

Peru 1965

Notes on a Guerrilla Experience
by Héctor Béjar

translated by William Rose

Héctor Béjar



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*To my wife, Ana María, an admirable
comrade during these intense years*

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Héctor Béjar: An Interview

by Winston Orrillo

This prison-cell interview, which contains information about Béjar and his part in the events of 1965, appears here in place of an introduction.

There are many intellectuals, not only those involved in scientific research but also in art and letters, who describe themselves as writers and not politicians, but in today's world it is rather difficult to be apolitical, because if one says one is apolitical one is taking a political position.
—Haydée Santamaría

For a Latin American writer, especially a young writer, there are probably no literary prizes as coveted as the annual Casa de las Américas awards for novel, poetry, short story, theater, and essay. Aside from awarding \$1000 to each author, the works are published by Casa de las Américas and almost immediately translated abroad. The following interview with Héctor Béjar, winner of the essay prize, was held recently in Lima's San Quintín prison.

Héctor Béjar is a man of many talents: poet, painter, engraver, and now an essayist—and a member of the "Javier Heraud" guerrilla group. He is a person of unfailing good spirits. He smiles and laughs as he secretively tells us

that in a few days he will “blow out three candles” to celebrate his third year of internment. He’s planning a small party in the prison.

w. o.: How did you react to the news of the prize?

H. B.: It’s been a happy event for me, for my wife, and the children. Actually we have all shared this imprisonment and the events of the past few years, and the news of the prize has been the happiest we’ve received in months. At the same time I think it’s good news for all political prisoners and for all those people who in one way or another were in solidarity with the guerrilla movement of 1965 and who are in solidarity with the prisoners.

w. o.: What made you think of competing for the prize?

H. B.: Well, you see, like every revolutionary I follow events in Cuba fairly closely, in all their multiple aspects, because the Cuban Revolution is still the most recent revolution and is geographically the closest to us. I knew about the prize from the time Casa de las Américas initiated it and I wanted to participate some day. Now that my forced imprisonment gives me time to study and produce I took advantage of the opportunity and entered the competition . . . and there you have it.

I’ve been very lucky. I only hope that the publication of the book will open up the discussion of the experiences of 1965, especially because in many quarters they have been misunderstood or distorted.

w. o.: I realize it may be difficult, but could you summarize the basic points of your essay?

H. B.: It’s a frank and self-critical analysis of the origins of the guerrilla movement in Peru—economic, social, and political—and the immediate and less immediate causes of its initial failures. My starting point is that the Peruvian guerrillas were both a response to and the natural result of

an entire climate of social and political rebellion which Peru had experienced since the fall of the Odría dictatorship.

On the other hand, I suggest that the guerrillas carried within themselves, from the beginning, a great many of the historical defects of the Peruvian Left political parties. The guerrillas reflected to too great a degree the political and class characteristics of their founders and leaders. In short, they began before they had really assimilated the experiences of other revolutionary wars and struggles—Vietnam and Cuba—and they didn’t manage to successfully assimilate their first experiences of the reality of the Peruvian peasantry.

Furthermore, as in other places, the guerrilla attempt was the result of a fusion of the most combative peasants and the revolutionary urban petty bourgeoisie. It was potentially a highly explosive fusion, but difficult to bring off. It’s a type of fusion that demands specific conditions of different types, even subjective and personal ones, and some also have to do with the quality of the leaders, and these conditions were missing. I suggest that this fusion could have been arrived at perfectly in 1962-1963, when the peasant movement under Hugo Blanco and others, and the revolutionary Left, seemed to be going in the same direction, but that in 1965 we arrived too late because much of the peasant social insurgency had been drowned in blood by the army.

What this means is that this explosive mixture may present itself at any time in the years ahead and that we must be preparing for it. I also mention that the so-called new Left was insufficiently intellectually, politically, and militarily prepared for the insurrection. It demonstrated more than enough courage, valor, and fighting will, but it lacked the political audacity to discover, during the insurrectionary process, new forms of action and to break once and for all the constraints of its preceding movement experience.

The conclusion of all this is that the revolution is an experience which one must live imaginatively and audaciously, living with the workers and the peasants; the revolution must be made from the depths of the masses, from the depths of their feelings and necessities.

w. o.: I wish you could give a brief run down of the different activities leading up to your participation in the Peruvian guerrilla uprisings. Many foreign readers—and even Peruvian readers—do not know, for example, that you were an art student or that you write poetry.

H. B.: A quick resumé. I have been involved in political struggle since I was seventeen years old. I've been involved in student, political, and union struggles; I've been imprisoned—this is the fifth time; I've written revolutionary journalism. All in all I suppose I've lived an intense life, known many people both superficially and intimately, known many different realities. Like all my generation, since Algeria, Vietnam, China, and Cuba, I have the deep conviction that the only road for the oppressed is to struggle against their oppressors, using all the forms possible.

To come back to your question, it's true I was a student at the National Academy of Fine Arts back in 1959 and 1960. I studied law until I finished all my course work, but without taking a degree, at the University of San Marcos. I've also written some poetry, but all of this incidentally, because in these troubled times there is very little place for art.

w. o.: To add a bit to my previous question, would you tell us about your present work? A few years ago, for example, you won another literary contest.

H. B.: Yes, in 1966. There was a literary contest for prisoners and I won the essay prize with a study entitled "Prisons in Peru." More than an essay, it was a denunciation of the

tragedy of Peruvian prisoners within a blind, cynical, and brutal prison system.

Now I take advantage of all the time I have to study, write, paint, and do handicrafts. I try to keep informed of everything going on outside of this cage and to pull together all the ideas that run around in my head.

w. o.: Who are your favorite authors?

H. B.: When it comes to the essay I prefer Sartre, whose analytical clarity I wish one could find among orthodox Marxists. In poetry, naturally, César Vallejo. In the novel, Gabriel García Márquez. In painting, no new painter except for Picasso.

w. o.: What literary genre do you prefer?

H. B.: Well, definitely the essay. It's the one form that allows me to study, analyze, and think systematically. This is important and yet it tends to be disdained almost completely, even by the Left, these days. Everything has been processed, tinned, and put in the larder.

w. o.: How do you look upon contemporary literature in Peru and in Latin America?

H. B.: I can only give you a fairly uninformed reader's opinion because I am not a critic. I don't think Latin America has yet found either its own art or its own literature. There are experiments that have been enthusiastically received, but they have more to do with form than with anything else. In Peru this may be because the people are not yet united and as a result our writers are limited in their experiences. I think the great Latin American art has yet to be created. Naturally it won't be one art because our realities are both different and multiple.

w. o.: Why did you choose the guerrillas as the theme for your essay?

H. B.: There are two fundamental reasons: 1) Because it's a lived experience which shouldn't belong to me alone, and 2) because there has to be a stock-taking of the errors which led to the first failures so that they won't be repeated in the future. When heroic acts are surrounded by legend we run the risk of canceling out every possibility for a genuine critique. This is one risk we must not take.

w. o.: What are the revolutionary perspectives for Peru?

H. B.: In Peru, from 1965 onward, and even before, from the first armed actions of Hugo Blanco, Javier Heraud, and Lieutenant Vallejo, a new stage in revolutionary struggle began. At the moment we are still living through the consequences of the first failures, but the ferment continues and that is the important thing. At the same time the country is moving toward a social, economic, and political crossroads. The bourgeois reformists have become aware of this and have unleashed a race against time . . . and against history, because they will arrive too late.

Our country is moving toward sharp social confrontations and we revolutionaries of today find ourselves in a situation similar to that experienced by the revolutionaries of the thirties: submerged in a crisis which is unfolding, but hardly prepared for it because we have become isolated from the people. We have to assume new responsibilities quickly.

Up to now the revolutionaries have shown that they can run physical risks and even die in their attempts, as in the case of De la Puente, Lobatón, Velando, Tello, Zapata, Heraud, and so many others. But there has always been a certain fear of intellectual adventure, without which there can be neither creation nor audacity in politics. One must always look for new forms of action without worrying about possible excommunication or being looked upon as a heretic. This is a stage for *search* in both action and thought. It

is the only way to find the path toward the liberation of all the people.

w. o.: Finally, I wish you would tell us about your present situation.

H.B.: I am supposed to have an open trial before a council of war. I've been in prison for three years and I have no idea when I shall be tried. The revolution is a war between the oppressed and their oppressors. For the present I've lost this round and am in the hands of the oppressors. That's all.

—Translated by Paul Bundy

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

APRA	Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana
APUIR	Asociación para la Unificación de la Izquierda Revolucionaria
ELN	Ejército de Liberación Nacional
FENCAP	Federación de Campesinos del Perú
FIR	Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria
MIR	Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria
UNO	Unión Nacional Odrísta

Prologue

These pages are unfinished. They represent a moment in a man's continuing reflections and a stage in the examination of events that were left in obscurity because their protagonists perished.

They were written with the conviction that it is possible and necessary to continue the revolutionary guerrilla struggle in Latin America and in Peru.

