, naval power, worldwide control of trade and vast financial power — and that of France — a great European power in which a thoroughgoing national bourgeois revolution took place and where agriculture carried great weight in the economy and politics, while politics and the state played a major role in colonization, first in northern Africa and then in competition with England to occupy the African continent, benefiting from the unequal terms of trade that permitted it to become one of the chief European exporters of capital. These two countries were the main protagonists of imperialist colonialism.

The population in the colonies, the volume of trade, the degree of efficiency in control and plunder and the integration of the parts of the empire all form a denunciation of British colonial capitalism during the last quarter of the 19th century. Britain's foreign investments in 1910 were double those of France; 94 percent of them were outside Europe, structured in a way that clearly showed the universal strength of the empire, while

65.7 percent of France's investments were in Europe. In *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin said, "Unlike British colonial imperialism, French imperialism might be termed usury imperialism."

The list of colonialist countries also included Russia, with its imperial expansion into the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Far East, though its bourgeoisie lost everything when the people made the October Revolution and took the road to socialism; Holland, a pioneer in colonial capitalism which was too small to compete with the big powers; Belgium, a small but highly industrialized country backed by Great Britain in the European "concert," whose seizure of the Congo as booty from the balance among the big powers ushered in one of the 20th century's dirtiest and bloodiest European colonial operations in Africa; Italy, a secondary imperialist and colonialist power; and Spain and Portugal, the first colonial powers and the poorest. Spain lost most of its empire early; Portugal was the last to lose its colonies (1975), but it had been subordinate to Great Britain for centuries and, during the final decades of its colonialism, was a small, underdeveloped, dependent "power" in the imperialist world.

Germany is a special case. It and Italy were the last European countries to become states and go on to become imperialist powers, but Germany's rate of development was the highest of all the European powers, comparable only to that of the United States, and colonialism did not play a significant role in its development. Germany came late to the colonial division of the world, and this was one of the factors — along with its ambitions to acquire advantages and land in Europe; the arms race; and its violent rivalry with Great Britain and France in the area of large-scale production, competitive and efficient trade and the push for foreign investments — that led to World War I. At the end of that war, Germany was stripped of its colonial empire, which was relatively large but secondary in terms of population and wealth.

The complexity of possible situations in the relationship between colonial exploitation and the imperialist phase of development is evident in the case of Germany and especially in the case of the United States. Switzerland, Sweden and Czechoslovakia also had high rates of development without any direct links to colonialism.

The history of imperialism shows three phases in the trend toward the predominance of neocolonialism over colonialism:

1. In the first phase, neocolonialism seemed to be denied by the spectacular colonialist orgy of nascent imperialism in Africa and its reaffirmation in Asia (1870-1914). Nevertheless, in Latin America, neocolonial ties with Great Britain were strengthened and developed — as were those with the United States, which was on its way to becoming a neocolonial boss. At least two factors that characterized the colonial nature of this phase are worth noting:

— Some 47.3 percent of Great Britain's foreign investments in 1913 were within the empire — 34.53 percent in Canada, Australia and South Africa; 9.93 percent in India and Ceylon; and a mere 2.84 percent in all its remaining possessions. Of the 52.7 percent of its foreign investments that were outside the empire, 18.34 percent were in the United States, 7.55 percent in Argentina, 20.8 percent in other Latin-American countries (even including a few colonies of other powers) and 6 percent in Europe. Only 9 percent of France's foreign investments were in its colonies, and less than 5 percent of Germany's. Meanwhile, 46.92 percent of the United States' foreign investments in 1914 were in Latin America, 7 percent in Asia, 19.69 percent in Europe and 24.68 percent in Canada.

— Imperialist colonialism protected markets against competition from other big powers. Twenty-six percent of Britain's exports went to the empire in 1870, and 39.8 percent in 1914. From 21 to 27 percent of its imports came from the empire in this period, those from British Africa rising from 2.22 to 5.02 percent of the total between 1877 and 1913.

France multiplied its exports to its colonies tenfold between 1897 and 1913, passing protectionist laws that gave it a favorable balance of trade at all times. Belgium succeeded in controlling half of the Congo's trade. In 1913, 35-40 percent of the Dutch East Indies' trade was with Britain — more than with its own metropolis. In 1912, only 1 percent of Germany's trade was with its colonies.

2. The second phase contained the apparent affirmation of colonialism in Africa and Asia and of US neocolonialism in Latin America, the worldwide capitalist crisis and World War II. This phase first saw an increase in trade and general economic relations between the imperialist powers and the rest of the capitalist world, to meet the needs of the 1914-19 war and then because of imperialist economic strength — up until the great crisis, when there was a general contraction in capitalist economic life.

The League of Nations legalized colonialism by limiting the right of national self-determination to the peoples of Europe. The German and Turkish empires were divided up among the victors, and colonial administration was greatly strengthened. However, other events of tremendous importance were also taking place.

— The October Revolution and the creation of the USSR provided a model of national and social liberation that was radically opposed to capitalism, a material source of support for revolutionaries and the ideological conditions for the liberation movements to become acquainted with Marxism-Leninism.

— Fearing that they would lose their colonies and needing to make them integrated economic units, in view of the obsolescence of their own industries and the competition for markets, the European metropolises strengthened their economic and administrative ties with their colonies. With its system of

colonial assimilation, France applied a strong policy of protectionism, increasing the percentages of its exports — from 16.4 percent in 1925 to 31.6 percent in 1935 — and imports — from 11.9 percent to 25.8 percent during the same period — with its colonies. With a much higher level of integration and greater capitalist development in its empire, Great Britain faced the situation by creating the Commonwealth and the trade preferences within it, that signified the abandonment of free trade. Between 1925 and 1935, Britain's imports from the empire rose from 27.6 percent to 36.2 percent of the total, and its exports to the empire, from 45.5 percent to 48.1 percent.

— The European imperialist states were weakened, the United States rose financially and economically in general and the world financial capital shifted from London to New York. Direct US worldwide investments rose from \$3.5 billion in 1914 to \$17.9 billion in 1929. Yankee monopolies began to use their subsidiaries to break through trade barriers everywhere. The rise of Yankee neocolonialism in Latin America meant the gradual decline of British influence there. The United States invested less than a fifth as much in its Filipino colony as in its Cuban neocolony.

In 1940, around 37.35 percent of the United States' foreign investments were in Latin America, 34.72 percent in Canada, 18.62 percent in Europe, 7.92 percent in Asia and Oceania and 1.1 percent in Africa. With its tremendous domestic market for goods and services, US dependency on the foreign market was felt only in a few raw materials and food supplies. Forty-one percent of its exports went to Europe, while 39 percent of its imports came from Asia and Oceania; 18 percent of its exports and 17 percent of its imports were with Canada, while the figures for its trade with Latin America were 19 and 24 percent, respectively.

— The world crisis deeply affected the entire capitalist system, as we all know. Then came the new challenge from German imperialism, the violent expansionism of Japan and Italy's junior partnership in a fascist bloc that also sought to carry out the primary bourgeois task of destroying the Soviet Union. European capitalism was so hard hit during World War II that its world role was reduced for all time.

3. "Decolonization" became general after 1947, and neocolonialism appeared in almost all places where national liberation was not attained.

We won't deal here with the impact that the formation of the socialist community and the tremendous upsurge in the national liberation movement had or with the control the United States exercised in the imperialist lineup and within the capitalist system as a whole. These phenomena substantially reduced the strength of European capitalism on a world scale and even within Europe.

The reordering of the capitalist system also opened the way to national independence in many cases, while the enormous

reactivation of trade and of the developed countries' economies from the '50s up to 1973 accelerated the national capitalist dependency of many "underdeveloped" (neocolonized) countries that specialized in certain phases of production complementary to the needs of the imperialist centers. Hence, the underdeveloped countries engaged in more unequal trade in the new system of "liberalized" trade. Meanwhile, the imperialist centers began to trade among themselves on a hitherto unheard-of scale and to link up their economies with technological, financial, industrial and political-military ties, first under US aegis and more recently with varying degrees of rivalry and confrontation — depending on the specific problem involved — but also with a level of coordination never before achieved by the imperialist powers (recognizing the United States as the major power), that has come about because of the change in the correlation of world forces, that is beginning to favor the socialist community and other revolutionaries.

The colonial empires disappeared. Great Britain withdrew in an orderly fashion from India (1947); from almost all of Asia and the Middle East; and then, between 1956 and 1968, from Africa. Although Britain became involved in the bloody repression of a number of insurrections and did not give up certain strategic points, even in the earlier period, it was closer to neocolonialism than the other metropolises were and often achieved it with greater facility. France fought two terrible wars to defend its right to retain its colonial regime in Indochina and in Algeria — and lost both of them to the peoples of those countries. In each war, it was helped by US imperialism, and, while general counterrevolutionary imperialist interests carried more weight in the case of Indochina, the loss of Algeria meant the collapse of France's most developed system of colonial exploitation, that began with a huge massacre and the massive installation of French settlers and ended 125 years later with another bloodbath, from which the Algerian people emerged victorious, leading to the massive exodus of the French settlers.

France's African colonies south of the Sahara became independent in three years (1958-61). Later, we will refer in detail to the neocolonial relations that have been established in that region. As for the small European countries, Holland tried in vain to retain Indonesia, and all of Portugal's long-drawn-out colonial wars in Africa, backed by the other imperialist powers, couldn't prevent the national liberation of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe.

Zaire is a terrible example of the specific limits of decolonization. Because its enormous wealth is strategic to the imperialists and it may hold the key to a revolutionary situation in southern Africa — where exploitation is the greatest — ever since it attained formal independence, all revolutionary actions and even attempts to undermine the neocolonial system have been brutally crushed with the direct use of European troops, mercenaries and reactionary African regimes.

Reviewing the century that has passed since imperialism first made its appearance, we can conclude that its universalization differs from premonopoly capitalism in that it involves the establishment of an *organic system* of relations with the countries it dominates — a developed economic complement with specializations, functions and interrelationships, combined with a complex of political and ideological relations; or, what amounts to the same thing, great violence followed by the restructuring of every national social form, whatever level of development it may have had and even though the results depended to a great extent on that level of development, in order to turn it into a capitalist structure fully integrated with the needs and interests of the world imperialist system on which it depends.

The universalization of capitalism turned out to be a prolonged process and one which will never be completed now, because of the emergence and development of world socialism. The monopolization and predominance of finance capital were used to multiply its strength and accelerate its expansion, with the result that there was *an enormous leap in the socialization of production and the exacerbation of the main contradiction within capitalism*. The struggle for "economic territory in general," as Lenin called it, necessarily replaced the old colonialism and, in a relatively brief period of time, led to the rule of neocolonialism, not by choice but because it was the form of international domination that corresponded to the needs of a parasitic monopoly capitalism in the existing world situation.

Such ideas as neocolonialism's being the form used by the Yankee empire while colonialism is the European form are so superficial as to cause confusion. At the same time, a study of imperialism's historic evolution in Europe, concerning the question of capitalist universalization, is most interesting, because you can see the whole range of situations pertaining to the many state imperialist powers of the time — Germany, whose development is comparable to that of the United States; Belgium, a small, industrialized power dependent on its foreign trade; Great Britain, which has had the most complex and complete capitalist history; and France, one of the first great capitalist powers, that developed usury and protectionism to the hilt and is now a middle-level power — and present attempts to make collective neocolonialism a European force in interimperialist battles and a corollary of the European Economic Community (EEC). The countries involved were at every possible level of development during the 19th and 20th centuries, and the magnitude of the relations established in capitalist Europe prior to the imperialist stage was impressive.

Many aspects of European colonialism might be analyzed; we have chosen one to illustrate our thesis: Africa and its current relations with the EEC countries.

A number of Western European spokesmen contend that the Lomé Convention (1975-80) — signed by the EEC and 46 (now 57) developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pa-



cific (the ACP states) — is the first in which neocolonialism has been excluded in an agreement among countries of clearly unequal levels of development. They argue that the Convention recognizes this inequality and mitigates it by giving the contracting parties nonreciprocal obligations; that cooperation replaces the "association" that governed most relations between the ACP states and the EEC up to 1975, under the Yaounde and Arusha Conventions; that two supranational bodies, including a large number (more than 40 percent) of the states of the world, have collectively agreed to economic relations for aid to development; and that, in the specific case of Africa, the Lomé Convention sets standards for a new economic legality between these two capitalist regions.

Unfortunately, except for the fact that the EEC is definitely the most effective example of capitalist economic integration, everything else in the preceding paragraph is false. Lomé is a step toward perfecting the neocolonialist system by guaranteeing capitalist Europe's access to essential raw materials, providing it with an area for investments protected from excessive risks, acting to neutralize the proponents of national sovereignty over resources and domestic development, seeking to divide the world front of underdeveloped countries and guaranteeing markets and a means for subordinate industrialization. In short, the Lomé Convention is an exercise in collective neocolonialism that does not exclude bilateral neocolonial extortion; it is both a resource in the interimperialist battle and an aspect of the imperialist international division of labor.

Moreover, the Lomé Convention is not the same as capitalist Europe's policy on Africa, because, although the Convention is certainly an important tool, the key relations in that policy lie outside its field of action. Moreover, the ACP states do not include a number of African countries with which capitalist Europe has extensive relations.

Europe's neocolonial relations in Africa

Here I would like to present some figures and a few brief comments on Europe's neocolonial relations in Africa, in order to show how imperialism, by its very nature, tends to strengthen ties with the neocolonialized countries and integrate them in its system in an increasingly complex way.

TABLE I

*Sub-Saharan Africa: some indices of development
(middle level)*

	Low-income developing countries		Intermediate- income developing countries	
	Africa	Others	Africa	Others
Income per inhabitant, 1976	145	155	390	990
Agricultural portion of the GIP, 1976 (% of total GIP)	41	47	28	18
Urban population, 1975 (% of total population)	11	18	24	47
Manufactured export products, 1975 (% of total exports)	5	14	5	24
Life expectancy at birth, 1975	41	45	44	61
Literate adults, 1974 (% of total adult population)	23	22	15	72

Source: Indices of world development reproduced in *Rapport sur le développement dans le monde, 1978* (Report on World Development, 1978), World Bank, Washington, D.C., August 1978, p. 53.

The underdeveloped world's index of food production per inhabitant (1961-65=100) is in itself modest, but Africa is in last place and falling farther and farther behind.

TABLE 2

	Average 1966-70	Average 1971-76
Africa	99	96
North and Central America	105	110
South America	104	104
Asia	104	107

Source: FAO, reproduced in *Rapport sur le développement dans le monde, 1978*, p. 59.

The figures are provided by an imperialist source. The sub-Saharan region is undoubtedly one of the areas of the world most severely plundered by capitalism and, as a whole, made very little progress in two decades of independence. Indeed, there are some examples of regression.

Before going into the region's ties with imperialism, let us round out the basic figures for Africa.

South Africa — that can't be considered a neocolony, strictly speaking — exerts various degrees of control over several underdeveloped countries that border on it and that were either British or its own colonies. With a little less than 7 percent of Africa's total population, it accounts for a third of the continent's Gross National Product, and its domestic GNP grew at an annual rate of 3 percent between 1960 and 1976. South Africa provides 40 percent of Africa's industrial production, 50 percent of its rail and motor transit and 75 percent of its steel production. It has 55 different minerals and produces 60 percent of the gold, 30 percent of the chrome, 25 percent of the manganese, 16 percent of the uranium and 14 percent of the diamonds mined in the world — 45 percent of all African mining. South Africa has 12 million head of cattle and a fifth of Africa's agricultural production. It is a strong and highly diversified industrial country.

A bourgeois minority superexploits the nonwhite population on behalf of the whites (17.5 percent of the population). Most of the proletariat and the dispossessed masses of this developed country are legally oppressed by the apartheid system. The South African Armed Forces, the strongest south of the Sahara

since the withdrawal of the colonizers, have been a tool for dominating the peoples of the Southern Cone: they illegally occupy Namibia, and, in 1975-76, they invaded Angola, where they were defeated. South Africa's monopoly enterprises act in several African countries and control 70 percent of the economy of Mauritius.

General statistics are few and far between for Zimbabwe (Rhodesia), but there are good economic reasons to explain imperialism's support for its barbarous white minority government. Zimbabwe is the fourth largest world producer of chrome (1974) and the ninth largest producer of gold (1974), and it also produces bauxite, tin, coal and tungsten. Its agriculture is productive and diversified, and it has 4.2 million head of cattle. The share of its Gross Internal Product derived from industry increased from 35 to 40 percent between 1960 and 1975: it produces paper, electric power and even motor vehicles. In 1976, its foreign debt was only .2 percent of the GNP.

The northern African countries fall into the Western classification of middle-income countries — except for Libya, which is one of the small group of oil exporters with surplus capital. French colonization of northwestern Africa (the Maghreb) and British colonization of Egypt readied this area for neocolonialism, but the Algerian Revolution and Libyan revolutionary process have put those two countries on the road to socioeconomic construction for the benefit of their peoples.

