EDITORIAL

CUBA - A RESPONSE

Our recently published editorial "Salute to Revolutionary Cuba" (OEM Vol. 1 No. 18, July, 1976) has brought a significant number of responses and comments, both in favor and against the views expressed in said editorial. In most instances we have attempted to respond to these comments individually. However, the importance of the subject, as well as the serious manner in which it was expressed, demands our response to a particular letter received from a companero from the Dominican revolutionary movement.

In his letter, companero CM recognizes the importance of the Cuban Revolution to the Latin American process and its lessons. But, he expresses that EL COMITE–MINP shied away from ideological struggle with the Cuban Revolution in the aforementioned editorial and presents in his letter his own criticisms to the Cuban Revolution which he bases on the science of dialectical materialism. These criticisms are essentially the following: that Cuba until recently upheld the foco theory and in so doing is responsible for the death of many Latin American revolutionaries – in particular Otto Castillo in Guatemala, the Peredo brothers in Bolivia, and Amaury German Aristy and Alberto Caamano Deno in the Dominican Republic; that Cuba has never put forth the "theoretical conceptions" that led to its victories and transition to socialism; and that in these historical moments only a "program of the old type" (defeat of the reactionary regimes, setting a liberal–democratic government as prerequisite to the socialist revolution) can be successful in the Latin American revolutionary process.

These are indeed serious criticisms which we have the responsability to respond to, not in defense of the Cuban Revolution (as history shows they are more than capable to meet the task), but as a manner of upholding the integrity and revolutionary principles that guide our movement, EL COMITE–MINP.

On the question of our editorial, it is obvious CM misunderstood the purpose of the same. We understand and accept as part of CM's criticisms that explanations in some of the points raised were much too general, this due to the limitations inherent in a publication of this type, nevertheless the editorial in discussion was not a historical analysis of the tactical and strategical conceptions of the Latin American revolutionary process (that would be beyond the limitations of an editorial, and indeed pretentious and arrogant). Yet in our view we did not shy away from ideological struggle, far from it. The question is, whom were we struggling with?

Our publications are generally geared toward struggle with bourgeois ideology, and in particular instances we wage struggle against those tendencies and deviations within the revolutionary movement which hinder the development of class struggle. Moreover, and in relation to the aforementioned editorial, recognizing US imperialism as our main enemy, we struggled against the dogmatists and pseudo-revolutionaries in the US who incapable of developing the revolution in their own imperialist country not only raise unsubstantiated, destructive criticisms toward true revolutionaries but, in the process, assume reactionary positions which objectively aligns them with their own bourgeoisie and in clear expression of social chauvinism. We think our editorial accomplished its task.

As to the other criticisms, again pointing out the natural limitations, we will respond to each in an admitted schematic form.

FOCO THEORY

This conception of armed struggle, so much talked about and so misunderstood – even by its advocates – counts many among its victims. In essence, the guerrilla foco or "foquismo" entails a reduced number of rural guerrilla, who organized in isolation, and independent of any national organization or urban political work, acts as a detonator that ignites the revolutionary process. Like CM, many in Latin America point to Cuba as its source. Indeed, soon after the victory of the Cuban rebels, Latin American revolutionaries and some Cubans began to interpret and implement this theory in Latin America. Its best known exponent is Regis Debray, French Marxist philosopher, who in interpreting the Cuban process described the guerrilla foco as its guiding force.

Cuba rectified this misconception (read Che on Guerrilla Warfare – a method) whereas Debray not only held his view until a recent self–criticism but propagated his writings

continued on page 10

EDITORIAL(cont.)

among Latin American revolutionaries, particularly unstable elements of the petty bourgeoisie. Within this context, and as it relates to CM's criticisms, it is in our view senseless to criticize the Cuban Revolution for something it rectified a long time ago. On the other hand, companero CM, a real problem is that many in Latin America – particularly the reformists – have found it easy to demolish this theory in order to justify their own vacillations and as pretext to reject the development of armed struggle.

ON THE RESPONSABILITY AND DEATH OF THE 5 REVOLUTIONARIES

Since CM states his criticisms are based on the science of dialectical materialism, we understand that it is necessary to point to the serious error committed by CM in his categoric statement on this matter. Dialectics, when applied to the social revolutions of peoples and nations, teach that these are clearly determined by internal causes, by the level of development and strength of its revolutionary forces and reactionary forces while the external factors (let these be in favor or against the revolutionary process) serve as conditioning elements. Often times disregarding this fundamental principle, we, and in particular Latin American revolutionaries, have often searched far and wide for our errors and failures except within our own development or lack of it.

In this respect, if we are to be consistent with the teachings of the Marxist science of dialectical materialism, we must prior to making unsubstantiated charges, look at the death of these revolutionaries within the context of the particular conditions in which they occurred and determine from that analysis what were the determinant factors. If, CM, and others who hold the same position, made such an analysis, they would under no circumstances group these five individuals as if they were homogenous revolutionary figures. For example, to place Castillo within the same group as Caamaño, and to speak of foquismo and Cuba's culpability in their death, is reflection of not understanding the historical development of the revolutionary process in Guatemala, or in this case ironically, not knowing the Dominican process or both. For obviously such a position manifests an ignorance of the conceptions of the foco theory, and most important, ignorance of the historical development of those revolutionary processes.