Our purpose in these pages is not merely to praise the guerrillas. It is always easy to pile up adjectives, especially for those who did not participate in combat. However, the author feels that if one really wants to continue an undertaking, it is preferable to explain why the first efforts failed. Total commitment to a cause does not exclude—on the contrary, it imposes—the obligation to discuss how best to serve it.

In the case of Peru, a detailed, dispassionate analysis of the 1965 experience, about which so much has been written and so little is known, has yet to be made. These pages are an effort to open the discussion, and they will be corrected and completed in the future.

The reader must understand that this book was written in jail, with all the limitations imposed by being a prisoner. On numerous occasions the rough draft was saved from the guards. Therefore, and because of the haste in which it was written, it appears somewhat disorganized.

We have purposely omitted any reference to the attempted revolt of Lieutenant Francisco Vallejo in Jauja in July

1962, and to the frustrated incursion into the Department of Madre de Dios by the ELN (Ejército de Liberación Nacional) in May 1963, which preceded the 1965 guerilla insurrection and are historically linked to it. In the first case, we lacked the necessary data. In the second, there exists a series of events and circumstances which it is still not the time to reveal.

Nevertheless, there remains the satisfaction of having begun the task and the promise of continuing and completing it.

1

Economic Outline

The Stage

Peru is located in the western region of South America below the equator, like a kidney bathed by the Pacific Ocean (see map on page 21). Its immense surface of 620,000 square miles is divided into twenty-three departments.

Geographically, the terrain is generally broken and difficult to cross. Observed from a high altitude, its most notable natural characteristic is the immense Andean mountain range that cuts through the country from north to south, like a gigantic spinal column. On the western side the mountains descend almost to the ocean, leaving a long, narrow coastal strip. One must travel 1,360 miles to cross the country from south to north, from Tacna on the Chilean border to Tumbes, the point of contact with Ecuador; going east, one would not be able to travel more than twenty-five miles, or 125 in the broadest zones, without having to begin the ascent of the foothills of the Andes.

The coast is a long sea wall that nature raised against the ocean. Its mild and monotonous climate which, except in the extreme north, does not exceed 62 degrees Fahrenheit, is altered only by fog and light rain. It is also an immense desert that, paradoxically, contains the country's most fertile and productive land in the oases created by the approximately fifty small rivers that flow by the ports and cities. It is there that the export crops are grown and that a third of the population and almost all of the industry are located.

By contrast, the mountains—the links in the Andean

chain—are isolated from the rest of the country. Everything in them, towns and men alike, follows the twists and turns of the mountain range. There we find innumerable geographical changes: gigantic plateaus, deep canyons, sharp drops, and the most varied types of climate. Man lives as high as 15,000 feet above sea level, cultivating the land and raising animals, but the peaks of the Andes continue to rise like needles thrust into the sky, as high as 22,000 feet. The rainfall varies from year to year and there are frequent droughts on the high plateaus.

Rivers descend tumultuously from the Andean peaks to the forest. They begin as small streams, then become powerful torrents, and finally slow serpents of water that feed into the Amazon basin.

The forest is an immense green mantle that covers a large portion of the northern and eastern border areas. Although it covers two-thirds of the nation's surface, it is inhabited by only 11 percent of the population, which has gathered on the last slopes of the Andes since the low, level zones are difficult to inhabit or even to reach. The flat, interminable rain forest, damp and swampy, stretches on over all of Brazil and is only rarely varied by an occasional hill. There are almost no roads, so the rivers are the only means of communication (see map of the geographical regions of Peru, page 22).

The deserts and hot tropical sun of the northern coast, tempered somewhat by the clouds created by the Humboldt Current, by the biting cold of the Andean mountain range and plateaus, and by the suffocating humidity of the rain forest, produce a changing and varied geography and climate. Such is the appearance which this contradictory country offers at first glance.

If there is anything characteristic of Peru, it is the contradictions. Its history was abruptly cut in half by the



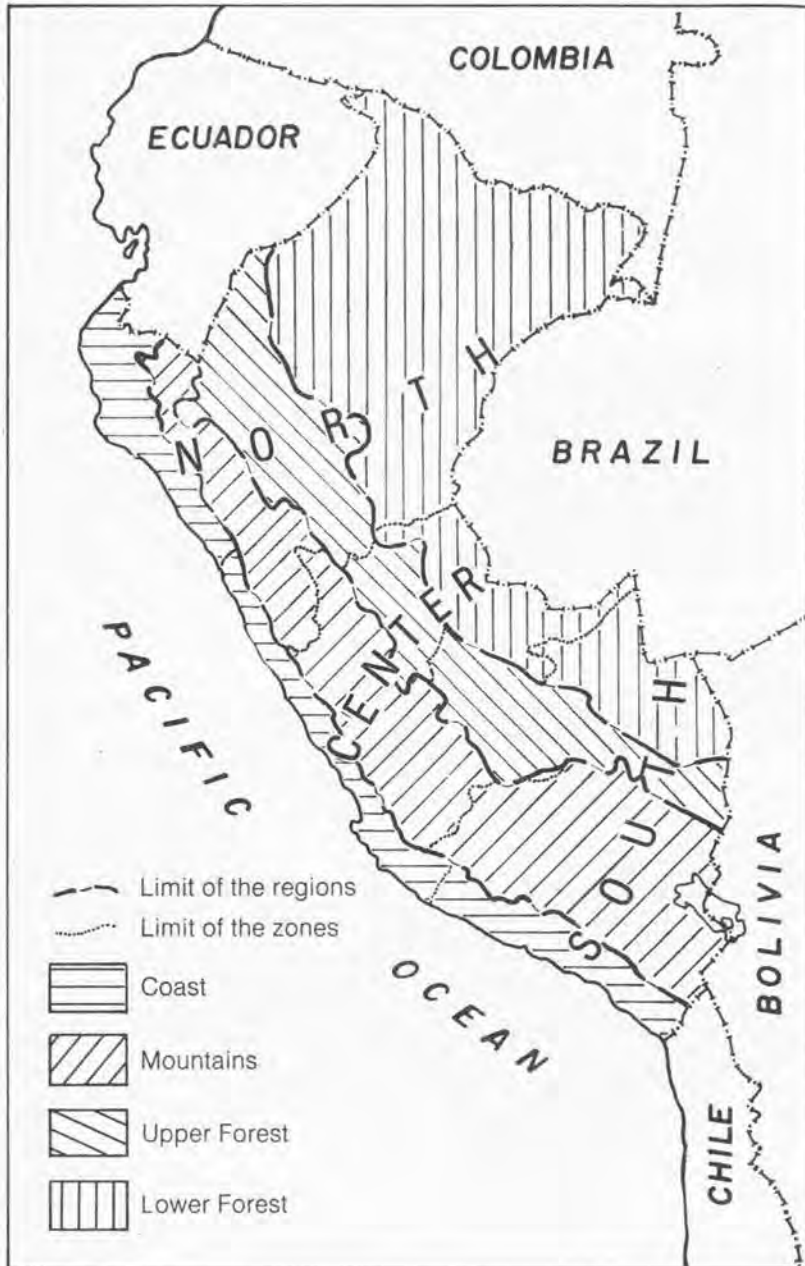
Spanish conquest, which destroyed an ancient culture and led to a three-hundred-year massacre of the conquered Quechuas. Its geography is violently broken up by the Andean backbone. Not even the racial characteristics of its inhabitants are uniform, since one cannot speak of a "mixed" race where signs of the now remote conquest are still discernible.

And what can be said of its economy? Large landholdings have long maintained a languid existence on the coast and in the mountains side by side with ancient peasant communities. And, on this base, capitalism imposed new relations of production and exchange at the same time that it entered into a shameful marriage with the colonial feudal class. Finally, since the beginning of the century, imperialism has dominated the country, guaranteeing the deformed survival of the earlier systems.

U.S. Domination

In the first part of this century, U.S. imperialism made its entry into Peru. In the first years of the turbulent history of our republic following our independence from Spain, English moneylenders operated behind the scenes of Peruvian politics and were also behind the readjustments that followed the disastrous War of the Pacific with Chile in 1879-1882. But after World War I, English economic domination gave way to North American penetration.

U.S. monopolies control copper, a large part of our petroleum, and the technologically advanced production of agricultural export products. Thus they have the main resources of our economy in their hands. U.S. monopolies and foreign enterprises own 85 percent of our mineral production (copper, iron, silver, lead, zinc, and other metals), fourteen of the twenty most important fishing concerns



(Peru is the largest producer of fish meal in the world), six of the ten largest sugar mills, and the commercial production of cotton, coffee, and woolen fabrics.

All of the banks are connected to the international banking system. The Banco de Crédito, the most important bank in the country, probably belongs to the Vatican through Italian banking concerns; the Banco Continental and the Banco Internacional are controlled by the Rockefeller family's Chase Manhattan Bank; there are numerous branches of U.S., European, and Japanese banks that operate with complete freedom. In general, there are almost no Peruvian banks that are not linked to foreign capital in one way or another.