Capitalist Europe's chief economic relations in Africa are with South Africa. The upper South African bourgeoisie shares profits with 630 British, 494 US, 132 West German and 85 French transnationals; 50 percent of all investments in South Africa come from foreign sources, controlling 87 percent of the productive capacity in the private sector; and state monopoly capital is also extensive, effectively aided by foreign capital. For example, the French Lyonnais Credit organized the banking group that made it possible for the state to acquire 85 percent of its financing for nuclear technology. The United States is said to have an investment of \$2 billion in South Africa, and its Export-Import Bank and International Monetary Fund have granted South Africa nearly \$3 billion in credits and loans.

Finance capital has two clear advantages in South Africa: a developed country, with all that means in terms of making investment profitable, and a cheap and abundant work force — a happy and unusual coincidence. The highest profits in the world are made there. Moreover, since South Africa is repudiated throughout the world, it is a safe associate that won't prove fickle, a counterrevolutionary gendarme with guns pointed at the heart of Africa and at the Indian and South Atlantic Oceans. Besides, it is loaded with minerals. The growing world collective tendency also guarantees that imperialist antiapartheid expressions are pure hypocrisy: Great Britain, the United States, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, France and Italy hold the first six places in trade with South Africa.

TABLE 3

Foreign trade of EEC countries with South Africa 1973-77
(in millions of EEU's)

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Imports	1684	2300	2697	3856	4669
Exports	2030	3179	3296	3153	2809
Balance	346	879	329	-703	-1860

Note: One dollar equals 0.811 EEU's (1973), 0.838 (1974), 0.805 (1975), 0.894 (1976), 0.876 (1977).

Source: Eurostat, Monthly Bulletin of Foreign Trade, special number 1958-77, Brussels, June 1978, pp. 14-16.

According to official figures, 64.86 percent of South Africa's world trade in 1975 was with the EEC. *Progressive* magazine for August 1979 reported that the United States had replaced Great Britain as South Africa's number-one trading partner.

Arms exports are one of the main branches of Western Europe's trade. France, the second largest world supplier of weapons (the United States, of course, is first), is the principal source of South Africa's arms — and the relationship is not limited to the sale of products; for the past decade, it has also included technology and licenses for weapons production. South Africa turns out enough sophisticated weapons to supply its own forces and enter into an arms race that could involve it in dirty actions where clean ones won't work — remember Israel's arms shipments to the tyrant Somoza. France has also transnationalized its arms industry and has found, in South Africa, an area of expansion to replace the one it lost to the United States in Europe.

In short, even though South Africa withdrew from the colonial-neocolonial Commonwealth bloc in 1961 and its regime is continuously being condemned by the international community, its role in the world imperialist system has actually grown stronger, through the scope and significance of its commercial relations and the increased internationalization of the imperialist presence there.

Europe's need to meet its tremendous demand for raw materials and energy sources is an obvious part of the relations between capitalist Europe and the underdeveloped countries — which, precisely because they are underdeveloped, don't yet have these needs. Meanwhile, the few reserves of these materials that exist are being exhausted, making it more difficult to meet the demands

of industrial advancement and satisfy consumer habits. The members of the EEC import 100 percent of their nickel, tungsten and phosphates; 98 percent of their chrome and copper; 95 percent of their tin; 75 percent of their aluminum; and 70 percent of their zinc (1976). In 1977, the EEC imported energy products valued at 42.191 billion European Exchange Units (EEU), 55.4 percent of the energy it used — and 94.55 percent of this was in crude oil. Western Europe's position in terms of raw materials and energy is very weak, and Japan's is even worse, in contrast to the United States and Canada. Some of the basic features of Western Europe's policy on Africa are to guarantee the uninterrupted, increasing flow of raw materials and oil; plan future supplies; and, of course, reap profits.

The ACP states as a whole supply the EEC with 40 percent of its copper, 20 percent of its iron and nearly 30 percent of its aluminum — the three minerals that weigh most heavily in the EEC's imports (its tin imports nearly tripled between 1973 and 1977, yet the price dropped). Other minerals — uranium, thorium and cobalt — are clearly strategic, and their importance cannot be measured.

In the world interimperialist struggle for raw materials — as in so many other things — the biggest transnationals call the shots. Today, there is very extensive monopolization of prospecting and mining, with the profits in the international marketing of minerals; a few transnationals control more than half the world capitalist production, in spite of the many nationalizations that have taken place. For example, the United States' Alcoa and Reynolds control aluminum, with Alcan (Canada), Alusuisse (Switzerland) and Penichey-Ugine-Kuhlmann (PUK) of France following close behind.

This is the picture for African mining and its protagonists: British and US interests predominate south of the equator. The Anglo-American Corporation controls all the gold and diamonds in South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Zaire; the uranium of South Africa; and the chrome (with PUK of France) of Zimbabwe and South Africa.

North of the equator, France faces US competition from very strong positions, sometimes holding control outright, sometimes as majority stockholder and sometimes as a component in broadly based international corporations — often with the participation of African states and always with large-scale backing from the French state. PUK controls Morocco's cobalt and Gabon's uranium (with direct aid from the Economic Community for Africa).

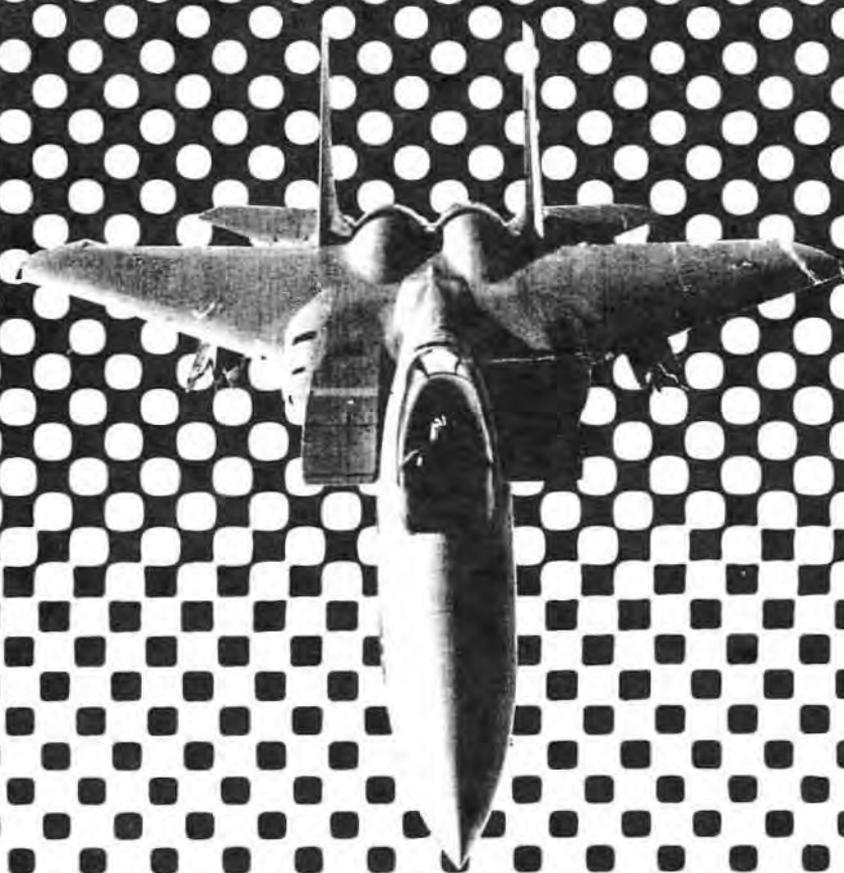
Reynolds exploits Ghana's bauxite. Liberia's iron is a US-West German enterprise, while its diamonds are, inevitably, the province of De Beers. Miferma continues to control the marketing of Mauritania's iron for the benefit of France, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany and Italy, while the AAC (51 percent) and the French state exploit Mauritanian copper. Sierra Leone shares the marketing of its bauxite with Alcan, but

its iron is controlled by the British; 49 percent of Gabon's manganese belongs to US Steel and the rest to PUK and the French state.

Zaire deserves special mention. It is one of imperialism's most coveted holdings in Africa, not only because of its mineral wealth. It produces 49.3 percent of the world's cobalt, 48 percent of its diamonds and 6 percent of its copper (it is the fifth largest producer), as well as zinc, tin, coal and oil. It also has vast reserves of uranium, manganese, gold, silver, germanium, columbium, tantalum, beryllium, cadmium and monazite — and foreign capital controls it all: Belgium (\$800 million), the United States (\$410 million), the Federal Republic of Germany (\$80 million), England (\$60 million) and France (\$20 million), in association with the state company Gecamines, created by formal nationalization. Japanese capital is also present in Sodimico and other companies and in mixed corporations. The imperialists have already developed the industrial mining of copper, tin, zinc and sulphuric acid in Zaire.

Algeria alone has managed to nationalize all its resources and marketing. Libya, whose development has been more recent, controls 70 percent of its oil production (it is the eighth largest oil producer), with a national development plan.

Some nationalizations include marketing contracts — Madagascar's manganese and Sierra Leone's bauxite, for example — which allow them certain options. Others, such as Gecamines and Miferma, leave matters of production and prospecting to the state and reserve the big slice of the pie for imperialism, through manipulations of sales prices and control of marketing. ●



THE US MILITARY
APPARATUS
IN PUERTO RICO

M. MEYN Y J. RODRIGUEZ

PUERTO Rico holds a key position in imperialism's worldwide and regional military strategy as a link in the Panama Canal defense system and its maritime approaches; as an operational base from which to threaten and possibly intervene in neighboring Caribbean countries; as a center for controlling naval activities and protecting the South Atlantic maritime routes; as a camp for all kinds of training and the testing of sophisticated weapons; and, finally, as an endless source of recruits for the imperial army. Our country is the headquarters for a huge system of bases and military installations and the naval command center for the entire Caribbean and South Atlantic. Training and weapons testing in a vast area northeast and southeast of Puerto Rico (including Vieques Island and, until recently, Culebra, as well) are coordinated from Roosevelt Roads Naval Station. The struggle of the people of Vieques, now known throughout the world, has served to dramatize the negative impact this has had on the population. Large numbers of Puerto Ricans have been recruited to serve in all the wars in which the United States has been involved during the past century. Finally, Puerto Rico has been used as a springboard for military interventions in the Caribbean, such as the 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic.

The constant militarization of the economy and society characteristic of postwar capitalism has been stepped up in Puerto Rico so much that it is a threat to world peace and the sovereignty of the peoples in the area.

In addition to its functions abroad, the US military apparatus is also one of the main components of the colonial state, penetrating colonial society in many ways that affect the people's daily lives and providing stability for the colonial order. Puerto Rico cannot fully exercise its right to self-determination until US imperialism stops using it for military purposes outside the island and within the colonial society.

This document summarizes the major changes in Puerto Rico's military functions since the war of '98, placing the present situation in its historic context and describing the various forms the imperialist military presence takes today.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Imperialist expansion and naval power

During the Spanish colonial period, when the Caribbean was the route through which gold and silver from Mexico and Peru were shipped to the metropolis, fierce battles erupted as the emerging European imperialist powers sought to establish operational bases from which they could plunder the wealth of the Spanish empire. Thus, the Caribbean became a mosaic of colonies belonging to the different European powers.

As a Mexican economist has noted, while religious architecture characterized the rest of the Spanish empire, military architecture was what distinguished the Antilles.

Even then, Puerto Rico was considered necessary to the defense of the Spanish routes, and its government was subsidized with funds from Mexico. When the Spanish colonies in America became independent, Puerto Rico was no longer needed for that purpose, but it continued to be an important military bastion because of its intrinsic economic importance — which increased during the 19th century — and its usefulness in controlling Cuba. For most of the 19th century, the United States preferred to see the Spanish remain in Cuba and Puerto Rico rather than allow those islands to fall into the hands of a stronger power — such as Great Britain — or become independent.

While the United States had important commercial interests in — and was, therefore, concerned about — the Caribbean, it did not acquire colonies or involve itself in military conflicts in the area until the end of the 19th century. In the first half of that century, the United States was busy expanding to the south and west in a process known as "agrarian expansionism." Unlike the situation in Europe, there was no major military resistance to this expansion — and, hence, no need to raise a powerful army. Later, during the 1860s and '70s, the United States poured its energies into the Civil War and the reconstruction of the South, thus finally solving the problem of establishing a heterogeneous economic base.

Toward the end of the 19th century, US capitalism reached a clearly monopolist phase, posing new internal contradictions that could not be solved by westward expansion. The US bourgeoisie then began to move toward imperialist commercial expansion and a search for markets for its surplus capital, especially in Asia and the Caribbean. This automatically entailed US military expansion, with emphasis on a naval force that could compete with other imperialist powers in dividing up the world.

Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, the theoretician of US naval power, provided the US imperialist bourgeoisie with a consistent program of overseas military expansion. As early as the 1880s, Mahan proposed building an imperial navy along British lines. He considered naval power to be a necessary prerequisite for US economic expansion. Among other things, a powerful navy required overseas bases, since "Warships are like land birds, incapable of straying far from the coast." Mahan also pointed out the military importance of building a canal through the Isthmus of Panama which would allow for speedy fleet movements between the Atlantic and Pacific, but he stressed that it would be "a strategic disaster" to build the canal before the United States had acquired clear naval hegemony around it — that is, in the Caribbean. The acquisition of Caribbean bases was necessary, not only to guarantee the

expansion of imperialist capital in the area but also to create secure military conditions for building the canal and continuing the United States' expansionist policy in Asia.

Mahan's ideas became a bible for such imperialist politicians as Theodore Roosevelt and Henry Cabot Lodge, who began to implement McKinley's policy. The acquisition of Hawaii (1897) and of Cuba, Puerto Rico, Guam and the Philippines (1898) gave the United States the bases it needed to pursue naval operations in Asia and, at the same time, defend the canal that was to be built in Panama. From a military point of view, the new colonies in Asia and the Pacific increased the need for the canal, while naval access to Cuba and Puerto Rico facilitated its defense. The United States decided to occupy Puerto Rico militarily before accepting Spain's surrender and then retained the island as a classic colony because of its military importance — which is also why the United States kept its troops in Cuba until it forced that country to cede the Guantánamo Base, in order to control the waters between Cuba and Haiti.

In 1902, a disciple of Mahan's candidly explained the military reasons for keeping Puerto Rico under US control:



In the West Indies, England holds Jamaica and St. Lucia, and France holds Martinique. Cuba (for naval purposes), Porto Rico and I believe we may say St. Thomas belong to the United States. Santo Domingo, belonging to no great power, might be seized by any in case it came to have a wartime importance. There are no other islands of any special present strategic value

Culebra, a small island to the east of and pertaining to Porto Rico, possesses an excellent harbor, better probably for war purposes than any in Porto Rico

In other things we're nearly equal; a naval station in Porto Rico might conceivably have great advantage over one at St. Thomas. Porto Rico might be made self-sustaining during blockade, which St. Thomas could never be, and if our authorities determine to establish a naval station at San Juan, for example, it would be a military measure of great importance to encourage the people of the island, by bounties or otherwise, to become a food exporting people. It would be a further exhibition of military foresight if we endeared the population to our institutions so that they would fight an invader in the way people fight for home and liberty

When an isthmian canal shall have been constructed it will be approached from Europe most conveniently by the Anegada passage, and from Atlantic ports of the United States by the Windward and Mona passages. Each passage will become a highway of great commerce.

No matter how strongly the isthmian canal may be fortified it would, in war, serve us no purpose — indeed, through war we might lose it entirely — if our fleet could not control its approaches.¹

Once the United States obtained these new military enclaves, it launched a policy of direct military intervention, prolonged military occupation and the training of client armies in the countries it invaded. This policy was aimed both at crushing the nationalist resistance to imperialist penetration and at placing the United States in a position of almost exclusive imperialist domination of the region. Naval control of Puerto Rico facilitated the implementation of this aggressive interventionist policy.

Puerto Rico and intervention in the Caribbean: 1898-1933

The US invading army met with very little resistance in Puerto Rico and occupied the island after a brief campaign. Unlike the Filipinos, the Puerto Ricans did not resist the new colonial power in armed struggle, for a number of historical reasons. Therefore, there was no need to

¹ W. V. Judson, "Strategic Value of Her West Indian Possessions to the United States," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, pp. 58-61, May 1902.



maintain a major garrison in Puerto Rico. The main confrontation with the US troops came from the armed "seditious parties" that had appeared on the scene when Spanish colonial power crumbled but were quickly put down by the Americans. The new colonial power built no new major military installation, having inherited the sizable Spanish-built military infrastructure. In 1923, however, the US Army took over a 300-acre plot near San Juan for Buchanan Military Camp, which became its main base on the island (still in existence, though now less important).

The influence of the imperial military apparatus was felt mainly through the colonial administration. Following a brief period of military government (1898-1900), a civilian colonial administration was established under the Foraker Act, but from 1909 to 1934 responsibility for colonial policy rested with the War Department's Bureau of Insular Affairs, which fought every effort to transfer administration of the colony to the Department of the Interior, indicating the military importance attributed to Puerto Rico and guaranteeing that military considerations were ever present in formulating colonial policy. Thus, militarism has always been a key factor in the colonial state.