OTTO RENE CASTILLO AND CAAMAÑO DEÑO

An in depth analysis of each case raised by CM is obviously impossible (nor for that matter of his other examples), nevertheless, we will touch on Castillo and Caamaño by way of example.

For reasons unknown to us, CM points out the death of Castillo and disregards the death of the popular leaders of that revolutionary process, namely Turcios Lima and Yon Sosa. Castillo died in 1967 in the mountain of Guatemala seven years after an attempted military coup by young army officers (which included over 100 army officers and over 3,000 soldiers) on November 13, 1960 to overthrow the repressive regime of Ydigoras Fuentes. The failure of the coup gave rise to the MR–13 MOVEMENT and the REVOLUTIONARY ARMED FORCES, led by Turcios and Sosa. Castillo, young Guatemalan poet, eventually joined this movement which in the early 60's developed various fronts and counted thousands of militarily trained peasant supporters. . . is this the basis of a "guerrilla foco"? Obviously CM is not aware of this historical process but incorrectly points to Cuba and disregards such facts as the betrayal of the Troskyite Fourth International who went as far as appropiating – stealing! – the financial resources of the FAR, the constant vacillations of the local revisionists of the PGT (PARTIDO GENERAL DE LOS TRABAJADORES) and the development of the CIA trained right wing terrorists of MANO. It were these factors, which coupled with the support and participation of US imperialist forces (Green Berets) and its intelligence apparatus of the CIA that contributed not only to the death of Castillo but to the defeat of one of the most developed guerrilla movements in Latin America.

On the question of Caamaño, the situation is indeed very serious and related to our comments on where we should look for responsabilities for our errors. CM blames Cuba for Caamaño's death which took place in 1973 in the Dominican Republic. Let us examine that statement.

The struggle of the Dominican people against the invading US Marines and the Popular leadership of Caamaño to that heoric resistance are well known facts. CM, as a Dominican revolutionary, is well aware of all this as well as Caamaño's military background and

significant mass following among the Dominican people. Taking all this into consideration, it is indeed difficult for us to conceive that a man of such preparation and knowledge provided by the experiences and failures of so many, both in Latin America and particularly in the Dominican Republic, would mask such an infantile error as going to the mountains with eight men and disdain bothits experiences and substantial mass following among the Dominican people. Therefore, to now attempt to place the blame on the Cuban Revolution for these inconsistencies raises fundamental questions particularly for the Dominican Revolutionary movement. It is our opinion that such a position is incorrec t, not to say irresponsible, and projects to others, errors, and unanswered questions, which are to be found within the Dominican revolutionary process.

ON CUBA'S THEORETICAL CONCEPTIONS AND CM'S "PROGRAM OF THE OLD TYPE"

On both these aspects, we have clear disagreements with the Dominican companero, for us they reflect the inconsistencies of his statements and his claim to base his criticisms on "the science of dialectical materialism". The fact that Cuba's theoretical formulations may be dispersed, and written in different moments (revolutions as a social process are not exempt from the laws of dialectics) does not in the least mean they do not exist, nor does it mean they have not been incorrectly analized or interpreted. As manner of example of this last important aspect we point out that to this date there are Cuban supportes who picture this revolutionary process as the "heroic deed of 12 great men", which is not and has never been the position of the Cuban Revolution.

As to the question of the "Program of the Old Type", CM fails to understand how unconsciously in his analysis he falls into precisely that which he criticizes, dogmatism in the form of copying revolutionary models. Isn't the "program of the old type" exactly an attempt at imposing a model which if taken to its ultimate consequence is nothing less than the Soviets Insurrections in a Latin American reality? Moreover, isn't this exactly the programs held by the collaborationists reformists in the "traditional" CPs of Latin America intent in applying a "European" model to Latin America? It is precisely due to the examples raised by CM that we are in agreement with those Latin American revolutionaries that take the opposite position, namely that as a result of the Cuban Revolution, and as proved by the subsequent invasion of the Dominican Republic, US imperialism will not again be "taken by surprise" and that the local bourgeoisies will and have become ever more dependent on US imperialism and as such less and less nationalist. Therefore, this determines that in most instances in Latin America revolutions must assume a socialist character (unlike Cuba), confronting both the local bourgeoisie and US imperialism, presenting clear class positions and a continental character guided by the principles of a prolonged war.

The Latin American revolutionary process, and its historical development is a highly complex situation, both in its general as well as particular conditions. In this context, Latin Americans have committed errors and ideological deviations, and in this respect we do not separate the Cuban Revolution. Nevertheless, in analizing this complex situation, and in order to overcome these errors, we must be self-critical and avoid simplifications which at times permeate our analysis. This fundamental lesson of historical materialism is a responsability of all.