The electric power consumed by the capital, where 70 percent of the nation's manufacturing is located, is provided by Lima Light and Power and a consortium connected to Italian banks. The telephones are controlled by International Telephone and Telegraph.

The wholesale import business is monopolized by foreign export firms, and U.S. penetration has even reached into the retail businesses.

Our traditional manufacturing industries—textiles, soap, etc.—were started by British firms. To this day three-fourths of the production of cotton textiles belongs to the Grace and Duncan Fox firms, started by British investors and now closely linked to U.S. interests.

During the last few years U.S. investments have created a consumer industry whose most notable characteristic is its dependence on foreign imports and, therefore, its great vulnerability. Forty-eight percent of its materials have to be imported from the United States and Europe.

Important modifications have taken place in the manufacturing industry recently with the appearance of new producers of intermediate goods such as fertilizers, artificial

fibers, caustic soda, explosives, sulphuric acid, paint, etc. But all of them are tied into U.S. capital or U.S. enterprises that operate in our country. In all, imperialist investments in the manufacturing industry represent 80 percent of the total, and groups of two or three enterprises monopolize between 90 and 100 percent of the production of tires, paper, oil, lactates, tobacco, etc.

Agriculture

The total land surface of Peru is 128.5 million hectares (1 hectare = 2.47 acres). Of that portion which constitutes rural property, there are 12 million hectares in pasture land, forests, hills, and land which could be cultivated but is not, as well as another 455,000 hectares which are lying fallow. Only an insignificant 2.8 million hectares are actually in production.¹

At first sight Peru appears to be a country of idle and abandoned land. A large part of that land could be cultivated if the peasants were provided with the means to do so, but the best of the little that is being used is monopolized by large landowners who leave broad expanses idle.

There is an enormous concentration of land among a very few owners. One percent of all agricultural and cattle raising units occupies 75 percent of the land involved in agriculture; 0.1 percent of the total number of landowners holds 60.9 percent of the land which is being utilized. Of the 17 million hectares of arable soil, 10 million are part of 1,000 great landholdings, and only 1,933,000 are in the hands of peasant communities.²

Foreign capital is linked to the large landholdings. The Gildemeister group of Hamburg is the largest landowner in the country with more than 500,000 hectares under its control, followed by the Cerro de Pasco Copper Corpora-

tion* with 300,000 hectares, and the Le Tourneau group with 400,000 hectares of forest land. Grace, William & Lockett, and Anderson Clayton & Co. are also among the foreign firms that own land for the cultivation of cotton and sugarcane, as well as for cattle raising and lumber.³ The direct consequence of this situation is an inevitable decline in agricultural production.

Here are a few indications of what is happening:

The agricultural and cattle raising sector, which in 1950 accounted for 25.7 percent of the Gross National Product, only accounted for 19.6 percent in 1964. In 1940, 61.2 percent of the economically active population was occupied in agriculture; by 1961 the percentage had dropped to 49.6. In 1950, agriculture and cattle raising accounted for 57.8 percent of the total value of exports, but in 1965 they accounted for only 29.2 percent.

This underproduction has grave consequences for Peru's economic and social picture. In 1950 we produced 8,431,638 tons of food products, while in 1960 we only produced 7,800,000. And the amount continues to decline for a population which is constantly increasing and which, in addition, is leaving the countryside and crowding into the slums around the cities. The food crisis exerts an increasing pressure on the poor and on the balance of payments. The country imports for human consumption 90 percent of its wheat, 40 percent of its meat, 40 percent of its milk, 40 percent of its fats, and 25 percent of its rice.

The flow of capital out of the country is acquiring alarming proportions. In the last five years imperialist consortiums

* The Peruvian government recently announced the expropriation of eighteen agricultural properties belonging to the Cerro de Pasco Copper Corporation on payment of 21 million soles in cash and 26 million more in agrarian reform bonds. In compensation for this operation, Cerro de Pasco received new oil concessions in the north of the country.

have taken \$347 million out of Peru while they have invested only \$58 million. The terms of trade are less to our advantage with each passing year. A ton for export was worth \$105 in 1950, but only \$58.50 in 1967.

It is easy to see from all of this that the fundamental characteristic of the contemporary Peruvian economy is its dependence on U.S. imperialism, which is draining the country's capital and making its structural crisis more acute.

Imbalances, Disconnections, Contradictions

As imperialist domination increases, the internal contradictions sharpen. An immensely rich oligarchy, closely linked to the imperialist consortiums through a multitude of investments and businesses, lives at the apex of the system. The majority of the people live at the base in the most abysmal poverty. Forty-five families, in association with the U.S. monopolies, have concentrated most of the political and economic power in their hands. Of these families, 56 percent are stockholders in banks and financial firms, 53 percent own stocks in insurance companies, 75 percent own companies involved in construction and real estate in the cities, 56 percent have investments in commercial firms, and 64 percent own significant amounts of stock in one or several oil companies. This group of families operates under the name of the National Agrarian Society.⁴

According to official statistics, 24,000 privileged individuals have an income of 2.5 million soles (about \$62,500) per year, while 11,976,000 Peruvians are barely able to survive on 6,310 soles (about \$157) a year. Some 61,300 investors—1.9 percent of the economically active population—receive 44 percent of the national income, while 1.5 million agricultural workers—44 percent of the economically active population—receive only 13 percent of the national income.⁵ The statistical averages do not reveal,

unfortunately, the frequent cases of families that have an income in excess of a million soles (about \$50,000 at the 1965 rate of exchange) a month, while a farm worker barely receives one sol a day or simply does not receive any wages at all.

Paralleling these sharp class differences are imbalances from region to region. In 1961 the income per person on the coast was four times as much as the per capita income in the mountains; in 1965 it was seven times as much.

There are also contradictions between the cities and the countryside. Twenty-three of every 100 Peruvians live in Lima and the proportion is increasing rapidly as 75,000 people move from the provinces to the capital every year. Seventy percent of the factories, half of the workers, and close to two-thirds of the trained professionals are in Lima.⁶ Almost half of the voters live there, so that it is the capital, in practice, which determines the nation's government. Aside from agriculture and mining, whose location is of necessity determined by the existence of arable land and of mineral resources, all other commercial activities are concentrated in the urban zones.

In the urban zones in the mountains 21 percent of the families consume less than 75 percent of the normal caloric requirement. (Rural families consume only 61 percent of the required number of calories.) The urban centers in the mountains are almost equal, in this regard, to the rural zones on the coast, where 20 percent of the families consume less than the minimum caloric requirement, but they are far from equaling the proportion in Lima, which is barely 5 percent.

When we turn our attention to the workers, we find great imbalances among them also. The distance between the levels of average income among the various occupations is too great. The income of clerks and self-employed workers—the petty bourgeoisie—is \$450 a year, almost double that

of urban workers, which is \$260. And this amount, although small, is superior to the income of several million farm workers: \$10 a year.⁷

The variation of income within the working class is also significant. While gas and electrical workers earn 224 soles a week, miners 215, and construction workers 298, workers in the manufacturing industry only earn 193 and agricultural workers, barely 86.⁸

Economists, sociologists, and politicians have insisted for a long time on the "dualism" of our society. Recently there has been a great deal of talk about its capitalist character, even though it is described as a deformed and contradictory capitalism. The polemic has not yet ended, but the objective fact is that Peru, economically and socially, is far from having achieved an integrated structure. The anthropologist Matos Mar refers to this fact when he says in a recent essay:

The regions are not developing, they are not establishing inter-relationships, they are not complementing each other. This is the case, for example, with the different sectors of production that are disconnected, since each economic activity has its own rhythm and meaning, almost without relationship to the others. Agriculture thus follows its own course, the fishing industry another, while manufacturing is isolated from them. If relationships are generated, they only occur among the power groups and segmentally in other activities. On the other hand, there is a great mixture of types of economies which appear in varying proportions; and also regional customs, originating in our cultural heterogeneity, prevail. In many cases this mixture contains contrasting tones. Thus we find the modern capitalist sector side by side with traditional Indian cooperative forms.⁹

Mobility and Social Change

The reality of Peruvian life has ceased to be static; social classes are developing an unprecedented mobility. The pop-

ulation in general is growing rapidly. We are multiplying at a rate of somewhat more than a quarter of a million people per year. Our population today is 12 million, in 1970 it will be 13.5 million, and in 1980, 18 million. In twenty-five years our population will have doubled.

Similarly, the number of workers is increasing and, within that number, the working class itself is growing. The economically active population increased from 2.5 million to 3.6 million between 1950 and 1965. In that same period, the number of workers increased from 904,800 to 1,382,100, office employees and clerks increased by 200,000, and self-employed workers by 300,000.

The structure of the working class has also undergone changes. The number of workers in agriculture and fishing, which previously were in the majority, has dropped to 40 percent of the total, and the number of miners has dropped from 5.2 to 4.7 percent. The sector employed in the manufacturing industry grew from 14 percent in 1950 to 18 percent in 1965.