Puerto Rico's strategic importance for the US Navy has already been noted. Like Guantánamo, it lies along one of the accesses to the Isthmus of Panama, facilitating naval operations in the area. Although this naval function is not the only consideration, it has always been a factor in US military policy on Puerto Rico.

During the first third of the century, the United States developed a policy of military intervention that affected almost all the countries in the Caribbean. Between 1898 and 1914, its main purpose was to prepare the conditions for the opening of the Panama Canal. That opening, in 1914, coincided with the outbreak of World War I in Europe, creating a power vacuum in the Caribbean that the United States hastened to fill. From then on, a number of Caribbean countries (Haiti,

the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, etc.) were kept under US military occupation for long periods, to incorporate them in the colonial system. Meanwhile, client armies were created, to be used later to bolster the structures of neocolonial domination. Implementation of this interventionist policy was facilitated by the naval bases which the United States held in Panama, Cuba and Puerto Rico.

TABLE 1

DIRECT MILITARY INTERVENTIONS: 1890-1933

1890	Argentina	1912	Honduras
1891	Haiti		Cuba
1894	Brazil	1913	Mexico
1895	Colombia	1914	Haiti
1896	Nicaragua		Dominican Republic
1898	Nicaragua		Dominican Republic
	Cuba	1917	Mexico
	Puerto Rico	1919	Mexico
1899	Nicaragua		Honduras
1901	Colombia (Panama)	1920	Panama
1902	Colombia		Guatemala
	Colombia (Panama)	1921	Panama/Costa Rica
1903	Honduras	1922	Cuba
	Panama	1924	Dominican Republic
1906	Dominican Republic		Honduras
1907	Honduras	1925	Honduras/Panama
1909	Cuba		Nicaragua
1910	Nicaragua	1933	Nicaragua
1911	Honduras		Cuba

Source: U.S. Senate Congressional Record, *U.S. Military Interventions: 1789-1945*; June 23, 1969.

The Jones Act and massive recruitment

World War I brought still another way of using Puerto Rico for military purposes. When it looked as though the United States would become involved in the war in Europe, Puerto Rico became an important potential source of military recruits. In order to make it legal to draft Puerto Ricans under the National Defense Act of 1916, they were given US citizenship with the passage of the Jones Act in 1917, just a month before formal US entry into the war. It is significant that the essence of the first legal reform in colonial relations involved pressing military considerations.²

Since 1917, more than 200 000 Puerto Ricans have served in the US Army. Troops recruited in Puerto Rico have fought in all the wars and invasions in which the United States has been involved, including those in Korea, Vietnam and the Dominican Republic.

TABLE II
PUERTO RICANS RECRUITED AND DRAFTED: 1917-73

	<i>Recruited</i>	<i>Drafted</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Casualties</i>
World War I	5 733	13 733	19 466	—
World War II	—	—	65 034	348
Korea	11 517	37 654	49 171	743
August 1953 to July 1964	41 554	7 273	48 827	1 300
August 1964 to January 1973	5 616	17 734	23 350	

Source: Peter Brown, *U.S. Military Presence in Puerto Rico*, p. 12, Río Piedras, March 1975.

² The National Guard was also established in 1917. Since 1950, it has been repeatedly used to repress the patriotic workers' movement.

Puerto Rican casualties have been higher than US casualties, in proportion to the population. In Korea, for example, US casualties were one for every 1125, while Puerto Rican casualties were one for every 660. Thirteen hundred Puerto Ricans died in Vietnam, and 56 percent of the island's veterans of that war are mental cases.

Although the draft was abolished because of widespread, militant opposition during the war in Vietnam, Puerto Rico is still targeted for a more subtle type of draft — the high rate of unemployment forces many young men to enlist in the Army. Between January and June 1975 alone, 1133 Puerto Ricans "enlisted" in the US Armed Forces (917 in the Army, 120 in the Navy, 61 in the Air Force and 35 in the Marines). In 1980, Robert Alfred McMillan, recruiting officer for the Armed Forces in Puerto Rico, stated that he had more than met his quota and had a waiting list of 60 candidates.

Massive recruitment of Puerto Ricans has had a considerable impact on the social structure and internal policy of the country. After demobilization, the "veterans"³ remain dependently linked to the US military apparatus through various aid programs (medical services, scholarships, low-interest loans, etc.) that allow them to move ahead. Many of them also join organizations such as the American Legion which represent their joint interests. These programs and organizations help build support for the colonial order by demanding stability in return for the few privileges that are granted.

The big depression and remilitarization of the colonial regime

The economic crisis of the '30s forced the United States to withdraw somewhat, in line with Roosevelt's "good neighbor" policy. The military occupation of a number of Caribbean countries was ended, open intervention was abandoned and negotiations with the reformist national forces were undertaken in order to reduce local tensions and growing anti-imperialist feelings in the area, but the United States was not prepared to relinquish control over countries it considered to be of great strategic importance, such as Panama and Puerto Rico. In other Caribbean countries, the economic crisis brought a relaxation in imperialist power, but just the opposite took place in Puerto Rico: repression was intensified.

During the depression, the anti-imperialist movement (represented by the Nationalist Party) gained strength, and the workers' movement became more militant, going beyond its traditional leadership. In 1934, the sugarcane workers went on strike, and this led to a gradual conver-

³ Puerto Rico has 170 000 veterans; 12 000 of them are active in the American Legion.

gence between the Nationalist Party and the grass roots of the workers' movement, with perspectives for establishing a broad front of opposition to colonialism. Faced with this threat, the US government decided to repress the Nationalist Party and the revolutionary working class demonstrations *manu militari*.

General Blanton Winship, a military official of the Bureau of Insular Affairs, was selected for this task and appointed Governor (1934-39),⁴ while Colonel Francis Riggs, another Army man, was appointed to head the police.⁵ In other words, a harsh military regime was installed on the island while a reformist policy prevailed in the metropolis.

Riggs made a number of changes in police organization, militarizing its structure, improving its weapons and setting up a special corps of policemen armed with Thompson machine guns. Clearly, the colonial regime did not wish to use the National Guard⁶ (of doubtful legality) or the regular Army troops (Infantry Regiment No. 65). Between 1935 and 1937, the militarized police force brutally repressed the nationalist movement in such actions as the massacre of Río Piedras (October 1935); the arrest and imprisonment of the top Nationalist Party leadership (March 1936); and the massacre of Ponce (March 1937), where the police first used their machine guns: 21 people were killed and nearly 200 were wounded. That operation, which Winship personally directed from the nearby town of Villalba, crushed the emerging anti-imperialist movement and left the field open to the Popular Party's reformist populism.

In 1939, after the Hayes Report had blamed Governor Winship for the massacre of Ponce, he was replaced by Admiral Leahy, a high-ranking diplomat. Leahy's mission was to establish huge naval bases in Ceiba and on Vieques and Culebra to provide sanctuary for the French and British fleets, should that prove necessary. After starting work on the bases, Leahy was appointed US Ambassador to the Vichy puppet government of occupied France in 1940.

⁴ Winship had not only participated in drawing up the colonial policy for Puerto Rico within the Bureau but had also been a member of the colonial administration in the Philippines.

⁵ Riggs was not lacking in counterrevolutionary experience. He is said to have helped Kerensky escape during the October Revolution.

⁶ The National Guard was mobilized in March 1936, following the arrest of the Nationalist Party leadership, but did not participate directly in the repression at that time. During the nationalist uprising of 1950, however, the National Guard played a major role and even bombed the town of Jayuya. In recent years, it has been used with ever greater frequency to repress the patriotic workers' movement.

Expansion during World War II

World War II brought about unprecedented militarization of the US economy and society. In 1939 only 1.3 percent of the Gross National Product was used for military purposes, but by 1943-44 that figure had risen to 41.6 percent. This huge and rapid expansion was immediately reflected in the increased US military presence in the Caribbean and Puerto Rico.

The United States obtained new Caribbean bases in the British colonies (Trinidad, the Bahamas, St. Lucia, British Guiana, etc.) through Lend-Lease agreements. It also expanded existing installations in Cuba (at Guantánamo); built new ones in Panama, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands; and established bases in other countries, such as Nicaragua (Corinto). Although the immediate purpose of this expansion was to defend the area (and its major maritime routes) from attack by the fascist powers, it also helped the United States to emerge from the war as a strong military power. The original US request to Panama to set up 100 military bases in that territory (outside the Canal Zone) was for a period of 999 years — not just the duration of the war.

The draft was reactivated in Puerto Rico, and more than 65 000 men were recruited. Moreover, a vast military construction program was launched: Borinquen Army Airfield was built near Aguadilla and was later transferred to the Air Force, which renamed it Ramey Base and used it for bombers equipped with nuclear warheads; Fort Buchanan was expanded to occupy 1514 acres of land; Roosevelt Roads Naval Station was built on an area of some 37 000 acres in Ceiba; land expropriation was begun on the nearby islands of Vieques and Culebra; and naval communications installations were set up. On Vieques, 26 000 out of a total of 33 000 acres were expropriated and large numbers of people were permanently displaced. The military construction program also had an important economic influence, helping to accelerate the process of colonial industrialization that characterized the next two decades.

Thus, World War II justified the construction of a vast network of all kinds of military installations in Puerto Rico and the rest of the Caribbean — which were kept in operation, with certain adaptations, during the cold war.

Puerto Rico's military role in the cold war

With the start of the cold war in 1947, all aspects of US foreign policy became secondary to the contradiction between capitalism and socialism. On the military level, plans for disarmament were forgotten, and wartime military alliances with capitalist countries were maintained and strengthened "to contain communism." The US military machine emerged as the dominant component in an extensive system of regional

and bilateral agreements⁷ designed to integrate all the military forces of the capitalist world in order to hem in the socialist countries.

During the first period (1947-60), the imperialist military machine was geared chiefly for direct military conflict with the socialist countries. Thus, a nuclear capacity was quickly developed, and conventional forces were maintained at a high level, the idea being to establish a cordon sanitaire around the socialist countries. In 1960, Kennedy began to reorient US military policy to counteract an alleged indirect strategy on the part of the Soviet Union, defining the national liberation movements as the immediate enemy. Without abandoning its aggressive posture reflected in nuclear and conventional arms, the United States adopted counterinsurgency doctrines and stepped up military intervention in the Third World. During both periods, Puerto Rico was assigned additional military functions in terms of general and regional strategy.

In 1947, the Army handed Borinquen Army Airfield over to the Air Force, which built a fairly large air base for the Strategic Air Command. At the height of its activity, what then became Ramey Base was headquarters for more than 30 B-52 bombers equipped with Hound Dog nuclear warheads. The existence of a nuclear air base in the Caribbean was part of Eisenhower's policy of dispersing nuclear power. Not only the Air Force but also the Navy began to use Puerto Rico as a nuclear center.

Once again, Puerto Rico was the victim of imperialism's strategic military requirements. The presence of nuclear weapons made the island a primary nuclear target, threatening its very survival and that of neighboring peoples. The nuclear importance of the island was made clear by the United States' refusal to include Puerto Rico in the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco. In December 1965, Ambassador William C. Foster wrote the Chairman of the Preparatory Commission, explaining that the United States did not wish to include the Virgin Islands in the proposed denuclearized zone, since they were US territory; nor did it wish to include the community of Puerto Rico, in view of its integral relationship with the United States. In the case of those area, he said, the United States would have to take into account disarmament policies that affected other nuclear powers.⁸

Ramey Base was closed in 1973 for economic reasons and transferred to the US Coast Guard Service. Recently, the Carter administration decided to adhere to the Treaty of Tlatelolco and agreed to include

⁷ Treaty of Rio, 1947; NATO, 1949; Australia and New Zealand, 1951; the Philippines, 1951; South Korea, 1953; Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), 1954; Baghdad Pact, 1955; Japan, 1960.

⁸ Alfonso García Robles, *El Tratado de Tlatelolco* (The Treaty of Tlatelolco), p. 161, Mexico, 1967.

Puerto Rico in it, but the Treaty still hasn't been ratified by the US Senate. Meanwhile, Navy ships and submarines that dock at bases on the island continue to be armed with nuclear warheads, in clear violation of Article 1 of the Treaty. As long as this continues and as long as a base the size and importance of Roosevelt Roads exists, the Puerto Rican people will continue to be exposed to nuclear destruction. In addition, there is reason to believe that nuclear weapons are still stockpiled at Roosevelt Roads. The international community should demand the total denuclearization of Puerto Rico and pressure the countries that have signed the Treaty to enforce Article 16, which provides for special inspections.

Puerto Rico is also used militarily in imperialism's attempts to contain national liberation struggles in Latin America and to freeze the neocolonial status quo in the Caribbean. In this new role, the colony is a coordinating center and a transit point for military intervention in the Caribbean, as well as a training base in counterinsurgency and landing tactics. Furthermore, as we have already pointed out, military personnel recruited in Puerto Rico have been used in attacks in other Third World countries.

In 1959, a military unit was airlifted to the island for the purpose of intervening in Venezuela during the protest demonstrations over Vice President Nixon's visit to that country. The naval blockade imposed on Cuba in 1962 was coordinated from Roosevelt Roads Naval Station, and all military forces were placed on a war footing. In 1965, Ramey Base was used to supply Elías Wessin y Wessin's reactionary Dominican forces when they were on the point of collapsing; later, civilian and military airports were used for the criminal invasion of the Dominican Republic. The naval forces that threatened Trinidad in 1970 were controlled by the naval command at Roosevelt Roads. Recently, President Carter sent Puerto Rican National Guard personnel and equipment instead of civilians to the Dominican Republic to provide assistance — a hidden form of military intervention which should be denounced.

Although Panama has been the chief center for counterinsurgency training, Puerto Rico has also been used for that purpose. The Peace Corps had a training center there, and the tropical forest of Yunque was used for counterinsurgency training and experiments with defoliants similar to those used in Vietnam.⁹ Finally, Vieques Island is used for amphibious landing practice for rapid strike military interventions.

⁹ The full irrationality of the military machine's disregard for life and for the civilian population was shown when it was revealed that bacteriological tests had been made in 1950. One of these tests was made in the Virgin Islands, near Puerto Rico, using a bacteria (cereal rust epidemic) that damages the harvests. (*San Juan Star*, p. 10, October 20, 1979.)



Until recently, these maneuvers were revealingly referred to as the Springboard Operations.

The cold war also consolidated Puerto Rico's position as a naval command and training center of primary importance. As we will see in more detail later, Puerto Rico is the headquarters for the naval command of the entire Caribbean (including Panama and Guantánamo) and the South Atlantic. This means that, if the United States had decided to invade Angola, the naval operations would have been directed from Roosevelt Roads. That base, Vieques and the waters around them are perhaps *the main naval center at present for training and experimenting with new weapons*. Puerto Rico has really been forced to become a fief of the US Navy.

Recent changes

In recent years, the United States has begun to make changes in its military policy on the Caribbean and Puerto Rico. These changes point to the gradual elimination of the old forms based on an imperialist military presence and to a search for new military approaches more in line with the changing political and economic situation in the area.

The Panamanian people's continuing struggle has forced the United States to commit itself to reducing its military presence and completely abandoning its numerous military installations in the Canal Zone by 1999. The Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua meant the final collapse of CONDECA, which had been set up for military intervention in Central America. The efforts to coordinate a multilateral invasion of Nicaragua — à la Dominican Republic — were a total failure. Cuba's leadership of the Third World countries will increase international pressure for the return of Guantánamo to Cuba. Moreover, this problem must be solved if relations between Cuba and the United States are to be normalized. From a political point of view, US possession of Guantánamo will become increasingly indefensible. The United States has also abandoned other important facilities, such as Chaguaramas Base, in Trinidad.

Since the old military forms can no longer be used, the United States considers it necessary to redefine its strategy in order to be able to influence and control the changes that are taking place in the Caribbean. The Cuban Revolution's consolidation; the progressive regimes in Jamaica, Grenada and Guyana; the assumption of power by revolutionary forces in Nicaragua, the rise of a people's movement in El Salvador and Guatemala; and, of course, the growing pressure for Puerto Rican independence pose new dangers for imperialism, which therefore relies on its capacity for military blackmail in the region. This is how the recent creation of a naval command at Key West, the scheduled landing practice at Guantánamo and the joint naval maneuvers in Puerto Rico must be viewed. The presence of Soviet troops in Cuba was just an excuse. This time the main aim was to intimidate not just Cuba but all the peoples of the Caribbean. Ironically, on a short-term basis, the political and economic changes in the region have served to increase Puerto Rico's strategic value for imperialism and harden the Pentagon's attitude toward the island.

A number of important trends can be identified in Puerto Rico:

1. The presence of the Air Force has been practically eliminated since the deactivation of Ramey in 1973.

2. The regular Army has been greatly reduced by closing down a number of facilities and concentrating activities at Fort Buchanan, where the main functions are recruitment and support of the domestic repressive forces.

3. The Navy has increased in importance and appears to be expanding its activities by taking over Ramey Base.

4. The domestic agencies of repression — the Army Reserves, the National Guard and the police — have been strengthened and used with greater frequency since the economic crisis of 1973-75.