In spite of its growth, the working class continues to receive an extremely low level of education. No day laborer in agriculture is a skilled worker. Forty-seven of every 100 workers have no education at all, and only forty-three of every 100 have a primary education.

The level of unemployment is very high. Economists estimate that at least 150,000 jobs must be created in Peru every year, and even more are needed if one takes into consideration not only the population increase but also the conspicuous entrance of women into production. But industry only creates about 10,000 jobs per year. Consequently, underemployment and concealed unemployment, as well as open and total unemployment, are increasing in the great urban centers.

Within this contradictory framework, in which many social phenomena are blurred and the behavior of the social

classes does not appear with the necessary clarity, the Marxist Left has still not been able to develop united and coherent tactics.

Peru, a Sick Country

More than the stages in the course of the disease, what appears clearly in Peru are its causes and symptoms. If we examine a few figures, which still do not reveal the true dimensions of the tragedy of the most impoverished and exploited sectors, we will have some idea of the incurable nature of the system's illness.

Malnutrition is one of the characteristics of the Peruvian population. The consumption of calories and proteins drops from year to year. The average Peruvian only consumes 38 pounds of meat annually, a figure which conceals the millions of people who simply do not consume meat at all. The statistics show an average consumption of only 60 grams of meat a day, 6 grams of eggs, 20 grams of fish, and 108 grams of milk, but there are millions of Peruvians whose diet does not include meat or milk or eggs.¹⁰ According to a survey carried out by the students of the San Fernando College of Medicine in 1963, 93 out of every 100 children in Lima suffer from hunger and 2 of every 100 drink milk.

This explains why the infant mortality rate, which is 80 per 1,000 in Latin America, is 97 per 1000 in Peru, and why a child under one year of age dies every ten minutes of diseases which for the most part are curable.

There are more than 400,000 mentally retarded children in Peru, a condition caused in most cases by their parents' alcoholism (there are 250,000 alcoholics), and by their poverty. Peru also occupies second place in world consumption of coca. It has been estimated that there are 800,000 people who chew the cocaine-producing plant, and that they consume close to eight million kilos per year. This

means that an estimated 137,000 kilos of cocaine enter our peasants' stomachs every year.¹¹

Approximately 7,000 children from six to nine years of age work. About 40 percent live in the urban zones of Lima, Arequipa, and Cuzco. There are 73,000 children between the ages of ten and fourteen who work in the nation's cities, especially in Lima and Arequipa.¹² Forty-five percent of the maids in Lima are under twenty-one and many are as young as ten to fourteen.¹³

The poverty of the masses is indescribable. Half of the population of Lima lives in unhealthy slums in one or two rooms which do not have running water or any hygienic facilities.¹⁴ It is estimated that 3 million Peruvians lack medical attention, 1.5 million go barefooted, and another 1.5 million only wear *ojotas*, a type of rustic sandal. The cost of living in Lima rose 77.93 percent from 1963 to January 1968.

Meanwhile, crime has increased as much as 75 to 85 percent over the last five years. There is a robbery every sixty minutes in the capital and at least two armed robberies every twenty-four hours. There are no less than 10,000 women working as prostitutes, a profession that recruits about seven women a day into its ranks. Lima is a city with one of the highest crime rates in Latin America.

There are more than two million officially registered illiterates, without counting the Peruvians over forty or under fifteen who are not included in the statistics (the latter are within the limits of compulsory education). And there are half a million children who, although they can read and write, are not able to continue their studies for lack of educational facilities. In all, looking at the reality concealed behind the official statistics, it is estimated that there are five million illiterates in Peru.

In spite of the poverty in which the masses live, the burden of paying most of the expenses of the Peruvian state

falls on them. Those who live on their investments and on salaries paid by the large enterprises only contribute a third as much to the national budget as the people who are forced to pay through indirect taxes. And the proportion tends to get worse for the most needy because there are practically no taxes on the big export firms or on the mining companies and the new manufacturing industries that depend, in one form or another, on U.S. monopolies. Between 1950 and 1965, indirect taxes increased 17.1 times, while the taxes paid directly by enterprises and investors only increased seven times.

The tax benefits enjoyed by the power structure force Peru to face continental fiscal deficits. These deficits totaled 10,638 million soles (about \$394 million at the 1967 rate of exchange) between 1963 and 1967. The deficits are covered by loans from the United States, as are the expenses from the public works that the government must undertake in spite of its meager budget. The abuse of foreign loans has increased the influence of the United States on the Peruvian state and its policies, especially during the regime of Belaúnde Terry. As a result, Peru owes \$234 million to private sources, \$94 million to financial institutions, \$76 million to the Inter-American Development Bank, \$234 million to the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, \$122 million to U.S. government agencies (the Agency for International Development and the Export-Import Bank), and \$42 million to other states. At the end of 1968, the foreign debt had reached \$742.1 million, according to information from the Central Reserve Bank.

The interest, amortization, and services that the state must pay to its foreign creditors have had an increasingly negative influence on the balance of payments. In the three years from the end of 1963 to the end of 1966 alone, the foreign obligations of our country more than doubled. As a way out of this situation, successive oligarchical govern-

ments have appealed for foreign investments on conditions that have always proven to be advantageous for imperialism and burdensome for the Peruvian state.

The monopolies' heaviest investments in our economy go into the mining sector. Thus, between 1961 and 1964 there was a total investment in mining of \$400 million. Although these statistics indicate such investments have given Peru one of the highest Gross National Product growth rates in Latin America, they conceal the resultingly higher degree of foreign dependence and the extent of crisis and deformation in the country's economic system taken as a whole. And above all they conceal the indisputable and dangerous fact that Peru is on the way to becoming a monoproducer in the field of mining.

Experts in the National Mining and Petroleum Society have estimated that annual investments amounting to \$127 million will be made over the next seven years, which would make a total for that period of \$900 million, an amount larger than total U.S. investments in Peru (\$518 million). If this forecast is accurate, and it appears to be, then the oligarchy will be able to survive its fiscal crisis and even provide the country with a relative "stability"—one which, however, will only intensify both the contradictions within the system and Peru's dependence.

A nascent insurrectional Left began to operate in 1965 within this national framework, the main characteristics of which are: a) an increasing dependence on imperialism, and b) a sharpening of the system's social and economic contradictions. Those were the objective conditions from which that Left was born and of which it tried to take advantage in its struggle. Let us now see how it did this and to what degree the imbalances, the contradictions, the disconnection, and the paradoxes of this country were reflected within the movement and operated against it.

2

The Social Framework

The Role of the Peasantry

From 1956 on, a new social force with its own characteristics—the peasantry—asserted itself, even though this passed almost unnoticed by the political leadership of the Left and of the entire country. The slow process of unionization began in those zones where the peasantry is strongest economically and lives closest to the communication centers. The valleys of La Convención and Lares in the Department of Cuzco, Cerro de Pasco in the central zone, and the valleys of the north contained a conscious peasantry that marketed its products and was beginning to struggle against the remains of feudalism.

The peasantry had traditionally lived isolated from national life. Although the debate around the Indian question goes back to the end of the last century, the Indians themselves took no part in it. Now they were beginning to raise their own problems and to develop their own line of action.

The agricultural worker in the coastal region of Peru has a long history of struggle. The cane and cotton plantations were the scene of profound social conflicts in the 1930's and it was there that the doctrines of the leaders of the petty bourgeoisie had some effect. But the same thing did not occur among the peasantry in the mountains, who were forgotten by those same leaders. However, in 1959 and 1960 the agrarian agitation spread easily into many of the most isolated districts. It began in the coastal regions, it is true, but was not limited to them.

The strike began at Casagrande, the largest sugar mill in the country, owned by the Gildemeister family. The police intervened and four workers were killed and twenty-six wounded, three seriously.¹⁵ In Paramonga, a mill owned by Grace, three people were killed and sixteen wounded in a clash between strikers and troops. Three more were killed at Rancas in a confrontation between the police who were defending the Cerro de Pasco Copper Corporation and the Indians who were demanding, on legal grounds, the ownership of their communal lands. Shortly before, members of another community had tried to regain possession of the Paria hacienda, which is owned by the same corporation. Civil Guards broke up a union meeting at the Torreblanca hacienda in Chancay valley, leaving several dead and wounded.

These events demonstrated that the government and the large landowners were attempting to use force to block the process of unionization, but their brutal methods did not achieve the desired result.

In 1961 and 1962 the Lima newspapers began to talk about Hugo Blanco and to demand the suppression of the unions in La Convención and Lares, where recovery of the land by the peasants, termed an "invasion" by the oligarchical Right, was being carried out by peaceful methods. The movement in these valleys mobilized large numbers of peasants who had been divided by the economic development of the country and by internal migration into a complex social structure.*

* "Less than a third of the peasants living in La Convención in 1965 were natives of that province. Two-thirds came from the mountain provinces of Urubamba, Calca, Anta, Acomayo, and Apurímac, which are adjacent to La Convención." The social structure was more or less as follows: the landowners; the *yanaconas*, who work for the landowners under conditions of servitude; the *arrendires*, who serve the *yanaconas* under similar conditions; and, finally, the *allegados* and even the sub-*allegados*.¹⁶

As Craig points out,¹⁷ the most exploited peasants, the *arrendires* and *allegados*, had organized and had been presenting joint demands to the Cuzco office of the Ministry of Labor for ten years, and in 1958 eight organizations formed a provincial federation. The incentive for presenting the first grievances and forming the first unions appears to have been the strikes carried out by the textile workers in the south in 1956.

Almost all of the union leaders in La Convención and Lares were former artisans or railroad workers who had migrated to the valleys, spoke Spanish, and had some basic education. Many of them were fundamentalist Protestants and "had seen in the labor movement the chance to realize the goals of 'social justice' that they had found in the Holy Scriptures. As one leader put it very succinctly: 'The Bible teaches that the meek shall inherit the earth, and we are the meek.'"¹⁸

Through their lawyers, the peasants established links with the Workers' Federation of Cuzco, which was led almost entirely by the Communist Party. The first strike took place in June and July 1960, before Hugo Blanco had arrived in the valley.

Hugo Blanco's entrance into union organizing raised the level of struggle. The years 1961 and 1962 can be taken as the high point of the wave of unionization. Blanco's revolutionary ideology stirred the ardor of the old leaders of the valley's Provincial Federation, while his Trotskyism made him distrusted by the Communist leaders of the Workers' Federation of Cuzco. When he became General Secretary of the Provincial Federation in 1962, his election was attacked by some of its members. Meanwhile, the Lima government ordered his arrest. This began a period of intense persecution which ended when he was captured in May 1963.

The government had removed Blanco, but it had not

been able to avoid the liberation of thousands of peasants, the breaking of the large landowners' power, and the alteration of the pre-existing social structure. It was the first defeat the large landowners had suffered on such a scale. A de facto agrarian reform had been carried out.

In general, the peasant movement was struggling for three fundamental objectives during those years: a) recognition of their unions and higher wages in the northern coastal area; b) the recovery of land by the communities in the central area; and c) an end to conditions of servitude by the unions in the Upper Forest region of the Department of Cuzco. At the same time, the main centers of agitation were concentrated in those zones where, due to greater economic capacity, contact with political parties, or the level of education, the peasantry had organized itself to defend its rights.

But it was not a total mobilization. On the contrary, the centers of agitation obscured the slow and deliberate struggle in other zones where the peasants are subjected to a greater and more tragic degree of exploitation. While in the northern coastal area, Cerro de Pasco, and La Convención the peasantry has a relatively high standard of living, in such places as the upper provinces of the Department of Cuzco, the mountains of the so-called Indian Mancha,* or the high plateaus, poverty attains the dimensions of a national tragedy.

Lauramarca is an example of this situation. In a study of

* "The region commonly referred to as the 'Mancha India,' comprised of the departments of Ancash, Apurímac, Ayacucho, Cuzco, Huancavelica, and Puno, contained 21 percent of the total population of the country in 1961. Of this percentage, 87 percent of those over five years of age spoke to each other in an Indian language. The work structure in this region was outstanding because 69 percent of the economically active population was devoted to farming and cattle raising activities, while the average in the rest of the country engaged in these activities was 42 percent."¹⁹

that hacienda in Quispicanchis Province, Department of Cuzco, Gustavo Alencastre describes the incredible working conditions that prevail. Men, women, and children—from the age of seven on—engage in various types of labor. Wages, when they are paid (the hacienda frequently avoids this obligation under a variety of pretexts), are thirty centavos a day. Those who do not go to work are forced to hire substitutes at the rate of fifty centavos, an amount greater than their own wages. In order to work on the hacienda the tenants have to leave their homes at four or five in the morning and walk from five to fifteen miles to the place of work. The shepherds have to watch over their flocks day and night in the coldest and most barren places; if a sheep is lost or dies they have to pay eight, ten, and even twelve sheep, which constitutes a financial disaster. *Pongaje* (unpaid service in the home of the owner, his major domo, or the Civil Guard) continues even though it is forbidden under Peruvian law. The peasants wage a silent struggle against this system:

It has also been proven that many tenants avoid complying with the orders and arrangements of those in charge of the work, that others openly rebel, and that some surreptitiously occupy the breeding places for sheep and break down wire fences. . . . A small group of natives that wholeheartedly serves the landowners enjoys such privileges as more land and more pastures, exemption from payment of grazing rights, and others. This group is despised by the rest and considered traitors to the Indian cause.²⁰

Organized in May 1957, the Lauramarca peasant union was affiliated to the Workers' Federation of Cuzco and the Peruvian Peasant Confederation. Its founding brought constant pressure and persecution to its leaders, who were forced to go into hiding to stay out of danger. The first sit-down strike occurred very soon thereafter, with the result that several tenants were abused by the owner's men, many

were imprisoned, and a number were shot down in their homes. But because of its collective strength the union was able to establish its presence and transform the peasants and their customs:

In former times there existed a Council of Elders that possessed great prestige, authority, and influence. However, that is a thing of the past, because now when it is necessary to discuss important matters a General Assembly is called in which they [the peasants] elect their representatives, proxies, or agents by voice vote. They demonstrate a clear sense of democratic discussion and a respect for others' opinions, as well as intuition and reasoning which are correct and perfectly focused on the desired objective.²¹

Several million peasants in Peru live under conditions that are similar to, or even worse than, those which prevail at the Lauramarca hacienda. But they have lacked the relative economic advantages enjoyed by the peasants of La Convención or the proximity to the centers of communication which exists in Pasco and the country's central zone.

When the government in power sends punitive expeditions against those areas of the countryside where the conflict is most acute, the discontent of the peasant masses only continues and spreads. This unrest is waiting for the first opportunity to explode, but rebellions happen only in isolated instances, due to the rivalry between political parties and between different groupings on the Left, the lack of contact between the regions, and the existence of several peasant federations which express different interests and concepts of struggle.

The following peasant organizations exist in Peru:

a) FENCAP (Federación de Campesinos del Perú), which is linked to the APRA (Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana) and has influence in the agricultural zones of the northern coastal area.

b) Peruvian Peasant Confederation, which is directed by

several groupings on the Marxist Left and influences the peasantry of Cuzco, Ayacucho, and Lima.

c) Federation of Communities of the Center, to which the peasant communities of the Mantaro Valley (Central Mountains) belong.

d) Union Front of the Department of Puno, led by the Cáceres brothers, local merchants with political ambitions.²²

All of these organizations have been in existence for some time, since peasant unionism is not a new thing in Peru. There are even unions that were organized back in the 1930's, such as those in the Chancay Valley and the large coastal haciendas. The new factors in this decade have been the extension of the union movement to the mountain zones, the occupation of land, the violence of the clashes with repressive forces, and the repercussions from all of this in the capital, thanks to the modern news media.

The Marginal Districts

The phenomenon of the marginal districts is another of the social characteristics of the last few decades, although it is not limited to Peru. In 1955 there were thirty-nine of these districts in greater Lima, with a population of 119,140 people, 10 percent of the total population of the capital. Ten years later they contained half a million inhabitants, a fourth of the population of Lima.

The reasons for this gigantic migration have been explained many times: the attraction that Lima exerts on the rest of the country as the most developed urban center; the belief, false but very widespread, that there are jobs in Lima; and, in general, the fact that living conditions are becoming increasingly difficult in the interior.

To this day the inhabitants of these districts are characterized by the hope they place in the present social order and by the fact that they expect the politicians of the bourgeoisie

to make improvements. At the same time, they retain the communal spirit of the provinces, which makes it possible for them to deal with the adverse conditions of their lives. The penetration of the Marxist Left in these districts has been limited or nonexistent.

Nonetheless, the presence of a growing, underemployed marginal population that surrounds the capital like a belt of poverty has always been considered an explosive social factor. And the occupation of land on the outskirts of Lima was compared to the frequent news of peasant "invasions" in the countryside. These two phenomena gave the most politicized sectors of the middle class the feeling that violent social changes were in the offing. The revolution seemed to be coming nearer.

The Radicalization of the Petty Bourgeoisie

Another factor can be added to those already mentioned as part of a political history of the last few years in Peru and even the history of the end result of these years, revolution: the growth of the petty bourgeoisie.

At first sight, we observe in twentieth-century Peru a powerful oligarchy allied with foreign enterprises concentrating power at the apex of the system. At the base, we find a peasantry comprising the majority of the population, illiterate and impoverished, without any decision-making power, and an exploited agricultural proletariat which lacks any rights. Between these two poles are the industrial and mining proletariat, the artisans, and the broad social range of the educated middle class.

Actually, as we have seen previously, the middle class is very far above the industrial proletariat and the artisans in terms of income, standard of living, degree of education, and technical training. At the highest levels it comes into contact with the ruling class, and its members reach that

position through their professions, politics, and friends and relatives.