5. All forms of opposition to militarism, such as the recent actions on Vieques, have been met with heavy-handed intransigence, indicating that, within the process of revising its regional military policy, imperialism seeks to retain Puerto Rico at all costs, especially as a naval enclave from which operations against other countries in the area can be launched.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

Thus far, we have analyzed the most important changes in the US military presence in Puerto Rico. Now we will try to describe the forms and the magnitude of its presence today. We would especially like to stress the impact that the imperialist military apparatus has on the domestic situation and how it helps provide stability for the colonial order.

Military costs

In spite of the number of military facilities that have been closed down, military costs increased during the '70s. In 1978, the cost of operating the military bureaucracy amounted to \$151.7 million, or 60.4 percent of the total operating costs of all US government agencies in Puerto Rico. In other words, the military sector is clearly the most important component of the imperialist state in Puerto Rico. We should point out that this percentage is significantly higher than it is in the United States — which shows just how militarized the colony is.

TABLE III

OPERATING COSTS FOR THE MILITARY APPARATUS
AND PAYMENTS TO VETERANS, IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS:
1975-78

<i>Operating costs</i>	<i>1975</i>		<i>1978</i>	
	<i>Absolute</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Absolute</i>	<i>%</i>
All federal agencies	193.9	100.0	251.0	100.0
Military agencies	112.0	57.8	251.0	60.4
Defense Dept.	(78.3)	(69.9)	(90.5)	(59.7)
Veterans' Administration	(33.1)	(29.5)	(61.2)	(40.7)
Selective Service	(0.5)	(0.4)	(0.0)	(0.0)
<i>Payments to Veterans</i>				
Total payments to individuals	1113.3	100.0	2009.9	100.0
Veterans	178.4	15.7	198.1	10.1

Source: Puerto Rican Planning Board, *Reports to the Governor*, 1975 and 1978.

The Department of Defense uses 67.6 percent of its total operating costs to maintain its bases and to finance the Army Reserves and the National Guard. The remaining 32.4 percent is absorbed by the Veterans' Administration, which provides services for former military personnel. In both cases, the costs have important political and economic repercussions. A large share of these funds goes directly into the colonial economy, helping to keep it afloat by creating hundreds of civilian jobs. The sector of the population directly linked to the military bureaucracy is a source of support for the colonial order.

Even more important are the payments made to veterans, which totaled \$198.1 million in 1978, or 10.1 percent of all individual payments from the federal government. Veterans' benefits fulfill the political function of integrating a considerable sector of the population in the colonial order through the military apparatus. Adding up the operating costs and payments to veterans, we find that, in 1978, the United States spent \$349.8 million for military purposes in Puerto Rico — more than it spent on military assistance for all the rest of Latin America.

Installations and bases

Since the mid-'50s, the US Armed Forces have transferred seven military installations to the Puerto Rican government (Camp O'Reilly, Fort Mascaro, Fort Amézquita, Fort Brooke, Fort San Cristóbal, Henry Barracks and Miramar Naval Station).

At present, the main installations and bases of the regular Armed Forces are 1) Roosevelt Roads, in Ceiba, in eastern Puerto Rico; 2) Camp García, on Vieques; 3) Fort Buchanan, in metropolitan San Juan; 4) Sabana Seca, a communications and tracking center west of San Juan; 5) Camp Tortuguero, a center for localized training on the northern coast, between San Juan and Arecibo; 6) Salinas Training Area, a very large training center now used by the National Guard; and 7) Ramey Base, a vast air base on the northwest coast, which is now being reactivated by the Navy. These installations and bases cover a total area of 62 000 acres.

In addition, the Army Reserves (2000 men) have nine installations, four in San Juan and five in other parts of the island: Bayamón, Fort Buchanan, Puerto Nuevo, San Juan, Aguadilla, Yauco, Ponce, Salinas and Caguas.

The National Guard (9000 men) has an air base (Muñiz Air Base) at the Isla Verde international airport and radar centers in Punta Salinas. In 1976, it had 20 garrisons in the most important cities; recently, seven more garrisons have been programmed or finished in Coamo, Arecibo, Aguadilla, Salinas, San Juan, Juana Díaz and Utuado. The National Guard can also use the Fort Buchanan installations during mobilizations.

The two main bases of the regular Armed Forces (Roosevelt Roads for the Navy and Fort Buchanan for the Army) deserve special discussion.

A. Roosevelt Roads Naval Station (RRNS)

The Navy is the main military force on active service in Puerto Rico, and its main base is the 37 000-acre RRNS, one of the largest installations in the world.

RRNS has three harbors, one of which is large enough to accommodate dozens of warships, including the *Enterprise*, the biggest ship in the US Navy. The port facilities at RRNS handle an average of 1200 ships and 5400 smaller vessels a year. The RRNS airport has landing strips around three miles long, so any type of military plane can put down there. Thus, it can replace the airport at Ramey. Some 45 000 takeoffs and landings are made at the RRNS airport every year. The station also includes a major communications center, in a building with five underground levels. RRNS also controls other communications facilities on the island, such as Sabana Seca Communications Center (also used by the National Guard) and Fort Allen, near Ponce.

TABLE IV
PERTINENT DATA ON ROOSEVELT ROADS

Area	37 000 acres, plus 22 000 on Vieques
Value of buildings	\$100 million
Roads	100 miles
Capacity	6000 military personnel
Military visitors	200 000 per year
Air traffic	45 000 landings and takeoffs per year
Maritime activity	1200 ships and 5400 small vessels per year
Active military personnel	2575
Civilian employees	794
Estimated replacement value in 1972	\$287 million (apparently not including the submarine practice area)

Source: John Enders, *United States Military and Puerto Rico*, p. 23, November 1977.

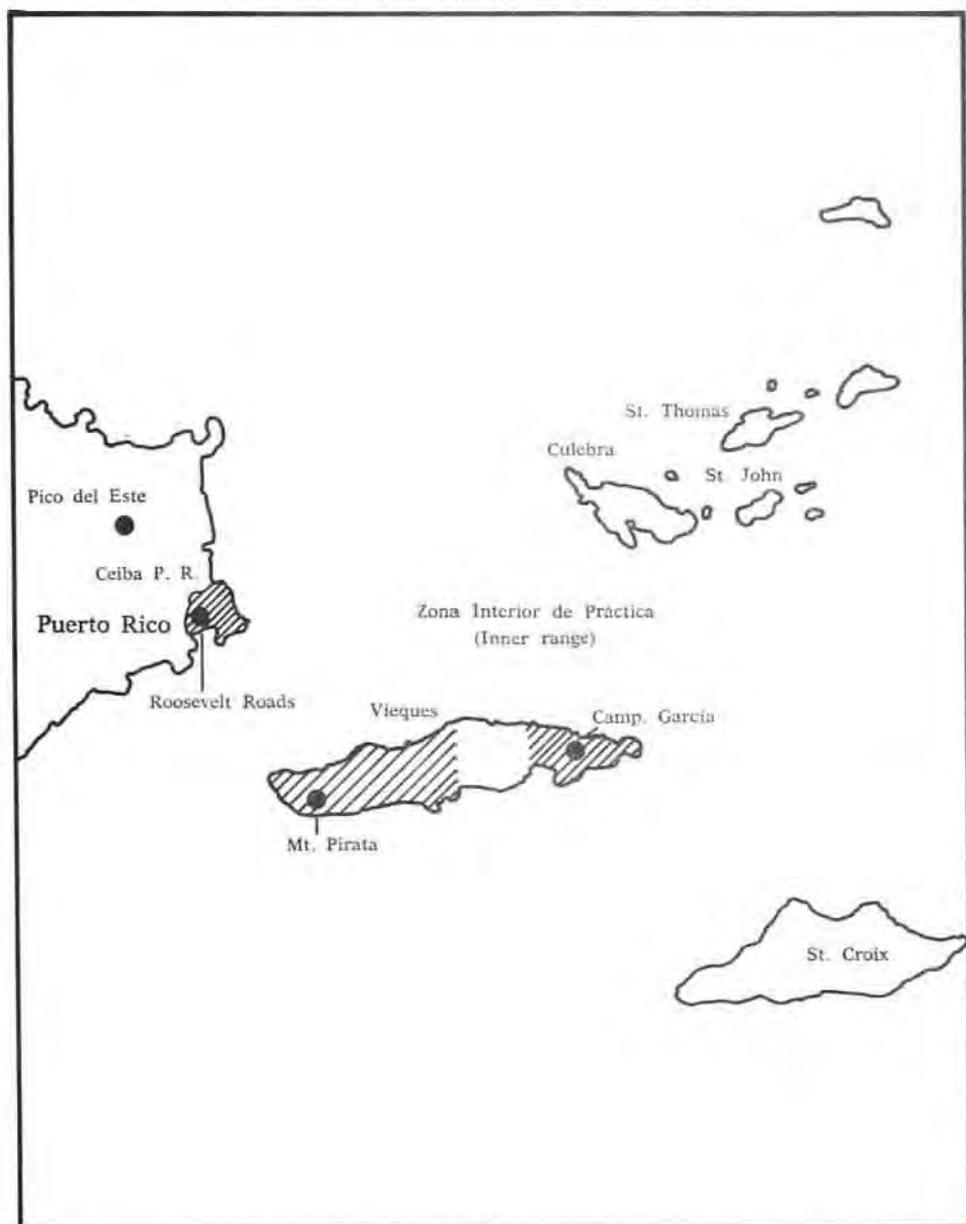
The islands of Vieques, Santa Cruz, Santo Tomás and (until recently) Culebra, plus Pico del Este in Puerto Rico, are also part of the RRNS military complex. Pico del Este, Santa Cruz and Santo Tomás have communications and base tracking installations. RRNS, the islands just listed and their surrounding waters make up the inside area of the Atlantic Fleet Weapons Training Facility. These installations were set up in 1963 to provide training in the use of weapons; support services for fleet training; and the development, testing and evaluation of new weapons systems. In addition to the inside area, there are two outside areas (Alfa and Bravo) that cover a vast expanse of the sea north- and southeast of Puerto Rico (see maps 1 and 2). The amount of testing done in these areas is shown in the following annual averages: 250 land-to-air and air-to-air missiles, 800 drones, 500 torpedos and anti-submarine weapons, 8000 shooting practices on the coast and in the sea around Vieques, 350 planes involved, 4 major sailing and landing maneuvers and 12 aircraft carriers tested.

The struggle the people of Culebra waged to dislodge the Navy forced the US Congress to vote unanimously to deny any funds for operations on that island after fiscal year 1974. Since then, operations and shooting practices on Vieques have been stepped up. There, the Navy controls 79 percent of the land. It uses one end of the island as an ammunition dump and the rest of the land for shooting and landing practice. This is a constant threat to the people of Vieques and is destroying their rich marine resources.

RRNS is the base for the following:

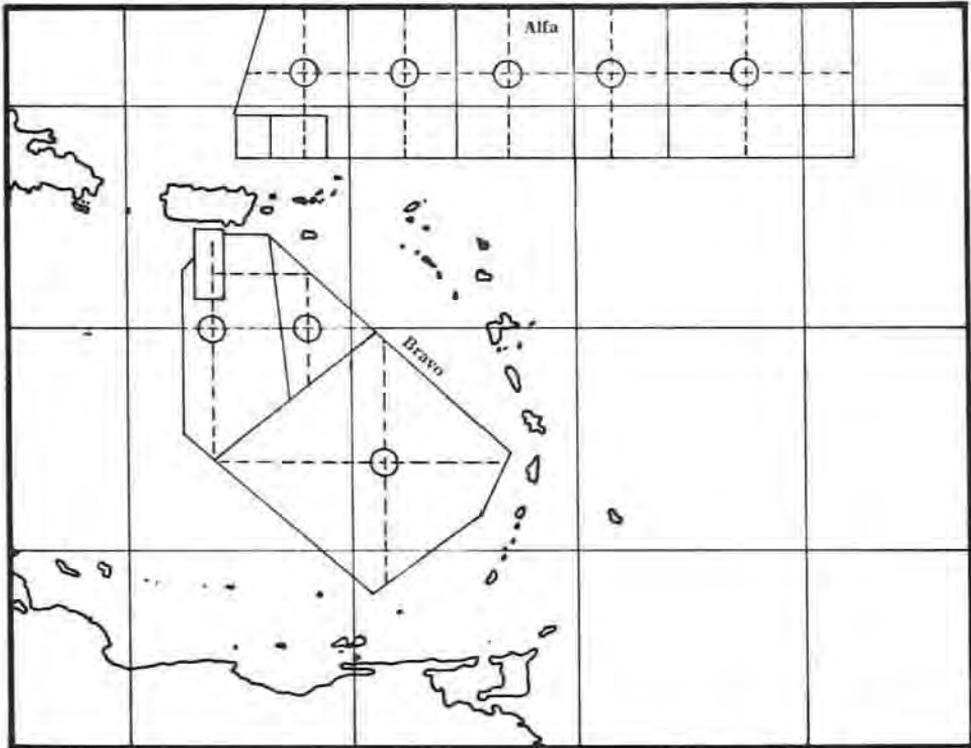
1. Commander of the Caribbean Naval Forces (COMNAVFORCARIB).
The Admiral who headed this command until recently was the recipient of many decorations, including one for what was described as exceptionally meritorious services during combat operations against North Vietnamese and Viet Cong communist aggressive forces. This command consists of
 - a) Sea Frontier, organized in 1941 for submarine protection of the maritime routes of Central and South America;
 - b) Panama Sector, which includes all the naval installations in the Canal Zone;
 - c) Guantánamo Sector, which includes the Guantánamo air and naval base; and
 - d) Puerto Rico and Trinidad Sector, which includes the maritime areas of the Atlantic and the Caribbean, most of the land mass of Hispaniola, Puerto Rico and all the Lesser Antilles;
2. Commander of the Naval Base (COMNAVBASE), the Roosevelt Roads administrative and logistics command;

Map 1
Roosevelt Roads Naval Complex and inner practice area



3. Commander of the Antilles Defense Command (COMANDEFCON), a branch of the US Joint Command whose function is to coordinate military actions in the Caribbean that require the participation of the other two branches of the services. In case of a federal mobilization of the Reserves and National Guard, these two forces fall under this command, indicating how important a role the Navy plays; and

Map 2
Alfa and Bravo areas



4. Commander of the South Atlantic Forces (COMSOLANT). This command is subordinate to the Commander in Chief of the Atlantic Fleet and apparently rests with a different officer from those who hold the previously listed commands. It also includes areas of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. It sponsors the Amity naval visits to Africa and the Unitas maneuvers along the coast of South America.

Because of its extraordinary naval installations, Roosevelt Roads, sponsors joint maneuvers with the naval forces of NATO: Caribops (Caribbean Operations, formerly Springboard) — in which, in 1977, three British ships, four from the Netherlands, one from Canada, two from the Federal Republic of Germany, five from Portugal and six from the United States participated — and Unitas, using Latin-American naval and air forces. There have been 18 Unitas maneuvers. A recent one included the participation of five ships from Ecuador, four from Colombia, six from Peru, three from Chile, one from Argentina, two from Brazil, eight from Venezuela and seven from Uruguay. This maneuver has a particularly painful meaning for the Chilean people, for it was being held off the coast of Chile at the time the Popular Unity government was overthrown in 1973. The international movement of solidarity with Puerto Rico should denounce the use of Puerto Rico for maneuvers in which European and Latin-American naval vessels participate and the use of Vieques as a shooting range.

B. Fort Buchanan

There are 211 active military personnel and 498 civilian employees on this Army base, which contrasts with RRNS in that its functions are mainly of a domestic nature: 1) support for the Reserves and the National Guard of Puerto Rico; 2) operations center for the National Guard in metropolitan San Juan in case of mobilization; 3) coordination of reserve officer training programs in schools and universities; 4) Army internal intelligence activities; 5) commissary services and other veterans' benefits; 6) public relations work in the metropolitan area; and 7) coordination of recruiting for the regular Army.

The Pentagon has considered shutting down Buchanan because it is too big and costly for the work it does, but a recent report indicates how important this installation is in maintaining colonial order:

Although all the units could be mobilized in a "tent city" in Camp Salinas, the commander of the mobilized units would be far from the offices of the Puerto Rican government. This could complicate and delay the coordination of defense plans and activities. Moreover, all the mobilized forces would be around 42 miles (at least an hour in convoy) from San Juan...

It is necessary to keep in mind the probability of sabotage, subversive actions and open aggression by antigovernment groups around San Juan. Any break in communications would delay or cancel defensive measures. The presence of at least a small force at Fort Buchanan would be an effective obstacle to aggressive or subversive actions by antigovernmental enemy groups... Closing down Fort Buchanan would eliminate the operations in the San Juan area.

... This installation is a visible link between the government of Puerto Rico and the American federal system. The presence of the Army in Buchanan is part of this symbolic link... The base has been a "good neighbor" to the community, mainly by providing play areas for children's sports activities. Its deactivation would remove this opportunity to maintain positive community relations.¹⁰

Thus, except for recruiting for service abroad, Buchanan's function is to control the colonial population; maintain a symbolic presence of the US Army as a warning to the people's movement; guarantee a high level of preparation for the domestic repressive forces and serve as a base for "antisubversive actions" in San Juan; maintain a direct link with demobilized men, veterans and the families of deceased servicemen (a total of 94 000 civilians directly or indirectly affected);

¹⁰ John Enders, *United States Military and Puerto Rico*, pp. 6-8, November 1977. (Retranslated from the Spanish.)

and build support for the military machine through public relations activities in the community and ideological penetration in schools and universities through ROTC.

The following table sums up the impact Buchanan has on the people:

TABLE V
MILITARY OR CIVILIAN POPULATION DIRECTLY
OR INDIRECTLY LINKED TO BUCHANAN IN 1975

	<i>Persons directly linked</i>	<i>Dependents</i>
Active Army	384	1 171
Reserve Army	2 200	6 820
National Guard	7 500	23 250
Regular Air Force	63	195
Marine Corps	10	31
Coast Guard Service	178	283
Navy	216	453
Civilians	1 204	—
Dependents of those missing, etc.	—	1 395
Retired	6 742	24 894
Totally incapacitated veterans	7 540	11 310
Dependents of deceased military	—	15 590
Army ROTC (students)	1 750	—
Air Force ROTC (students)	450	—
Puerto Rican regular Army	—	—
Serving abroad	10 000	—
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL	38 237	85 392

Source: Enders, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

The National Guard: the main repressive force

The National Guard has an organic relationship with the US Army and Air Force. Since the economic crisis of 1973-75, it has been expanded considerably — from 7500 troops and 51 units to 9000 troops and 54 units in 1977. It now has some 10 000 members and 1074 employees. Significantly, it is the biggest force of its kind — even larger in proportion to the population than any in the United States.

This force has weekend and summer training and practice and can be totally or partially mobilized for any eventuality. Many of its officers, who come from the professional sectors directly linked to the state bureaucracy (both local and federal), are pro-American and virulently anticommunist. The high-ranking cadres are a source of recruits for key posts in the civilian bureaucracy. For example, the superintendency of the police has twice gone to a National Guard officer. The current Secretary of Housing is also a high-ranking officer of the force. General Carlos Llenza, Commander of the National Guard, gave a speech not long ago that showed the ideological orientation of the officers. Llenza urged that the draft be reinstated and that problems in Iran be quickly and effectively resolved, denounced the Puerto Rican Lawyers' Guild for having praised Juan Mari Bras and said that the Communists were the number-one enemy of the National Guard.

The National Guard has two main functions: it is a domestic counterinsurgency force and a mediating tool for militaristic and colonialist values in Puerto Rican society. It also serves as a reserve force in case of international conflict. We have already noted that units of the National Guard were sent to the Dominican Republic, which indicates that they may be used in the future as a regional gendarme.

Although the National Guard is formally under the authority of the colonial government, it is clearly an appendage of the imperialist state, directly protecting its interests in Puerto Rico. This force gets its funds from the US Department of Defense. In 1977, it received \$21 million in federal funds — and \$1.7 million from the Puerto Rican government. Commander in Chief Llenza has an Army adviser and an Air Force adviser assigned to him who are directly responsible to the US military machine. In addition, the US President can "federalize" the National Guard whenever he chooses, placing it under his direct command in such cases. The order to send National Guard troops to the Dominican Republic, for instance, came directly from the US President.

Since 1972, the National Guard has had a military academy where it trains cadres up to the level of Second Lieutenant, but most of the officers still receive their training in the United States and Panama.

All units receive training in such repressive techniques as "antimutiny" tactics, which are clearly directed against the workers' and student

movements and other patriotic forces. Other specialists in repression include the Unit of Military Support for the Civilian Authorities, which, among other things, is responsible for planning militant actions in case of "civilian disturbances." The G-2 Special Assistance Unit investigates civilians who are considered "subversive" and the affiliations of all members and employees of the National Guard. These investigations are made through the Puerto Rican police. In 1976, there were 1147 such investigations for recruitment and employment and 260 for the "federal level." This guarantees that personnel with progressive or independent leanings will not be admitted to the National Guard.

The National Guard has been used successfully to repress students at the University of Puerto Rico and to break workers' strikes in public services (1973 and 1974). The National Guard's role in national and class oppression becomes clear when we recall its bloody repression of the 1950 nationalist uprising. Since then, as the crisis in the colonial model has deepened, the National Guard has been strengthened and used for these ends with ever greater frequency. The Puerto Rican police have played a similar role and have also been expanded and "modernized," but it is the National Guard that provides imperialism with the infrastructure of a regular "national" army — and the imperialists will try to make it just that if forced to grant Puerto Rico its independence. Any real decolonization process will be impossible as long as this force remains intact.

Other forms of militarization of colonial society

When we speak of the militarization of colonial society, we refer not only to the use of vast areas for bases and installations, the channeling of large numbers of people into military institutions and the development of relations of economic dependency on the military apparatus among a broad sector of the population but also to the ideological penetration of colonial society through an endless number of military, paramilitary and "civic action" organizations in communities and the constant propaganda fed through the mass media. In this regard, ideological penetration by the military machine is an aspect of cultural and ideological aggression by imperialism. In Puerto Rico, militarism is a key component of colonialist ideology.

The spreading of values of order, discipline, obedience and sacrifice for US interests and the presentation of the imperialist military machine as the essence of scientific-technical progress contribute to passive acceptance of the present colonial situation and to the hope that Puerto Rico will become a real part of the United States, as another state. This is clearly the ideological content of militarism in Puerto Rico.

U.S. Army promotion



Ideological penetration of Puerto Rican society by US militarism takes so many forms that it is impossible to describe them all in detail here. We would simply like to give examples of some of the mechanisms that are used.

Not only does the National Guard influence the community through the individual activities of its members, but it also has "community relations squads" that specialize in such operations. These units support many of the paramilitary youth organizations, such as the Boy and Girls Scouts, the Civil Air Patrol, the Crusaders of America, and the Police Athletic League. The Army and Navy also actively support these groups. For some years now, though, their support has gone beyond these groups to the establishment of private military schools — the Lincoln Military Academy, the Puerto Rican Military Academy and the Antilles Military Academy, where the students are taught military values from a very early age. In these schools, the US Armed Forces have set up Junior ROTC programs to prepare the students ideologically to become future ROTC cadets in the universities. Students from other private schools also take part in these programs.

The Air Force and the Army run ROTC programs in both public and private universities. Even though the program had to be removed from the Río Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico because of militant opposition from the student movement, it continues to operate with a sizable enrollment. In 1975, the Army ROTC had 1750 cadets and the Air Force, 450. ROTC students have been noted for their reactionary positions in the university.



High court tells Barreto to explain 'official results'

By TOMAS STELLA

of the staff

The Commonwealth Supreme Court issued a unanimous decision today to require the legal basis for his gubernatorial inauguration rights at the "official results" of the general election. The court in a unanimous opinion today Wednesday afternoon, after also questioning the validity of Barreto's victory, found that a law filed by the Popular Democratic Party.

Whether the Electoral Law allows him to start a term.

Gov. Barreto has said and repeated that as votes from San Juan Province (and 2 are mentioned, Page 1)

use of particular credits that were used in the day following the election, as authorized by law.

Whether a court can be verified before meeting the legal requirements for constitution, a person will, still, in the case of elections as well as that one is found in the rules.

Some of the right orders were beyond the arguments raised. (See COURT, Page 1)



2 cops shot dead

Because of their key position in the family, women also play an important role as tools of ideological penetration. One of the expressions of feminism in Puerto Rico has been increasing incorporation of women in the Armed Forces.

All branches of the Armed Forces have public relations officers, whose role is to provide the mass media with news favorable to the interests of the military machine. Such news abounds in the *San Juan Star*, an English-language newspaper. The public relations officers also maintain contact with many civic associations and military support groups, such as the Navy League. Finally, the American Legion, the veterans' organization, also plays an important role of ideological penetration in colonial society by promoting the commemoration of "patriotic" occasions, such as Veterans' Day.

IN CONCLUSION

The struggle for the denuclearization and demilitarization of Puerto Rico is an important part of the movement of international solidarity with the independence of Puerto Rico. As an immediate, urgent task, support for the struggle of the people of Vieques should be a main concern of anti-imperialist forces throughout the world. The military use of Puerto Rico constitutes a constant threat to all the peoples of the Caribbean and Latin America and to world peace. Moreover, the militarization of the island's society is an obstacle to real decolonization. The international movement should demand an immediate halt to all direct or indirect forms of intervention by the imperialist military machine in the daily lives of the Puerto Rican people. ●



ma'i and
his word

MENGISTU HAILE MARIAM

A CHAPTER IN ETHIOPIAN HISTORY

(II)



Tricontinental presents the final section of Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile Mariam's report to the 1st Congress of the Commission for Organizing the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia. The first part appeared in the last issue of our magazine.

Slavery existed in Ethiopia for a long time, but the feudal order was mainly responsible for the centuries-long exploitation of the Ethiopian people. The feudal system of land ownership was extremely cruel, keeping the peasants in abject poverty and encouraging divisions based on religious, tribal and regional differences that led to internecine wars and massacres.

The feudal landowners permitted a gradual rise of capitalism in Ethiopia, but this only aggravated the direct and indirect oppression of the masses.

For 100 years before the Revolution, the Ethiopian masses were attacked not only by their internal enemies but also by foreign invaders and imperialist forces.

Both Egypt and Italy invaded Ethiopia more than once out of colonial expansionist greed, and Great Britain later established its neocolonialist power there.

After World War II, the United States took over from England and held neocolonialist power in Ethiopia for the next 30 years. Its close links with the feudal regime allowed it to establish a military base, promote capitalist ideology and relentlessly push its cheap culture.

When the Ethiopian Revolution erupted, imperialism undertook the direct and indirect coordination of the counterrevolutionary forces to protect its interests, seriously injuring the people's movement.

In the period just before the revolutionary triumph, the peasants, workers, soldiers, students and other brutally exploited sectors became the real force behind the Revolution.

The drought in Wollo, unemployment and other hardships also triggered the mass uprising.

Although the Revolution lacked an organized leadership at first, it soon adopted a radical line and initiated basic changes. Rather than acting mechanically or spontaneously, the Provisional Military Administrative Council implemented various strategies that benefited the masses and rooted out the traitors from its ranks.

The December 19, 1974, proclamation of Ethiopian socialism based on the Program of National Democratic Revolution was a great ideological advance. Its slogan was "Ethiopia first," and it launched a campaign of "development through cooperation," designed to raise the consciousness of the peasants, abolish religious division and commemorate May Day and March 8.

Marxist-Leninist theory states that the basic factor in any revolution is political power, with the progressive sectors taking over the government from the reactionary ruling class.

Following the people's uprising of February 1974, the ruling class tried to retain power, but the people's movement stood firmly by its goal of removing the government that protected the interests of the ruling class and replacing it with a progressive group.

The fall of the monarchy and the rise to power of the PMAC was the first confirmation of the speed-up in revolutionary change. Then the mass organizations emerged in all sectors, contributing significantly to the progress of the Revolution.

REFERENCE has already been made to the fact that the demise of the monarchic rule and the establishment of the Provisional Military Government during the early stage of our Revolution were the first steps in the long journey for effecting fundamental change. Since any class holding political power controls the economy, as well, to remove that class from power, it is not sufficient that it be defeated on the political stage only. Its domination can be effectively terminated only when its control over the economy also ceases.

It was, therefore, necessary that the political victory scored by controlling the notorious operatives of the reactionary government and deposing the king be reinforced by measures in the economic sphere. Thus, the nationalization of the major financial institutions and the means of production for the benefit of the people, the restitution of land to the people, the nationalization of urban land and extra houses and similar other major steps have denied economic bases to those reactionaries who were overthrown from their positions of political supremacy.

While the placing of the means of production under public control makes it possible to demolish the bases of power of the exploiters and to terminate their domination, it also ensures the eradication of the exploitation of the working people. Just as the reactionary ruling class could not enjoy political domination without economic bases, so also the working class must ensure its economic control as a guarantee for its political victory. This is an important matter to which all revolutions attach particular significance.

The wrenching of economic power from the hands of the reactionaries and its utilization for the common benefit of the working people not only ensures the predominance of the workers by eradicating the domination of reactionaries but also creates favorable conditions for improving the standard of living of the working people through planned economic activity.

Inasmuch as the working class had risen in a revolution to rid itself of exploitation and oppression and to bring about a life in which genuine equality and prosperity prevail, it would have liked to realize its aspirations at the very moment that it overthrew the archreactionaries, but that did not come to pass. The ruling class did not concede defeat. Indeed, relying on its worldwide links with imperialism and financial power and intent on regaining the power it had lost, it escalated its reactionary struggle in all spheres.

Much earlier, when the proclamation that decreed rural land to be public property was issued, the most stubborn of the feudal barons resorted to banditry. They recruited peasants who were then at the lowest level of political consciousness, took them along and retreated to the forests, from which they launched hit-and-run campaigns, robbed,

burned harvests and engaged in other similar outrages against the people, thereby challenging the Revolution.

Some of those elements who had amassed limitless benefits through modern farming and were in the process of transition to the status of comprador bourgeois also joined them. Subsequently, as the membership of disenchanted coterie swelled following the proclamation nationalizing urban land and extra houses for the benefit of the people, more and more reactionaries ganged up together. In general, the collection of feudal landlords, calling itself "Ethiopian Democratic Union" (EDU), embarked on its manifold counterrevolutionary activities.

The secessionists, who had created a problem in the Administrative Region of Eritrea and who, unwilling to invite mutual destruction, were more or less tolerant toward the rulers with whom they previously shared certain benefits, despite their contradiction, stepped up their reactionary struggle.

Interpreting our numerous efforts to solve the problem peacefully and our desire for peace as a sign of weakness, the secessionists inflicted great damage on the people, especially during their futile attempt to occupy Asmara in January 1975, which cannot be easily forgotten. The gross injustice they perpetrated soon after that by coordinating their activities with the arrogant aggression launched by the reactionary regime in Somalia will be only too sadly remembered by succeeding generations as well.

In that life-and-death struggle between revolution and counterrevolution, the forces which lined up in the counterrevolutionary camp were not only landlords and other lackeys of imperialism. These and the secessionists, which were making futile attempts to separate the Administrative Region of Eritrea from Revolutionary Ethiopia, were not the only emissaries of imperialism. The right wing of the petite bourgeoisie and the radicals of the same class, bent on assuming an initial revolutionary appearance and ganging up within their organization which they had dubbed "EPRP," strengthened the counterrevolutionary camp. With a view to frustrating the struggle of the masses and bending it for their own objectives, they assassinated militants — an act of injustice that has scarcely any parallel.

As the Revolution gained strength, its adversaries' hatred intensified. The reactionaries, who were systematically defeated at all levels, endeavored to have the struggle assume its final characteristics — i.e., develop into armed struggle. By taking up arms, they forced the masses to resist them by the same means. Nor were they limited to that. At the international level, reactionaries publicly demonstrated their mutual support by their coordinated opposition to Revolutionary Ethiopia. It is not easy to estimate the damage and destruction they have inflicted on us through Somalia's Armed Forces, in the vain hope of fulfilling their reactionary objectives.

It is well known that, during the second half of 1977 and the first half of 1978, internal and external counterrevolutionary forces, having coordinated their military hardware, their resources and all their abil-



ities, arrogantly turned our revolutionary homeland into a veritable battlefield. There was hardly a single citizen of this country who was not compelled to identify his role during that dark period. While the majority of the masses of workers and patriotic individuals were arrayed on one side to defend their national unity and their Revolution, outright reactionaries and traitors gathered in the antipeople camp, supporting the objectives of imperialism.

It is impossible to recite the details of the events of that period with all their ramifications, on this occasion; it is also difficult to describe even some aspects of those events.

While the effort required to resist the violation of our homeland in the eastern and southern regions was in itself quite considerable, the conspiracies of the fifth columnists that had infiltrated our forces to weaken their fighting ability posed another challenge.

That the reactionary secessionists in the north had taken advantage of our preoccupation with the situation on the eastern and southern fronts and had temporarily gained control of the Eritrean Administrative Region, with the exception of a few towns, was a matter of great concern. As if all this were not enough, the daily destruction wrought by the adversaries of the Revolution in the heartland was beyond calculation.

At one period, the counterrevolutionary forces thought that their objectives were near attainment and indulged in all sorts of licentious actions. They seized every opportunity to show their contempt for the people. They could not, however, indefinitely continue in their indulgence.

The masses could not remain silent spectators when their militant sons were being cut down; the blood of their sons, who had been languishing under the yoke of exploitation and oppression, was being shed by paid assassins; the children of militants became orphans; and, in general, the life of the citizens who hoped for a bright future lacked any security. Having exhausted their patience, the masses were compelled to rise up in arms against their enemies and wage the struggle with determination.

Revolutionary homeland or death

In this connection, the prompt response of the masses to the call of the homeland that was made on April 12, 1977, leaving aside concern for home or property, and offering their children to line up as vanguard fighters under the motto of "Revolutionary homeland or death" will have a prominent place in the history of our Revolution.

Over and above the fact that the entire world was surprised by the efficiency with which some 300 000 militiamen were trained to combat readiness within a short space of time, that achievement will also have its proper place in the history of the struggle of oppressed peoples as our proud historic legacy.