This phenomenon is not unique to our country, but it is more notable here due to the existence of broad sectors that do not participate in our national life. An abyss separates the "middle class" from the peasantry and the agricultural proletariat, making it in effect a privileged group. Since 1930 this sector has been struggling for power and mouthing radical slogans to attract the underprivileged, but it has not hesitated to betray them when it could make agreements with the ruling class which were to its advantage.

On the other hand, we can observe that the growth of the middle class since 1956 is comparable to that of the proletariat: both result from urbanization and from the great social mobility of the last few years.

Even though Peruvian statistics are not adequate for developing an accurate study of the class structure of our society, they can be used as an "occupational index" of the workers who were registered in the 1961 census. Self-employed workers and office employees accounted for 50.8 percent of the economically active population; the working-class was 32 percent; domestic workers, 5.7 percent; employers, 1.9 percent; and families with no income, 9.3 percent.²³

This high figure—1,548,469 persons in an economically active population which has been estimated at somewhat more than three million—gives us some idea of the numerical importance of the petty bourgeoisie in Peru, especially since students are not considered part of the economically active population.

Besides its growth over the last few years, the petty bourgeoisie shows great social mobility. A large number of people who have "recently arrived" from the provinces, as well as children of working-class, artisan, or peasant families, join its ranks. The key to entering this class is

always education, just as it is for entering the higher social strata. This is why the growth of the petty bourgeoisie is accompanied by the democratization of the universities and by a yearly decline in the social level of the student body. And since this process takes place in the midst of contradictions, battles, and class struggles, the universities are also radicalized and become the breeding ground for Marxist ideas.

Finally, clerks in businesses and banks have formed strong union organizations that were in the vanguard of social struggles in the capital for several years.

The Students

We read in the Sectional Plan of Education:

Since 1955 the Peruvian educational system has experienced the most rapid growth in its history. It has grown from a total of 12,875 teaching institutions in 1955 to 18,722 in 1964, a total increase of 45.4 percent with increases on the primary, secondary, and higher levels of 41.0 percent, 140.6 percent, and 273.3 percent respectively.²⁴

The number of matriculated students rose from 1,262,765 in 1955 to 2,491,571 in 1964, a total increase of 97.3 percent.

The growth was still more striking in the universities. The thirty-four normal schools and nine universities that existed in 1960 grew to eighty-six normal schools and twenty-four universities. And this growth rate held steady in later years. In 1968 there were 3,235,700 students enrolled on all levels of education, a fourth of the total population. There are 96,000 university students. In 1970, 111,000 secondary school graduates will be knocking on the doors of the universities.

The students, motivated by traditional notions of edu-

cation and by the desire for prestige, prefer to study the liberal professions, which offer the fewest opportunities for employment in a country overloaded with men of letters. When they leave the university, few can find well-paying jobs and a good number have to work in other areas.

But that is not all. Before reaching the university they must pass through a rigorous process of selection in which the poorest are eliminated. Of those who succeed in finishing their secondary education, an increasingly high percentage is eliminated by the institutions of higher learning, which do not have the facilities to cope with so many applicants.

The number of applicants rose from 12,305 in 1960 to 26,374 in 1964. Of that number, 4,479 were accepted in 1960 and 7,968 in 1964. In 1967, 40,000 applicants were rejected. It is estimated that 71,000 will be eliminated in 1970.²⁵ "Almost half of the students leave secondary school without finishing their studies. . . . Of those who finish, only half are able to enter higher institutions."²⁶

The position of students has undergone a profound change. In the first years of this century, the children from "good families" who received a university education had a secure future in politics, the liberal professions, and business. In the last few decades, however, poor students feel insecure, and this impels them to engage in increasingly radical and violent actions. The children of poor clerks or workers can expect very little from the system. And although it is true that a minority is able to attain choice positions, there is always a majority left behind, ripe for revolutionary teachings.

That is why, from 1956 on, the process of accelerated radicalization carried the Marxist Left into the leadership of the student movement. Since then, that sector of the Left which used the most radical language was the one that led most of the Peruvian student organizations.

3

The Political Causes

It was not long before the economic and social picture which we have described in the previous chapters came to be clearly reflected in the political life of the country.

In 1956, Odría's authoritarian regime was no longer able to hold back the wave of discontent and was forced to step aside in favor of Manuel Prado, an unpopular banker who was backed by the APRA. Prado formed his government in a situation dominated by contradictions between various sectors of the oligarchy and, in spite of the APRA's unconditional support, he had to face a growing wave of social agitation.

While peasants and agricultural workers engaged in struggles on an unprecedented scale, the students and the poorer levels of the petty bourgeoisie were quickly becoming radicalized. The peasantry wanted to recover its land, free itself of servitude, and force recognition of its unions. The workers, who were suffering from the economic crisis, and broad sectors of the petty bourgeoisie were demanding better wages.

In this situation the influence of the Marxist Left began to grow among the students, the workers, and the peasants. At the same time the petty bourgeoisie gave rise to new reformist tendencies such as Belaúndism and Christian Democracy. The situation could be compared to 1931, when a similar wave of discontent caused the formation of the APRA and the Communist Party. But now its proportions and consequences were much greater and much

broader social sectors were affected by it. This time it was not possible to ignore the masses or the forgotten sectors of the peasantry, and the necessity to reach them was understood with much greater clarity.

The Cuban Revolution and the Twentieth Congress

The impact of the Cuban Revolution was very great and it was soon reflected in the political organizations. A group of young people broke off from the APRA and formed first the Committee for Defense of APRA Principles, then APRA Rebelde (Rebel), and later the MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria). They were led by Luis de la Puente.

The repercussions were even greater in the Communist Party, and they were reinforced by the impact of the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the polemic with the Communist Party of China. In Peru, the Party's whole ideological, theoretical, and practical structure automatically came under discussion. The Stalinist cult was shaken to its very roots, and with it the infallibility of the CPSU. Subjects such as the validity of the CPSU's positions, the immediacy or remoteness of the revolution and the role of social classes in it, the stages of the revolution, and the Party's role in it began to be debated.

Cuban socialism made the problems of revolution of immediate concern and did not allow them to be postponed to a more or less distant future. It gave a precise goal to all Latin American revolutionaries, and it lent a certain support to "heresies" in general. Even when we didn't articulate it, we all understood in those years that a new revolutionary period had begun and that the revolution, if it were achieved, would not necessarily develop according to the models that we had in our heads.

The "New Left"

The fundamental effect of the Twentieth Congress, the changes in the international Communist movement, the Cuban Revolution, the peasant struggles, and the whole social framework described previously was to generate various movements which had discrepancies or at least differences with the existing Left political leadership. These movements were what many began later to call the "new Left."

Who made up this heterogeneous "new Left"? This is difficult to say since some of those belonging to it would deny the label if they were asked. But in line with what has happened over the last few years we can list some of its components:

1) The APRA dissidents who, after a complete process of internal struggle, formed the MIR and a group calling itself the Revolutionary Vanguard.

2) The Communist Party dissidents who, after a similar process, in some cases joined the FIR (Frente de Izquierda Revolucionaria) and the ELN, and in other cases joined the Maoist groupings that appeared later.

3) The great number of young people, mainly university students, who, without belonging to these organizations, identified themselves with them in one way or another.

4) Some Trotskyists like Hugo Blanco, whose tenacious work among peasants clearly differentiated them from "traditional" Trotskyists, given to theorizing and dogmatism.

Many questions of strategy and tactics were not made explicit. To a great degree the "new Left" continued to maintain the "traditional" theoretical positions in its description of the nation and its ruling classes and of the necessary stages for revolution. Even today we find some insurrectional organizations describing the regime in their

documents in the same terms as those employed by the Communist Party. The original features lay in the methods of struggle that the "new Left" proposed and in its general attitude toward the power of the oligarchy.

How can the points of view of the "new Left" be summarized? This is a difficult task since they were presented very diffusely in formulations that only half expressed their authors' meaning or in statements which have to be read between the lines. It has been impossible to find a solid theoretical statement that would really sum up and encompass everything that the "new Left" thought. Rather than a theoretical platform, it had, in that period, expressed an attitude.

We will try to bring out some of the points that we consider common to the entire "new Left."

First, its attitude toward the peasants. Guided by the Chinese and Cuban examples, all of these new groups gave the peasantry a very important role in the first phase of the revolution, and organized their major activities accordingly. Thus, Luis de la Puente was an adviser to the community of Chepén and others for a long period of time, Hugo Blanco participated in union organizing in the valleys of La Convención and Lares, and other students took part in the unionization of the peasantry in different ways.

It is true that the "traditional" political parties, particularly the Communist Party, had also taken part in advising and organizing the peasant unions, but they had not sent their militants to participate fully in the local movements. There was, then, a great difference between those who tried to influence the peasant movement "from without" and those who joined it in order to orient it "from within."

In the second place, the denial of any peaceful road for achieving power. With the exception of the Socialists, no organization of the Marxist Left has ever maintained that

a nonviolent victory was possible in Peru. But the dissidents wanted the methods of action, the tactics, to be in accord with the final objective of a violent seizure of power.