Likewise, the masses, who had taken up their position as a rearguard, spared no effort to safeguard their homeland and Revolution. In response to the call of the homeland, heroes came from every part of Ethiopia, ready to defend its unity and independence with their precious military training at bases lacking the usual amenities, such as beds and mattresses. On the contrary they were lodged in tents donated by the masses and used kitchenware similarly obtained. Branches and leaves had to be thrown down to cover the muddy ground in winter. Nor was the support of the masses limited to this. Those nearer the Militia Training Center cooked fresh food, while others further away prepared special food and delivered it to the Center. These tireless patriotic contributions are indelibly engraved in our minds and we feel great pride when we speak about them.

We will always remember the assistance extended to us, on the basis of proletarian internationalism, by the Soviet Union, Cuba, other genuinely socialist countries and all other peace-loving peoples. On this occasion, we wish to express, once again, our sincere gratitude — especially to the Communist Party, government and people of the Soviet Union — for the timely support afforded us during that challenging period for our Revolution and homeland. It is gratifying to note that the support we received was commensurate with the urgency of the situation and the requirements of our struggle. We are strongly convinced that, in our peaceful constructive endeavors to achieve socialist objectives, they will continue to stand on our side. For our part, we wish to reaffirm our solemn pledge on this historic day to workers, revolutionaries and peace-loving peoples of all countries that we will do everything in our power to faithfully discharge our interantionalist obligations.

Through their Revolutionary Army, which is their strong arm, the masses have ejected the reactionary forces of Somalia from our country. Part of the invading forces were completely destroyed, while the remainder retreated in panic and total disarray, as if the invader had not arrogantly violated the sanctity of our boundaries.

In the north, by teaching proper lessons to the secessionists who were wildly dreaming of the imminent realization of their futile ambition, our

Revolutionary Second Liberation Army has relieved the broad masses in the area from a situation of anxious concern.

Our detractors were declaring that Ethiopia was finished and that she would be compelled to make territorial concessions to the expansionist regime of Somalia. Moreover, they asserted that it would be to her advantage to conclude a cease-fire agreement to avoid further penetration by Somalia's forces. They were also saying that Ethiopia was being compelled to accept the secessionist demands of the Eritrean traitorous bandits and that she had to choose either socialism or Eritrea. On the other hand, our Revolutionary People's Army had vowed that the soil of our revolutionary homeland would be a graveyard for Siad Barre's troops and the traitorous bandits — never their seat.

Declaring that socialism will flourish in Ethiopia with the blood of heroes of Revolutionary Ethiopia, the Revolutionary Army, after a short period of preparation and a quick campaign, inflicted a crushing defeat upon that vociferous, arrogant and reactionary stronghold.

Today, when we observe the level of political consciousness and quality attained by our Revolutionary Army, there is no doubt that it will be one of the few People's Armed Forces which, without pay, will be recorded in the history of the world as having stood for a just cause and the rights of the people, as having voluntarily fought, struggled and made sacrifices.

We should, therefore, not only be proud of and rely upon this Army but also care for it, just as we do for the pupil of our eye.

In this process of defensive struggle, the Revolution was victorious not only over invaders and reactionary secessionists but also over fifth columnists in the interior who were creating conditions favorable for the reversal of the Revolution.

When the masses finally ran out of patience, they took up the challenge of the paid assassins with a declaration of resolve and determination that not even death would keep them from their goal.

The masses of Ethiopia have added a glorious chapter to the history of the struggle of the people of the world by demonstrating that nothing can obstruct a people that has risen up with a clear goal to bring about justice and genuine freedom.

The Revolution's constructive work

Even though resuscitating reactionaries opened wars on various fronts to snatch away the victories already scored, the masses of Ethiopia, just as they had done earlier in other fields of struggle, have brought them to their knees. This was only an effort designed to remove the obstacles set in the way of the masses by the reactionaries; it was neither the basic goal nor the ultimate objective of the masses.

Since their final goal is the building of a prosperous new socialist order wherein genuine equality prevails, the people of Ethiopia did not complacently relax in the belief that they had attained ultimate victory. Consequently, we embarked upon the long struggle by immediately launching the emergency program of the economic and cultural

development campaign. This became the major and timely focus of the Revolution. The objective of this campaign is to alleviate the temporary hardships of the masses and to create the requisite conditions for long-term constructive efforts. Not only are we speedily implementing the second round of the development campaign, but, broadly speaking, our Revolution has also attained a stage of all-round development.

The task of our Revolution is to develop the productive forces on the basis of coordination, modernization and efficient production and thereby liberate the masses from their basic burdens and build a society wherein genuine equality and prosperity will prevail.

The attainment of this lofty objective depends upon the active participation of the working people. This, in turn, embraces wide responsibilities ranging from fully grasping the objectives to implementing them. This is only a starting point to obtain maximum results.

Today, in the first stage of our construction, we are exerting every effort to manage our economy by means of a centrally planned development program and to devise a system of production which will meet the needs of the people. A number of preconditions have to be met at every stage in the process before we can attain this initial objective.

We seek to coordinate the needs of the people with production by means of a centrally planned distribution and by meeting shortages where they occur. This requires a high stage of development. An advanced stage of development can occur after the elimination of the relations between the exploiter and the exploited and with the institution of modern production. This, in turn, requires an advanced stage of industrial development based on social needs. It is, therefore, imperative to concentrate on the accumulation of capital which is indispensable for such development. This pillar of our national economy is the accumulation of capital publicly owned and managed by the government.

Another problem which has to be considered in conjunction with capital accumulation is the development of the infrastructure of the country. This includes transport, communications, education, health and various other social services. Our economy should not promote uneven development. There should be coordination in such a way that, based on central planning, one locality can contribute to the development of another.

Although the application of these general theories of economic reconstruction is vital for development, it is not easily attainable. As I have indicated earlier, the most serious problem confronting us is the shortage of capital. Since we largely depend on coffee to alleviate our problem in this regard, we have to do more to improve the quality and quantity of this source of foreign exchange. Furthermore, we have to make every effort to increase our foreign exchange earning capacity by diversifying our export commodities. In view of the price fluctuation on the world market caused by capitalism, a single foreign exchange

earning commodity is not dependable. The situation, therefore, does not permit any complacency.

It has been repeatedly said that agriculture is the mainstay of our national economy and that it is our main-hope for getting ourselves out of backwardness. This is correct. However, its veracity should be viewed not from the vantage point of capitalist agriculture or a capitalist line of development but from the perspective of its highly organized and social characteristics. Our agriculture can contribute its share to the attainment of our objectives only if it is built along socialist lines of development.

During the present period of transition, our course of action and performance should not rely on the transient and ephemeral but rather develop the viable. We must, therefore, give particular emphasis to those activities which have a socialist content. In this connection, while agriculture as a whole deserves due attention, evidently we must give special consideration to the development of farmers' cooperatives and state farms. This policy should also encompass, in its application, other branches of the economy.

Although we realize that private enterprise has a role during this transitional phase, it must be recognized that the emerging social sector should assume the leading role in our economic efforts. Otherwise, while different modes of production are simultaneously operating, it will be unrealistic to say that we are building socialism.

Satisfaction with a mixed economic system can only be a result of analysis and assumptions devoid of class perspective. As has been clearly enunciated in the basic objectives of our economic and cultural campaign, our policy of reconstruction is firmly based on the fundamental principles of socialist development.

It is evident that our economy is linked to the international economic system in many respects. Paying bottom prices for our exports while charging ever rising prices for their products, the imperialist countries are adversely affecting our development. Consequently, the necessary capital accumulation cannot occur in the developing countries while imbalances characterize international economic relations and the ever widening income gap continues unabated.

Our stand regarding our international economic relations must be very clear indeed. As we forge ahead in the task of reconstructing our national economy, we must increase our contribution to the strengthening of trade and other relations within the socialist camp, with a view to redressing the existing imbalance. Economic independence and the establishment of an equitable and just international economic order based on mutual benefit are the objectives of our Revolution. This is the direction of our struggle, because these basic ideas of economic development will guide us in our efforts to lay the material foundations of the new socialist society. While we endeavor to effect social transformations in accordance with these ideas, however, the question relating to the culture of the new society cannot be overlooked.

Embracing, as it does, the totality of man's ideas and experiences, culture cannot be viewed in isolation from the social order in which it is found. In societies which are divided along class lines, culture reflects the values of the ruling class. The cultural ethos which prevailed in our country and which, because of its internal nature, is not easily amenable to change reflected preponderantly feudalist — and, to a lesser degree, capitalist — characteristics.

The culture we would like to foster is the opposite of this. The new culture, which is national in form, must be international in content. As heir to the rich treasures of knowledge which mankind has accumulated throughout the ages, it must adopt them as and when appropriate.

Although cultural development has the tendency to lag behind in situations of revolutionary process, it cannot and must not be overlooked in the acceleration of overall development. Cultural revolution being a major aspect of our struggle, it is imperative that we have a correct perspective in order to be successful in our efforts.

We are duty-bound to foster, develop and pass on to the next generation all those positive elements which our forefathers have bequeathed to us. This heritage is necessary as long as it contributes to the promotion of the new. It is, however, wrong to be chained to everything ancient that is "ours," without discriminating between the harmful and the beneficial. True, one aspect of culture is to hold dear the positive elements inherited from the past and transmit them to succeeding generations, but it would be fallacious to assume that it is limited only to such an exercise. The thrust for change which our Revolution has undertaken in this sphere must be given further impetus.

The effort that is being deployed to bring education, scientific ideology and political knowledge to the masses should be seen within the context of the cultural revolution. In this regard, the campaign to eradicate illiteracy — to which we are giving particular emphasis — is a significant tool essential for the acceleration of our cultural development in the future and therefore deserves special consideration vis-à-vis the totality of our development.

Since the struggle in the cultural field is a major aspect of the Revolution, its content must be well understood and its development accelerated. The development of our economy along socialist lines will contribute to our cultural development. Similarly, the new culture of the working people will contribute to our economic growth.

Like our perspectives for economic development, our efforts in the field of culture should be forward-looking. Our overall development would seriously suffer if we were to be forward-looking and think in broad terms in economic matters but continue to look backwards and remain confined to narrower thinking in the cultural sphere.

Party formation

The science of social development teaches us that, although the transition to socialism is inevitable, such a historical outcome is not

an automatic phenomenon but one requiring leadership, clarity of objective and conscious struggle.

The situation associated with the transitional period and the socialist path of development to which I have referred require a high quality of leadership which can only emerge from a vanguard revolutionary organization and, as such, deserves special attention.

It is a scientific truth which has been tested in action that, in its struggle for genuine freedom, the working class needs its own party with which it can accomplish its organizational and leadership tasks. Without such a revolutionary party, based on class consciousness, the working people cannot reliably establish their political power.

The revolutionary party cannot discharge this high responsibility only through the aggregation of its members; it also requires the ideological and organizational unity of the aware members. The strength resulting from the unity of militants is equal only to the total strength of the assembly of individuals. Revolutionary experience teaches us, however, that the strength emanating from the ideological and organizational unity of militants is manifold.

It is evident, therefore, that more agreement among members on basic ideas is no substitute for the invincible strength of an organization. Only central leadership and strong discipline among members can guarantee the attainment of the necessary revolutionary outcome. This can be realized through not only the ideological but also the organizational unity of the members. In other words, the working people can guarantee the achievement of their ultimate objective only when they are led by a party with theoretical and organizational strength.

In this regard, we have derived a considerable lesson from our struggles in the past, and there is no doubt that, as we forge ahead in our reconstruction efforts, the decisive leadership role of a vanguard party will become even more obvious. Furthermore, in a situation where reactionaries have been removed from political power and responsibility for all matters pertaining to the society has been entrusted to revolutionaries, the need for an efficacious organization becomes particularly important and does not lend itself to ready solutions.

Despite the relentless efforts we have made to make such a historic leadership a reality, the difficulties which confronted us were so complex that our objectives were not easily achieved. The struggles waged in this regard within our society in general and within the PMAC in particular will have a significant place in the history of our Revolution.

The PMAC — which, aligning itself with the masses, became the vanguard in effecting far-reaching changes to restructure society — also had to address itself to several profound questions, the most crucial of which was the creation of a vanguard revolutionary party.

Since we are waging a revolutionary struggle and since the PMAC, which is giving it direction, is also a revolutionary body, the position had been taken that ultimate leadership of the Revolution must rest

with the party of the working people. However, agents provocateurs had made frantic efforts to have the PMAC disbanded by raising questions as to how, from where and for whom the party was to be created.

On the other hand, there were those who believed that politics was their private domain and felt that, once the workers had obtained the right to bargain with their employers, land was distributed among the peasants and the members of the Armed Forces received an increase in salary, there would be no impediment to the perpetuation of their position within the capitalist system. Nonetheless, as those who recognized that betrayal of the popular cause would be contrary to the march of history were stronger, the PMAC continued to adhere to its correct stand.

It was against this background that the PMAC set up a team charged with the task of preparing a comprehensive study taking into account the national and general world situation, to find an answer to the question of organization. Further, to translate the study into action, a set of criteria by which all revolutionaries were to be measured was prepared and steps were taken to rally all Ethiopian militants in the country and those living abroad.

After exhaustively discussing the process leading to the establishment of popular power, the question of democracy, the right of nationalities, the question relating to the defense forces, the international communist movement and other issues, the majority accepted our basic stand with admiration. On the issue of party formation, however, some insisted that it was the right of the people and should be left aside. Others explicitly took the position that all classes in the society should organize themselves as they pleased and compete. Still others argued at length for the establishment of different political organizations — which, after resolving their differences through ideological struggle, would either be transformed into a party or unite as a front from which the party could emerge.

We, on the other hand, gave priority to raising the level of consciousness of the working people and were steadfast in our resolve that, since genuine revolutionaries have an identity of objectives, they should have one program and one organization; that the right to organize must be the right of those who support the Revolution; and that such an exercise cannot be open to reactionaries.

While agreement on this basic issue was pending, it was nonetheless possible to start work by agreeing to establish a political school and train cadres with support to be provided by the government.

The Provisional Office for Mass Organizational Affairs (POMOA) was established. The Program of the National Democratic Revolution which was drafted earlier was discussed and issued. It was at this period that the so-called EPRP, which had no confidence in the Revolution from the outset, came out in its true colors. Having by its pretentious form confused the youth, whose zeal for struggle was high and whose numerical strength cannot be underestimated, it finally joined the counter-revolutionary camp.

While the so-called EPRP chose to join the counterrevolutionary camp, the progressive groups stood by the Revolution and intensified their struggle, partially utilizing the open platform and the support provided by the government.

In the process of the struggle a few months later, a serious counter-revolutionary conspiracy was engineered by supporters of the "EPRP" within the PMAC to bring the Revolution under imperialist control. This conspiracy, however, was foiled on February 3, 1977, with great sacrifice, and the Revolution went from the defensive to the offensive.

The right to be armed, from which the masses had been barred, was fully implemented. Then a situation conducive to rallying progressives was created and a call was made to progressive organizations. Although the call did not elicit a total response, it was possible to rally around the newly-established Union of Ethiopian Marxist-Leninist Organizations (EMALEDH).

The struggle intensified. As indicated earlier, the assassination of the struggling sons of the masses was stepped up in the heartland. In the east and south, the reactionary regime of Somalia pressed its invasion. In the northwest, remnants of the nobility and landlords intensified their banditry. In the north, secessionist groups intensified their reactionary activities more than ever before. The Revolution and our homeland faced a very grave danger. A call for stronger unity was made during those dark days to member organizations of EMAL-EDH in order to coordinate the masses for the defense of the country. Nevertheless, the call did not elicit an adequate response. On the contrary, the leaders of the so-called MEISON openly rejected cooperation in the belief that a situation had been created that would enable their organization to rule.

Just as the imperialists keep on telling the socialist countries to be "moderate" and "democratic" in order to create counterrevolutionary parties with a view to finding them a shortcut to political power, MEISON advocated instant and "unconditional democracy" in the name of the oppressed.

Although it was not certain that they had planned to return "triumphantly" together with those reactionary forces which were fighting against the Revolution at the time, as of August 1977, they finally went underground. They preferred counterrevolution to revolution. The remaining progressive organizations were seriously concerned by the event because it could lead to a lack of confidence by the masses in progressive organizations. In fact, the consequences of that event as far as progressives are concerned should not be underestimated.

The other member organizations of EMAL-EDH, having thoroughly condemned the counterrevolutionary actions of MEISON, stabilized the situation and continued to push on with the struggle, but they proceeded no farther before a new situation developed. Instead of struggling for the unity and the common freedom of the masses, the so-called ECHAT group embarked upon dividing the working people along ethnic lines. Some members of that organization openly joined

forces with the reactionary regime of Somalia and began to fight against the Revolution. Because of this fifth columnist stand, the organization was expelled from EMALEDH.

After all these obstacles, those member organizations of EMALEDH which remained firm in their stand resumed their struggle with a stronger sense of unity. At the same time, an agreement was reached to create a party organizing committee with a view to analyzing the situation and facilitating union.

However, the effort failed because some members, particularly a few individuals among the leadership of Woz Ader and the Marxist-Leninist Revolutionary Organization, two of the three remaining organizations which were saying one thing while doing something else, were caught red-handed, thus creating further difficulties among revolutionaries.

It is to be recalled that, not long afterwards, a new phenomenon appeared within EMALEDH. It was discovered during the second half of 1978 that the Woz Ader League, one of the three member organizations of EMALEDH, had infiltrated a limited number of its members in the ranks of Abiyotawi Seded.

Consequently, a dangerous situation was again created. However, as you know, the danger was averted and normality reestablished as a result of the stand taken by Abiyotawi Seded and the corrective measures taken by the Woz Ader League as regards its leadership.

Later on, a few individuals, members of Abiyotawi Seded, pretending to be overcome by desperation and masquerading as if they embodied more organizational interests than anybody, tried to promote their own interests from the vantage point of narrow factionalism.

The struggle waged to secure the leadership of a party which our Revolution lacked cannot be viewed in isolation from the general progress of our Revolution, and the sacrifices made for the cause of this fundamental question are high. Nor should we forget the fact that, each time we were confronted with difficulties and dangerous situations, the reactionaries were on their toes to benefit from our shortcomings. By using every opportunity and heavily infiltrating the organizations, they exerted every effort to sow discord among genuine progressives.

Since continuing in that manner would have meant eroding the unity of revolutionaries and destroying organizational integrity, a reassessment of the objective situation became imperative. It became clear that it was impossible to form a party of the working people through the merger of organizations, as had previously been envisaged. The three member organizations of EMALEDH therefore agreed in February 1979 that, considering the realities of our time, it was necessary for the establishment of the party to rally around a central leadership composed of individual militants chosen on the basis of their revolutionary stand, ability and contribution.

On the basis of this, the PMAC, which has always supported without reservation the rallying of revolutionaries and the creation of the party of the working people, proclaimed on December 18, 1979, the

establishment of the Commission for Organizing the Party of the Working People of Ethiopia (COPWE). Recognizing that a strong foundation was laid for the creation of the long-awaited vanguard of the Revolution, for the cause of which enormous sacrifices had been made, the masses declared their full support for the action taken.

It has repeatedly been stated that the leadership of a revolutionary party is essential for the Revolution to achieve its objectives. We also know full well from our own experience what it means to lack such a leadership. Moreover, we also learn from history that the Paris Commune, where the first dictatorship of the proletariat was established, was extinguished in 72 days because of the absence of party leadership.

In contrast, the great October Revolution, which heralded the new era, the era of socialism, emerged victorious through the instrumentality of the Bolshevik Party, which was led by the great Lenin. This is an added, living testimony to the decisive role of a revolutionary party.

The measure of the nature of a revolutionary party is the content and depth of its mission. It is essential to understand that the mission itself must, in turn, be measured not only against situations prevailing within national confines but also against the international situation.

Imperialism today

Today, the peace of the world is more seriously disturbed than at any other time since World War II. Instead of the advancement of human welfare and civilization, we observe heavy war clouds on the horizon. Détente, which has been in existence for some time now, appears to be on the verge of being extinguished under the notorious leadership and coordination of American imperialism. In its place, the arms race, the violation of sovereignty of other countries and provoking conflicts have become standard practice for American imperialism.

As we look at the armed aggressions and political and ideological campaigns being conducted against the socialist countries; against countries carrying out revolutionary transformations to eliminate exploitation and oppression; and against all anti-imperialist, peace-loving and democratic forces in general, we are reminded of the period known as the cold war era.

It is to be remembered that, in the 1940s, American imperialism used different subterfuges simultaneously with a view to arresting the march of Communism and stifling national liberation struggles. Armed intervention, various conspiracies to overthrow progressive governments, economic blockades and intensive anticommunist and antipeace propaganda were all launched at the same time in a coordinated manner.

This, however, did not bring about the desired result. Consequently, the policy of détente, which is an aspect of the principle of peaceful coexistence that had long been advocated by socialist and other progressive forces, gained acceptance at the time. This situation allowed

the peoples of the world to enjoy peace and enabled them to concentrate on and make strides in the sphere of development, yet it cannot be asserted that peace prevailed even during that period.

While, on the one hand, the progressive forces withstood imperialist onslaughts and were able to liberate themselves from its oppression, on the other hand, imperialist conspiracies were sometimes successful. On the whole, however, there is no denying the fact that détente has made an enormous contribution to the peace of mankind.

Since the basic aim of imperialism is the obstruction of human development, it manifests itself glaringly in the wars it unleashes from time to time. It is the standard tactic of imperialism to create confusing situations in order to give these wars a semblance of legality.

Not only has imperialism, through manifest interference and intrigues, opposed the measures undertaken by the government of Afghanistan to consolidate its revolution, but it has also unabashedly gone beyond that. In order to fulfill its selfish strategic interests, imperialism has given top priority to its campaign against the Soviet Union, alleging that it has threatened international peace. Is it really the question of Afghanistan which has led American imperialism to revert to its cold war policies? Of course, only the gullible accept such reasoning. Those who can assess situations objectively look at the issue differently.

Ever since the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917, the world has been in transition from capitalism to socialism. The net effect of this process has been the shrinkage of the domain of imperialism and the expansion of the frontiers of socialism in the world. In contrast to the decline of imperialism, one can proudly point to the ever increasing victories that the struggle for socialism has achieved in the world.

Indeed, the determined struggle that peoples in Eastern Europe and Asia have waged since World War II to build socialism has immeasurably consolidated the international socialist movement. In addition, many developing countries formerly in the clutches of imperialist colonial domination have achieved political independence. During the same era, we have also witnessed American imperialism, as leader of the camp, exerting serious efforts to contain — and, if possible, destroy — Communism in order to avert defeat. To this day, we find imperialism following the same course but with refined tactics in the pursuit of its strategic objectives.

If we pause and consider, we find that the destructive tendencies of imperialism have not arisen from sheer coincidence. They are a result of its worldwide setbacks. In several regions, it has suffered ignominious defeat. Here in Ethiopia and in Vietnam, Lao, Kampuchea, Mozambique, Angola, Afghanistan and Nicaragua, imperialism has lost ground to the forces of peace and socialism, at it also did recently in Iran and Zimbabwe. The process continues. All these defeats, coupled with the crisis arising out of skyrocketing oil prices, financial instability, inflation and unemployment — in short, the precipitous

decline in the living standards of peoples — have thrown the imperialist camp into complete disarray. These are the basic causes for the frantic conduct of American imperialism.

The intensification of the peoples' struggle for freedom, the acceleration in the rate of raw material depletion and stiff competition for markets are all elements which cause anxiety in the imperialist camp. American imperialism, having declared the Persian Gulf area to be in its strategic sphere of influence, has openly threatened to take every measure to protect its alleged interests.

Denying that the triumphs scored by peoples in their determined struggles for freedom are the result of objective processes in the historical development of mankind, imperialism has chosen to ascribe them to what it alleges to be the conspiracy of Communism. This false premise explains the campaign being waged by imperialism against socialist countries and those which pursue the path of socialist development.

The anti-Soviet campaign currently being waged by American imperialism under the pretext of Afghanistan must be seen for what it is — a campaign against peace and development.

It is not difficult to imagine its objectives in imposing an embargo on trade, the exchange of science and technology and cultural relations and boycotting the Olympic Games — an important sports forum for contact among the peoples of the world.

At their recent meeting in Poland, recognizing the dangers that could result from the aggressive policy of confrontation, the Heads of State of the Warsaw Pact countries called on the peoples of the world to wage a resolute campaign for peace and stability.

In this precarious situation in which the world now finds itself, Revolutionary Ethiopia will continue its solidarity with the peace-loving forces of the world, pursue its policy of peaceful coexistence and work to strengthen the process of détente. Revolutionary Ethiopia rejects all imperialist maneuvers that threaten to disrupt the peaceful development of the peoples. Our unflinching position is to promote the common aspirations*of mankind, and we are committed to make our due contribution toward its realization. Likewise, it must be abundantly



clear that we will not tolerate any threat by those who may choose to serve the interests of imperialism by hindering the historic march of our Revolution or by conspiring against the unity of our homeland.

Consistent with our firm stand of cooperation for the prosperity and development of the peoples, while we intensify our struggle to bring about economic justice here at home, we will also work for an international economic order free from exploitation and based on mutual benefits.

I have already attempted to discuss the stage we have reached in our efforts in the field of national development. I have also touched upon the complexity of the international situation as it prevails today. I have done so not only to explain our views on various situations but also to underscore the need for a revolutionary political organization — for the realization of which so much has been sacrificed — and to be prepared for the challenges that lie ahead, in view of the objective conditions facing us.

A genuine party

The task of a revolutionary party is to unite the struggle of the workers against the exploiting and oppressing classes in a society, thereby enabling them to remove the latter and assume power themselves in order to fulfill the mission of creating a just and prosperous society free from exploitation of man by man. The party can fulfill this high mission only if it is composed of those who are prepared to make the necessary sacrifices and are resolutely committed not just to the transient benefits of the workers but to the lasting victories and broader objectives of the Revolution. The party can realize this high mission only if it is armed with a scientific ideology which will enable it to achieve concrete results of social development through resolute class struggle.

The party's leadership can be made manifest by its ability to evolve popularly supported policies and tactics related to the objective realities of the society which enable the masses to advance from one victory to another. The effectiveness of the party in carrying out its numerous responsibilities hinges on the unity of purpose and action of genuine revolutionaries.

Practical experience proves that a healthy revolutionary party can emerge only if it is guided by the cardinal principle of democratic centralism. A Marxist-Leninist party is the form for the practical expression of genuine democracy.

As the party has the responsibility for building a new society, its effectiveness demands total respect for the principles of democratic centralism. It is therefore obvious that, for COPWE, which itself is the outcome of many challenges and bitter struggles entailing enormous sacrifices, to make practical progress toward establishing the Ethiopian Workers' Party which will at last provide proper leadership for our Revolution, strict discipline must be among the distinguishing features of its members.

Although the yoke of oppression imposed on the masses for many centuries by the reactionary system has been removed by the Revolution, the desperate struggle of die-hard reactionaries refusing to admit defeat has, in some cases, aggravated the difficulties in the lives of the masses. As this internal situation is linked with the dangerous antipeace activities being conducted by international imperialism, it has had the effect of keeping the masses from reaping the full benefits of the Revolution. The masses await effective leadership which will enable them to overcome these difficulties and attain a better life in the shortest possible time.

Even in the situation in which we find ourselves today, the masses continue to reiterate that it is through COPWE that the Revolution will find correct leadership. The masses have continuously expressed their support for COPWE in a practical manner; it now remains for COPWE to live up to their expectations.

For COPWE, its share of the struggle ahead is, in large measure, the construction of the new society. This responsibility is complex and difficult, and its own preparedness will have to be commensurate with the challenge. This, of course, will not be achieved overnight; it requires considerable effort and experience.

The task requires outstanding leadership, and the organizational experience we have so far does not warrant a slackening of effort. As such, the situation must not be viewed lightly. To close this gap must be among the foremost tasks of the present period.

To resolve this crucial question satisfactorily, much is expected from each COPWE member. Practical implementation of revolutionary decisions, with complete dedication to the objectives of the Revolution, giving precedence and primacy to the needs of the working people over those of individuals, is one of the basic features of the discipline we must honor. Negligence in its observance is a characteristic tenet of petit bourgeois indecisiveness, whose inevitable outcome is a weakening of unity and organizational cohesion — which would erode the Revolution and hand it over to the reactionaries. We will overcome these tendencies only through iron discipline.

Strict organizational discipline can prevail and gain respect, not by the imposition of higher organs of leadership on lower ones but by the ready and willing acceptance of the program and regulations by revolutionary individuals when they become members of the organization.

Our revolutionary zeal will be judged not so much by our agitational capabilities as by the degree of economic and social emancipation of the working people. As we have already tried to explain, a revolutionary vanguard political organization should be able to understand phenomena correctly as they actually exist in the process of change and development and provide appropriate solutions to the problems that arise.

For COPWE to successfully discharge its responsibilities, the discipline of its members is of paramount importance. Good personal conduct alone, commendable as it may be, is not enough. Iron discipline,

coupled with revolutionary theory in the performance of revolutionary action, is absolutely essential for the accomplishment of our objectives.

Revolutionary leadership and the masses

When, today, we stress the responsibilities of revolutionary individuals and of COPWE in general and when we speak of the party of Ethiopia to be established in the future, we should concentrate our attention upon the revolutionary vanguard organization, never forgetting the historical role of the masses.

At the same time, our experience of revolutionary struggle of the past years is sufficient proof of the fact that, decisive as the role of leadership may be from the point of view of our objectives, it is nevertheless not capable of conducting the struggle single-handedly throughout its progress. As we have repeatedly stated on various occasions, the strivings of any revolutionary individual or vanguard organization can therefore have meaningful results only through the work done among the masses.

To ensure the attainment of final victory, there must be an organic link and cohesion between the efforts of the revolutionary leadership and the masses. Our unshakable faith in the people and the strength we derive from their revolutionary reserves has been the guarantee of our revolutionary victories so far.

For the successful accomplishment of the arduous tasks ahead, it is essential that the solid foundations of our faith in the people be further reinforced. From the viewpoint of an organization which has an enduring mission, this is indeed a matter of paramount importance.

The great task of a revolutionary organization having leadership responsibilities requires the exertion of every effort by making the necessary sacrifices. The guarantee for the attainment of this objective is the ability to utilize the experiences of the millions upon millions of working people. This can only be achieved through close links with the people and by working among them.

In this context, the mass organizations are the bridges linking COPWE today and the Workers' Party of Ethiopia tomorrow with the working people. The ability to successfully maintain the close links that ought to exist between the mass organizations and the vanguard organization is one of the primary tasks of revolutionaries.

This will help us not only in applying the experiences of the working people to the present tasks of development but also in guaranteeing the successful conduct of our correct political line and achieving results commensurate with the needs of the entire people.

Mass organizations are forums in which the citizens of the country conduct the affairs of the society. Generally speaking, one can say that, at present, almost all citizens are within the reach of one or another of these organizations.

On the one hand, the AETU and the AEPA — which, between them, embrace those classes and sections of society that are in the vanguard

of production in our present tasks of development — are the outcome of our struggle; on the other, their contribution to our struggle is exemplary.

Above and beyond the contributions both these organizations make to the Revolution, they have been a great factor in strengthening the alliance between the workers and the peasants, thus assisting the latter to discharge their responsibilities in building socialism. The means for raising the living standards of the people lie in developing the workers' and peasants' creativity to increase production.

The place in the Revolution of the women and youth of Revolutionary Ethiopia, whose nationwide organizations are expected to be formed soon, is becoming increasingly clear. While it is undeniable that, in many respects, women are lagging behind, it is encouraging to see their progress and performance through their numerous regional organizations. We trust that tomorrow they will do still better through their nationwide organization.

The youth, whose organizational activities are similar to those of the women, are the hope of the new Ethiopia. This is a fact which one can hardly fail to recognize. Over and above exerting maximum efforts to reaffirm this hope by speedily forming their nationwide organization, our youth must never relax from redoubling their efforts in line with the teachings of the great Lenin. A quest for the knowledge needed for the building of the new society and readiness for tireless work must be their guiding principles. Only thus can the youth constitute the strong arm of COPWE today and an inexhaustible reservoir of strength for the future party.

In the context of the place that the mass organizations occupy in the process of the struggle, the role played by the urban dwellers' associations is quite significant. Their accomplishments testify to this, yet it is imperative that they prepare and strengthen themselves so as to increase their due contribution to the accomplishment of the complex tasks that still lie ahead.

The professional associations — of teachers, doctors, nurses, writers, journalists, artists, musicians, etc. — which were either established or strengthened as a result of the revolutionary process are a further source of strength and creativity. The struggle waged by these associations in contributing their due share is not to be estimated lightly. However, measured in terms of the tasks of the new social order we wish to establish, it cannot be denied that they have not yet attained the desired level in either quantity or quality. While their actual development will depend upon the overall struggle, we expect them to play a vanguard role in their respective fields. So long as they make conscious efforts, they will not find it difficult to attain the desired results.

Only when our defense capabilities are adequately strengthened can we protect the gains we have achieved through immense sacrifices and ensure success in the building of the new social order.

If our very existence as a nation is not guaranteed, not only will we fail in our future objectives, but our past sacrifices will also have been in vain.

In this context, in response to the challenge posed to the Revolution, a new defense structure was set up recently along the lines of socialist principles. This is a matter deserving special attention in our overall development efforts, for it is inseparably linked with our deep concern for the security of our homeland and Revolution. It is our firm belief that our efforts in this field will not only ensure our own security but also contribute to the peace and stability of the world. While COPWE gives great importance and pays due attention to its links with the mass organizations, it also provides guidelines regarding the relationship between itself and government institutions. In practice, it also determines the relationship that should exist between government organs, mass organizations and itself. It coordinates governmental and organizational efforts toward a single objective: the building of the new social order of equality and prosperity. This is only a schematic outline; we still have to learn more from practical experience.

I hope that the foregoing analysis will give a general idea of what the 1st Congress of COPWE — which enjoys the full support of the masses, occupies a unique place in the history of Ethiopia and constitutes a very advanced stage in our struggle of party formation — is all about.