In the third place, the repudiation of the "traditional" APRA and of the Communist Party, whose past was attacked. All the new groups rejected something: They came into being denying rather than affirming and so they shared a certain lack of analysis, which was a consequence of their faulty knowledge of the past. This was particularly true for Communist Party dissidents, few if any of whom had any real understanding of the history of the Party and of the national and international framework within which it had to operate and which explained its policy errors.

This point, which at first seems minor, is actually very important. Only by exhaustively analyzing the Party's history and relating it to the history of the international Communist movement can one find the root cause of the errors it committed, because the Party's national policies always reflected the line of the international Communist movement. By limiting themselves to a vague and all-inclusive rejection of "opportunism," the Communist Party dissidents and those who repeated their arguments neglected any thorough analysis.

The same thing can be said with regard to the Trotskyists. It is true that Stalinism was the source of the deformation of the Communist movement, of its errors and its frustrations. But does that, in itself, explain it all? Isn't it also necessary to look to its roots for an explanation of why it arose and triumphed in the struggle for the leadership of the Bolsheviks? Why direct criticism only at Stalinism and not also at Trotskyism, which has a long history in our country? In reality, the Trotskyist leadership had participated to a great degree in the formation of the concepts and methods that were termed "traditional."

In the fourth place, the "new Left" reaffirmed the value

of *action* as the main force in the development of the people's consciousness. Action—armed or unarmed, individual or *en masse*—was, in their eyes, the only thing that could generate revolution and unify revolutionaries. This is the most important aspect and the one that, in the last analysis, defines the struggle during these years. It distinguishes what is really new from what is not. Taking this principle as a point of reference, we can demand a certain correspondence between words and deeds, theory and practice, speeches and conduct.

Little by little this attitude became clearer and it soon affected the concept that required the existence of a party before any revolutionary process could take place. When the theoretical basis for guerrilla warfare as expressed by the Cuban leaders and summed up by Debray began to circulate in Peru, it only reinforced what many had maintained in practice: first comes action, then the party; the party is born out of action.

Nevertheless, the "new Left" carried within itself a number of negative characteristics, many of which later contributed to its most serious defeats. It is impossible to give a coherent explanation of the history of the last few years without going into these characteristics in depth.

The "new Left," which arose from the impoverished and powerless sectors of the petty bourgeoisie, did not always follow its own announced principles. It preferred gestures and declarations to concrete deeds. It proclaimed the necessity of going to the countryside to initiate the revolution, but—with the exceptions already mentioned—it stayed in the cities. It proclaimed guerrilla warfare as the only revolutionary solution to the nation's problems, but only a minority was in the guerrilla bands when they opened fire. It said it stood for unity, but it remained fragmented in many groups that fought violently among themselves. It fervently denounced the Communist Party's tendency to allow itself

to be guided by political formulations that were alien to our country's reality, but it made no systematic effort to study that reality and, in general, it can be said that it knew nothing about it. It repudiated Stalinism, but applied Stalinist methods in its internal struggles and splits.

In general, the "new Left" lacked the coherent ideological program and the firsthand understanding of the Peruvian reality which would result only from the concurrence of two factors: theoretical study of the Peruvian economy and society, and practical activity among the masses.

The profound divisions of the Left have a long history in Peru. Since the death of José Carlos Mariátegui, a Marxist with a broad and creative spirit, the Communist Party had for many years been under the leadership of Eudocio Ravines and his figureheads. Ravines is possibly the most unscrupulous traitor in Latin America and he was able, while he headed the CPP, to practice a type of political liquidation that was completely unprincipled and without any kind of legality. Many valuable revolutionaries were destroyed politically by such techniques and the struggle against Ravines took a good many years in the history of the CPP.

Fabricated accusations, expulsions without proof, intolerance in the face of dissent, dogmatism, the lack of imagination and audacity, distrust of the masses, fear of thinking for oneself—all these were part of that degenerate Stalinism that Ravines created. These methods blocked any debate over principles, any confrontation of opposing points of view. This situation, which prevailed for many years and survives in great part until this very day, was reflected in the entire Left. It established no precedent for cooperating in spite of disagreements and for comparing different experiences.

Divided by innumerable quarrels, split again and again,

and retaining many of the qualities of "traditional" politics, this "new Left," contained much of the old. Under such conditions it was obviously unable to rise to the great occasions that were awaiting it and it lost, as we will show later, several opportunities for uniting with the masses.

The Left and Peasant Unionization

We have already seen how, under the influence of the Left on some occasions and spontaneously on others, the peasant unions spread between 1956 to 1962. The high point of that great wave, thanks to the political quality of its leaders, was reached in the valleys of La Convención and Lares, and its most outstanding figure was Hugo Blanco.

But Hugo Blanco was and is a disciplined Trotskyist militant. This fact posed a serious problem for the Left. Hadn't it been said for many years that the Trotskyists were imperialist agents? Hadn't Trotskyism been characterized repeatedly as a counter-revolutionary tendency? The years of Stalinism were not far off and, in any case, even after the fall of the idol Stalin, no one had withdrawn the supreme anathema against Trotskyism. It continued in full force.

This on the one hand. On the other, the Left as a whole did not throw itself wholeheartedly into the peasant struggle. It guided the organizations "from above," it advised the unions, and it sent organizers into the countryside on temporary assignments, but it did not lead "from within" as Hugo Blanco did. While still-existing political prejudices kept the Left from supporting Blanco as he deserved, at the same time, inertia kept it imprisoned in the old urban patterns.

Toward the end of 1961, Juan Pablo Chang and a group of cadres who were not active within any party organization formed the APUIR (Asociación para la Unificación

de la Izquierda Revolucionaria) and proposed the formation of a Peruvian Revolutionary Front. Soon the following points were agreed upon:

Unconditional support for the land recovery movement; reorganization of the Confederation of Peruvian Workers and struggle for a single list of demands; amnesty for all prisoners and people persecuted for political and social reasons; unconditional defense of the Cuban Revolution; confiscation of all large landholdings and free distribution of the land to the peasants; nationalization of imperialist enterprises; urban reform and a workers' government.²⁷

The Front's objective was the construction of a United Revolutionary Party. The call was directed to all the organizations on the Left: the Communist Party, the MIR, the Socialist Party, the Communist-Leninist Party, the Túpac Amaru Movement, the "Workers' Voice" and "Worker and Peasant" Trotskyist factions, and the Progressive Social Movement. The real reason for the call was to promote vigorous political support for the land occupations led by the peasant federations, and particularly for Hugo Blanco at a time when he lacked support.

The call was well received by the Trotskyist factions, with the exception of the Posadas group, and by the Communist-Leninist Party, a group of Communist dissidents. The great majority of the Left ignored it and support for Blanco was, at best, purely verbal. But what Blanco needed was not words but money, men, arms.

The upsurge of the peasant masses was too rapid and widespread to be ignored. If other political tendencies besides Trotskyism had supported Blanco, it would have paved the way for a movement which would have been firm, strong, and able to expand to other parts of the country and to defend itself successfully against the repression which was obviously coming. On the other hand, Blanco was not

prepared to deal with those difficult moments because he remained subject to a dogmatic leadership that was little familiar with the national reality and ignorant of practical work, a leadership that could not provide a coherent and logical development for the movement which had been initiated.

Blanco wanted "the Peasant Union to become a real organism of democratic *popular power* that would at each step and on a daily basis confront *employers' power*, represented by the landowner and the forces of the state at his disposal, with greater vigor."²⁸ This was what he called *dual power*: "two powers that confront each other, the power of the exploiters representing a shameful past and that of the exploited proclaiming the future."²⁹

The fundamental organism of armed struggle in Peru would be, according to this thesis, the union militia led by the party.³⁰ That did not mean that the hour to struggle for power had arrived: "This stage," said Blanco in 1964 from his prison in Arequipa, "does not have as its immediate objective the struggle for power or the overthrow of the Belaúnde regime, but more modest and defensive objectives: the defense of the land which has been occupied by the peasants from attack by the armed forces and the landowners."³¹

The thesis of dual power and the militia might be successful as a slogan for the masses and it might be circulated and obeyed under a bourgeois regime such as Prado's that alternated between negotiation and repression. But after the 1962 military coup, it was insufficient to confront an army that had taken power in order to "bring order" to the country and, among other things, to settle accounts with the peasants of La Convención.

Anyone who wanted to remain close to the masses in spite of the repression had to use guerrilla tactics. But that decision required absolute clarity as to the methods to be

applied, and this was not the case. At the beginning of 1963, alone and abandoned after the encounters at Pucyura, Blanco fell into the hands of the police. The Left in general and especially the revolutionary Left must bear a serious responsibility for his capture.

As a result, the masses of La Convención did not undertake the guerrilla struggle that would have been the logical culmination of the process initiated in 1956. On the contrary, they had to endure successive repressive incursions in 1963. What could have been the point of departure for a powerful revolutionary movement got no farther than reforms. The military junta soon recognized, in a decree promulgated in March 1963, the peasants' de facto control of the land they had seized.