It will be recalled that the PMAC announced the formation of this sole vanguard political organization, COPWE, on December 17, 1979. Six full months have elapsed from the day of that proclamation to this 1st Congress. A period of six months in a revolutionary situation is a long time; this is obvious, especially to revolutionaries who have gone through similar experiences of intense struggle.

At this point, there is no doubt that the question "Why was it delayed for so long?" may be legitimately posed.

Nevertheless, Ethiopian revolutionaries and the masses have reposed in me the highest responsibility that could ever be given to an individual citizen. The complex and difficult situation which confronted us has also necessitated immense sacrifices that defy description. This is why six months of efforts were required by the situation, because of the limits of our resources, to reach the day of this historic congress.

Future practice will show whether or not what has been done during this time is worth the efforts made.

The party of the working people will be established through the united struggle of Communists!

The world will belong to the working peoples! ■



notes for
history

WORLD PARLIAMENT OF PEOPLES FOR PEACE

VIRGILIO CALVO



THE World Parliament of Peoples for Peace met in Sofia, Bulgaria, September 23-27, 1980, under the auspices of the World Peace Council, with delegates from 137 countries, guests from 109 international organizations and hundreds of private individuals — all of whom came prepared to work for peace and peaceful coexistence and against the arms race.

The main purpose of the event was to promote peace, which is particularly important now because of imperialism's arms escalation. The conference took the form of meetings, commissions, hearings, workshops, round-table discussions and complementary activities — such as meetings with children, intellectuals and scientists and the commemoration of such dates as the 90th anniversary of Ho Chi Minh's and the 250th anniversary of Simón Bolívar's birth — which lent variety to the Parliament.

The arms race, the danger of war and the impact these factors have on the struggle for national independence were discussed in terms of present-day realities, with emphasis on imperialism's stepped-up warmongering activities and the danger posed by its political goals. Many of the delegates mentioned the significance of limited nuclear warfare, which the imperialists have projected as an alternative to all-out war — an alternative that would be extremely costly for the entire world.

It was pointed out that the astronomical sums spent on military hardware impose great sacrifices on the masses, undermining the bases for socioeconomic development, blocking the progress of Third World countries and threatening the world with a holocaust. In general, imperialism was denounced as the prime mover of the arms escalation, and the need for unity in the struggle to eliminate the threat of nuclear warfare was stressed.

The 2300 delegates to the Parliament also discussed the world economic situation, the chaos the Third World countries face as a result of the present crisis in the capitalist world and the impact that the struggle for the New International Economic Order has in terms of general social progress. On this question, OSPAAAL urged Commission 1 of the Parliament to back the proposal that Comrade Fidel Castro, Chairman of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, made in the United Nations concerning the need for a massive transfer of resources to launch an international development strategy, setting a minimum figure of \$300 billion for the coming decade. The proposal was approved.

During the discussion of the general economic situation in the underdeveloped countries, some delegations representing public opinion in the developed capitalist countries also raised the difficulties they faced and asked for solidarity. An important point of unity was found regarding the problems faced by the underdeveloped countries and those faced by workers in the imperialist metropolises, and it was agreed that both sets of problems merited international solidarity.

Other matters discussed included those related to solidarity with the Palestinian and other Arab peoples; the contribution of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to peace and national independence; the struggle for national liberation and economic independence in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean; peace and security in Asia; racism and other kinds of discrimination; the new international information order; the role and responsibility of organized religion in promoting peace; and cooperation with nongovernmental organizations.

The hearings dealt with violations of human rights and other crimes against mankind, especially those committed by the Chinese aggressors in Vietnam and by the former Pol Pot-Ieng Sary regime in Kampuchea, and the situation of the peoples of El Salvador,



Haiti, Guatemala, Chile, Uruguay, Northern Ireland and the Arab territories occupied by Israel.

The delegation from the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL) was headed by Miriam Almanza, representing Cuba, and also included Doang Dinh Ca, member of the OSPAAAL Secretariat and representative of Vietnam; Imad Jadaa, representing the PLO; Aída Cañas, representing El Salvador; Erick Blandón, of the Sandinista National Liberation Front of Nicaragua; Helmut Angula, representing Namibia; and Abelardo Curbelo, Eduardo Rodríguez and Virgilio Calvo, of Cuba.

The delegation participated in all the activities; many of its members were among the presiding officers of the Parliament's commissions, round-table discussions and other events.

OSPAAAL's goals meshed perfectly with the meaning and essence of the event, which, in spite of its size and heterogeneity, proved to be a real expression of solidarity.

This solidarity was particularly evident in the hearings, attended by almost all the delegations, which presented a clear picture of the problems certain countries are facing. The solidarity with El Salvador was especially impressive.

OSPAAAL had the honor of being represented on the World Peace Council by Comrade Melba Hernández, its General Secretary, who was reelected to one of the WPC's top leadership posts.

The World Parliament of Peoples for Peace, which was brilliantly chaired by Romesh Chandra, head of the World



Peace Council, was undoubtedly one of the most important meetings of non-governmental organizations in 1980 to promote independence and national sovereignty; defend national resources; and oppose imperialist exploitation, neocolonialism, colonialism, racism, Zionism and apartheid.

The participants in this international meeting gave their backing and solidarity to every just cause. The resolutions and decisions that were adopted favored the revolutionary movement and such progressive causes as peace, development and social progress, for they were based on the real assumption that the question of peace is critical and that its defense implies an active struggle against imperialism. It was clear that the Parliament correctly related the

struggle for peace to our peoples' struggle for progress and social development.

The Parliament was a success because it showed, above all, that mankind wants peace as an indispensable requirement for the economic, political and social development of all the peoples of the world; because it recognized the forces that threaten peace; and because it expressed increased readiness to fight to preserve the peoples' right to life.

In order to provide its readers with further information on the Parliament, *Tricontinental* presents excerpts from the most important resolutions that were adopted and the full text of the appeal to the peoples of the world issued by the World Parliament of Peoples for Peace.

CALL
FROM THE WORLD PARLIAMENT OF PEOPLES FOR PEACE

The peoples of the world are alarmed. Never before has the danger of a world nuclear holocaust been so great.

The escalation of the nuclear arms race and the stockpiling of deadly weapons have reached a critical point. The new intensification of the arms race could create an extremely dangerous situation, subjecting mankind to the threat of annihilation.

The "new nuclear strategy" is a deception put forth to convince the peoples that limited nuclear warfare can be waged without involving a world nuclear holocaust. We categorically reject this dangerous and inhuman concept.

For more than three decades now, people everywhere have managed to prevent the unleashing of a world war and have fought with great devotion for disarmament and détente. They refuse to participate in these new maneuvers. Their demand is: Halt the arms race, stop the sword rattling, halt the aggression or threats of aggression and remove the danger of nuclear warfare.

We appeal to the reason and sense of responsibility of all politicians and statesmen; we appeal to all governments:

Give up your arms programs.

Stop manufacturing new weapons of mass destruction — missiles and neutron, chemical and other types of weapons.

Reduce the stockpiles.

Ban nuclear weapons.

We appeal to all who support the concept of peace.

It is not enough to be concerned.

It is not enough to be alarmed.

The peoples have the power to maintain peace, their basic right.

Act now!

Let our voices be heard louder than ever before.

Resolution on Vietnam

Basing itself on the peoples' deep concern over the danger of Southeast Asia's being turned into a battlefield because of the expansionist and hegemonistic policy followed by the Chinese leaders in connivance with the bellicose forces of imperialism and the international reaction, the World Parliament of Peoples for Peace denounced the fact that Chinese troops massacred civilians and destroyed many cultural, educational and health centers during their attack on the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in 1979.

It also denounced the incessant, daily armed attacks that China has been making on the borders of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Beijing authorities' policy of force, which is a flagrant violation of international law.

This policy of force is in defiance of all the national democratic and peace-loving forces that are struggling to consolidate détente and to fulfill the aspirations of all peoples regarding the achievement of peace and international friendship and cooperation.

The preparations for a new war have given rise to tensions in Southeast Asia. The Congress blamed China for pushing the region to the brink of war.

The Parliament fully supported the Vietnamese people's struggle to rebuild and defend their homeland, and it saluted the government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam for having given constant proof of its good will and for having made constructive suggestions and initiatives in searching for a peaceful solution to the border conflicts and the normalization of relations.

Resolution on the military escalation in the Arab Gulf and Peninsula

The World Parliament of Peoples for Peace expressed its solidarity with all the liberation movements and democratic and patriotic forces in this region — which, in extremely difficult conditions, are waging a struggle to achieve independence, freedom, human rights and independent socioeconomic development.

The Parliament firmly supported the efforts that are being made to unite the Yemeni homeland on the basis of peace and democracy and Democratic Yemen's struggle to frustrate the reactionaries' and imperialists' plots.

It emphasized that the military conflict between Iran and Iraq can only serve the interests of imperialism and called for an immediate end to these clashes and respect for the territorial integrity of the two countries.

It called for the abolition of the US bases and other military installations in Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Somalia.

It denounced the imperialists' attempts to create a reactionary military alliance — supposedly to protect the security of the Gulf.

It denounced the repressive actions that have taken place in Saudi Arabia, Oman, Bahrain and other countries in the Gulf area.

It recommended engaging in national and international activities that focus on the danger of military escalation and support the struggle for peace, security, development and liberation.

Resolution on El Salvador

The Parliament called attention to the fact that the US government is threatening to step up its military intervention in El Salvador, in connivance with the Venezuelan government, by arming and mobilizing the armies of Honduras and Guatemala, which oppose their people, and even using its own forces to invade Salvadoran territory if necessary.

It energetically and indignantly denounced this US intervention in El Salvador and the genocide committed by the Christian Democratic military junta.

It expressed its complete solidarity with the legitimate struggle being waged by the Salvadoran people, led by the Unified Revolutionary Leadership (DRU), their political-military vanguard.

It denounced the systematic violation of human rights in El Salvador, calling attention to the thousands of refugees who are subsisting in a permanent state of anguish and uncertainty in churches and other institutions in the country and to the thousands of others who are being persecuted in Honduras and other neighboring countries.

It recognized the Unified Revolutionary Leadership and the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) as the sole legitimate representatives of the Salvadoran people and their government platform as the only possibility for solving the deep socioeconomic crisis and achieving a strong and lasting peace in El Salvador.

It called on the international community — and especially the United Nations — to recognize the legitimacy of the Salvadoran people's struggle against the fascist, imperialist aggressors.

It further called on all progressive, democratic and revolutionary forces in the world to denounce the US intervention in El Salvador as a serious threat to world peace.

Resolution of solidarity with the Bolivian people

In its resolution of solidarity with the Bolivian people, the World Parliament of Peoples for Peace energetically denounced the coup military men and their international accomplices, who forcibly broke off the democratizing process, subjecting the country to the barbarousness of a fascist dictatorship.

It indignantly denounced the genocide, torture, terrorism and other crimes committed by the junta headed by General Luis García Meza.

It expressed its complete solidarity with the people's resistance to the usurping regime and called on the democratic forces and champions of peace throughout the world to engage in emergency actions to support the Bolivian patriots' antifascist struggle.

It called for respect for the lives and security of political and trade union leaders and all other prisoners held by the dictatorship, and it urged international agencies to redouble their efforts to defend human rights and obtain immediate freedom for prisoners.

It recognized the underground government of National Unity headed by Dr. Hernán Siles Suazo as the legitimate representative of the Bolivian people, elected by the sovereign will of the citizens.

It called on the international community and world governments to refuse to establish relations with the usurping junta or grant it any economic, financial or military aid — for, by refraining from giving this aid, they will help to restore democracy in Bolivia. ●

11 Anniversary Grenada free and revolutionary





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on the march**

Visits to OSPAAAL

The members of the Executive Secretariat welcomed several fraternal delegations, with which they discussed various aspects of the problems facing the peoples of the "Third World" in their struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, racism and the reaction.

The visiting delegations included one from Kampuchea headed by Pen Sovan, President of the People's Revolutionary Council of Kampuchea and Minister of Defense of that country; one from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine headed by Taysir Khaled, member of the Political Bureau and head of the Department of International Relations of the Central Committee of the DFLP; one from the African National Congress headed by Alfred Nzo, General Secretary of the ANC; and one from the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization headed by Vasos Lissarides, its Vice President.

Comrade Melba Hernández, General Secretary of OSPAAAL, also met with outstanding political leaders from the three continents, including Nguyen Thi Dinh, heroine of Ben Tre and Deputy Commander in Chief of the People's Liberation Armed Forces during the anti-Yankee war for national salvation and now President of the Union of Vietnamese Women and member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam; Rodney Arismendi, General Secretary of the Uruguayan Communist Party; and Carlos Gallisá, President of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, who also held a press conference at OSPAAAL's headquarters.

Solidarity with the Lao people

A political-cultural meeting was held in militant solidarity with the just cause of the Lao people on the 5th anniversary of the proclamation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

The meeting was chaired by Comrade Melba Hernández and H. E. Somvath Choulamany, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of



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the Lao People's Democratic Republic in Cuba, who gave a detailed summary of the Lao people's victorious anti-Yankee struggle that led to the proclamation of the Republic on December 2, 1975; the attacks to which his country has been subjected by the reaction, both inside and outside the country; and the work done to rebuild the country and create the technical and material base for development.

15th anniversary of OSPAAAL

OSPAAAL's 15th anniversary was celebrated during the week of January 5-12 with a reaffirmation of the principles that have guided the organization ever since its creation in the historic Tricontinental Conference. The anniversary activities' theme was developed along three lines: the peoples' struggle, international solidarity and the denunciation of imperialist aggression.

An exhibit of photos, posters and publications was held in Havana, where the Executive Secretariat of OSPAAAL has its headquarters. Sculptress Rita Longa provided an impressive work for the occasion; painters, caricaturists, young artists and singers from the New Trova Movement also contributed their talents; and Doan Dinh Ca, Vietnamese representative on the OSPAAAL Secretariat, gave the main address.

A particularly moving meeting was held with OSPAAAL's contributors, who have promoted international solidarity throughout the years.

In a solemn ceremony, the Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to Cuba presented OSPAAAL with his government's Order of Friendship, which Comrade Melba Hernández accepted on behalf of the organization. Jesús Montané Oropesa, alternate member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba, and Manuel Piñeiro, member of the Central Committee, attended the ceremony.



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The anniversary was also celebrated with press conferences and various activities in other countries. Congratulatory greetings poured in from all over the world.

The final event was a public meeting in the Mella Theater. Those present included Osmany Cienfuegos Gorriarán, the organization's first Executive Secretary and a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party; Armando Hart Dávalos, Minister of Culture and member of the Political Bureau; Jesús Montané Oropesa, alternate member of the Political Bureau, who gave the main speech; Socorro Galán, representing the leadership of the Nicaraguan Committee of Solidarity with the Peoples; Dr. Mohsen Bilal, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Syrian Parliament; and members of the diplomatic corps.

In her opening remarks, Comrade Melba Hernández paid special tribute to those who had fought and died for their peoples' independence and freedom during the last 15 years.

The week's anniversary activities provided ample evidence of the value of our organization's work and served as a stimulus for continuing to promote the independence, unity and dignity of the peoples. In its next issue, *Tricontinental* magazine will publish two of the anniversary speeches.

Declaration of solidarity with the Salvadoran people

The Executive Secretariat of OSPAAAL was perturbed to learn that the Christian Democratic fascist Military Junta of El Salvador had murdered six of the main leaders of the Revolutionary Democratic Front of that country.

Everyone knows that Yankee imperialism was behind the murders, for, in complicity with the genocidal regime of El Salvador, it has tried to drown the Salvadoran people's freedom drive in a blood bath.



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The names of Enrique Córdoba, Juan Chacón, Humberto Mendoza, Enrique Barrera, Doroteo Hernández and Manuel Franco are added to the long list of martyred heroes cravenly murdered by the despotic regime that now misrules their country. Their exemplary lives and deaths will lead their people to step up the struggle, writing new pages of heroism and victories.

On reviewing the multifaceted lives of those fighters, we recall the firm stand taken by Comrade Manuel Franco as a delegate from OSPAAAL to the recent International Conference of Solidarity with the Libyan People — showing that, for revolutionaries, all battle fronts are valid in defending the just cause of the peoples.

The courageous Salvadoran fighters fell heroically while engaged in their sacred revolutionary mission of organizing the people and leading them in a general insurrection to end the Salvadoran fascist dictatorship once and for all.

The Executive Secretariat of OSPAAAL strongly denounces this crime, which is yet another of the murders committed daily by the Salvadoran Christian Democratic Military Junta. OSPAAAL calls on all democratic, progressive, anti-imperialist and revolutionary forces to denounce this criminal action and the genocidal fascist dictatorship in El Salvador.

At this difficult time, when the fraternal people of El Salvador have again lost some of their finest sons, OSPAAAL expresses its unlimited solidarity with their struggle for freedom, convinced that this struggle will take on even larger dimensions and attain final victory.

Long live the people of El Salvador!

Long live the peoples' struggles for liberation! ■

Executive Secretariat of OSPAAAL

Havana, December 1980

Lumumba 20th Anniversary



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