The land had been won. And although this did not solve all of the peasants' problems, since the landowners were to be paid for the land (something which the peasants have not done to date and presumably will not do), part of the objective for which they had fought had been achieved. Yet the movement would not regain its former strength because the common interests that had united the various social strata no longer existed. On the contrary, the organizations were actually weakened by conflicts between Blanco's followers and the Workers' Federation of Cuzco, and by the differences between the *arrendires* and the *allegados*.

The "Invasions" of 1963-1964

Hugo Blanco's capture did not mean the end of the peasant movement since, as we have seen previously, La Convención was only one of the centers of insurgent activity.

For almost seven years architect Fernando Belaúnde had been traveling throughout the nation promising agrarian reform in order to get votes. It was logical for the peasants

to expect the promises to be fulfilled once he was in the Presidency—after elections sponsored by the army.

In fact, his double dealing had led him into a dangerous game. While he promised the masses an agrarian reform in language sufficiently vague to arouse their enthusiasm and make them believe what they wanted to believe, he proposed to the oligarchy in concrete terms an agrarian reform which would be limited to the most disputed areas, leaving the most productive large landholdings—which were also the most powerful—untouched. Among the masses he liked to pose as an incendiary; to the oligarchy, with which he had old political and family connections, he seemed the fireman who could extinguish the blaze he threatened them with if he was not elected.

Toward mid-1963 the land occupations began to spread in a most threatening fashion. What had happened? It was evident that the architect's election had made the masses confident that there would be no reprisals when they recovered their lands. By October the "invasions" had multiplied in the center of the country and were spreading south. It is estimated that no less than 300,000 peasants of various types (basically members of Indian communities, tenants on the haciendas, and landless workers) were involved. This great wave of invaders had its own distinctive characteristics, all of which revealed the high level the peasant struggle had reached and were alarming, therefore, to the "upper classes."

In previous stages the peasants had limited themselves to occupying uncultivated zones peacefully, preferably natural pasture land, and had always presented incontrovertible legal arguments to support their action. Violence came strictly from the enemy camp. Now the situation had changed. No longer interested in legal formulas, the peasants simply said that the lands belonged to them and had

been purchased with the free or poorly paid labor of several generations. They also occupied cultivated land which had been planted or was lying fallow.³²

The slogan "Land or Death" spread throughout the mountains for the first time. "With the exception of Puno, all of the mountain departments were the scene of invasions: Cajamarca, Ancash, and Huánuco to a lesser degree; Apurímac, Ayacucho, Huancavelica, and Arequipa to a higher degree; and Pasco, Junín, and Cuzco to a very high degree."³³

The growing contact between the cities and the countryside helped to give many of these land occupations conscious leadership from students, discharged soldiers, provincial lawyers, people following their own interests, etc. It was a movement which arose from the most profound desires of the masses for the recovery of their rights, but it was not entirely spontaneous. There was a leadership, but it was multiple and not located in any one place.

The Left was not present organizationally in this massive movement. It had been repressed in January 1963 and almost all of its leaders were in jail. The only elements remaining were isolated, although active, and out of contact with their leadership. Since it had not known how to establish links with the peasantry in time, the Left was not able to foresee the gigantic mobilization, nor was it able to defend the peasants from the massacres that followed.

Toward the end of December 1963, Minister of Government Oscar Trelles was censured by the right-wing opposition, the APRA, and the UNO (Unión Nacional Odrísta). He was replaced by a new "tough" minister who ordered the army and the police to restore order.

The "invasions" were drowned in a bloodbath.

Held back by its lack of audacity, the Left had voluntarily isolated itself from the popular upsurge and so was unable to use it to link the peasants' demands to the ob-

jectives of revolution. Thus, as in 1962, it lost a revolutionary opportunity. It had had the means to unite itself with the peasantry in 1961-1962, but had lacked initiative and imagination. By 1963-1964 it was already too late for such an attempt.

4 The ELN

From its very beginning the ELN (*Ejército de Liberación Nacional*) was composed of a small group of young people. Among them were high school and college students, workers, and a few peasants. Many came from the Communist Youth and the Communist Party but, for a variety of reasons, they had ceased to observe Party discipline or to work actively in its organizations. They had come together not through any preconceived plan of recruitment, but by chance circumstances.

Among them were brilliant poets who had already achieved a following and recognition, such as Javier Heráud; young people with intellectual inclinations, imagination, and great talent, like Edgardo Tello; high school students—plain neighborhood boys—like Hugo Ricra; construction workers such as Moisés Valiente. Later, in 1964, some cadres with a certain political experience joined the group—like Juan Chang, who had been a member of the FIR leadership; Luis Zapata, a leader of the civil construction workers in Cuzco; Guillermo Mercado, who had also belonged to the Leninist Central Committee and the FIR leadership; and others.

Adolescents just entering political life joined the ranks of the ELN together with mature leaders of long experience. Different roads had led them to the same position. For some it was their experience with many tactics and their final disillusionment regarding the methods of political struggle practiced until then in our country, while for others

it was the desire to take part in heroic actions. They were united in their admiration for the Cuban Revolution and its leaders and in their desire to follow that example. They all considered themselves Marxist-Leninists, but something differentiated them from the rest of the “new Left”—their desire for political purism, a certain disdain for “politics” in the narrow sense, and suspicion of any type of party organization.

The ELN drew up a program but did not put much effort into its preparation. Most members felt that the Left had already drawn up enough programs without their writing yet another one. The program was worked out in brief, heated discussions in camps, during trips, or in the midst of underground activity. Some of the drafts were lost during the events of those hectic years.

The points in the program were formulated with two requirements in mind: they be broad enough to unite many levels of the population (basically the workers and peasants), and clear enough so that no one would have any doubt as to the objectives of the action to be undertaken. At the same time they should embody the organization’s thought in such a way as would easily capture the people’s imagination.

It was certainly not a question of making a long, dry, pedantic, difficult list of minimum and maximum demands when it was designed to appeal to simple people. To outline, on the other hand, plans for governing the country such as those bourgeois parties draw up was unrealistic given the great distance in years and efforts that separated those early moments from the seizure of power. The program had to be a basis for the common struggle which could be proclaimed from the very beginning, as well as an outline which could be filled in, corrected, and completed as the Peruvian reality and the desires and needs of the people were studied at first hand.

The program was subsequently corrected, reduced, and expanded in successive stages. Toward the middle of 1964 it had been formulated in the following points:

- 1) People's government.
- 2) Expulsion of all foreign monopolies.
- 3) Agrarian revolution.
- 4) Friendship with all the peoples of the world.
- 5) National sovereignty.

These were the five tasks the revolution had to carry out, tasks without which there would be no revolution. At the same time they were the goals the people would achieve at the end of a long road.

In short, we proposed socialism as the final objective of our struggle.

Two methods were held to be fundamental to our success: armed struggle and popular unity. They complemented each other dialectically since in Peru one is not possible without the other. Armed struggle is the method for building genuine unity among all exploited levels of the population; and, at the same time, popular unity finds its highest expression in armed combat against the imperialist oppressor and his national allies.

With respect to the other Left organizations, the ELN's activities were directed from the very beginning toward the formation of a broad political front that would support its actions, although it was not considered indispensable to have such a front first. The ELN always thought that the revolution would be the result not of a single process, but of a multiple, changing, and highly complex one supported by the most varied social and political forces. It carefully built a very broad, nonsectarian image, making it easy for all those who wished to participate in the insurrection in any capacity they might choose.

These decisions were based on two objective facts: the

condition of the Peruvian people and the situation of the Marxist Left.

Revolution and Party

In Peru the great majority of people has always been apolitical. First the Inca empire, then the Spanish colonial regime, and finally the mockery of a republic under which we have lived during most of this century—all had political structures which were limited to the ruling classes and the privileged sectors. Neither the Indian masses in the beginning nor later the proletarians and the peasants ever had decision-making power in matters of state. With the vote limited to "solvent" citizens or the literate minority, there was no need to consult the people about those decisions, and even less need to incorporate the people into partisan political organizations.

Our people have fought heroic and bloody battles against their oppressors on innumerable occasions, but the struggle never attained national proportions, even in the case of the most widespread rebellions. The Quechua chiefs who faced Spanish power were not able to mobilize all of the Indian peoples behind them, nor were the American-born leaders of our War of Independence able to accomplish such unity. And the history of the republic is a succession of peasant uprisings which were easily and rapidly isolated and weakened, or of bloody, unprincipled wars between military leaders and ambitious politicians which were observed with indifference by the vast majority of the population.

At the bottom of these limitations were profound class differences and the lack of contact between the various regions of the country.

The socialist revolution is the first national change that requires the active participation of the entire people. With-

out that participation it is an illusion to think about the triumph of the revolution. And at the same time that it is an indispensable prerequisite for victory, the people's involvement constitutes the best safeguard against any perversion of the revolution. The peasant and proletarian masses must produce their own leaders and become experienced in making their own decisions. The premature creation of a political party would be a serious obstacle to this development.

If the party is created *before* the war is begun, it soon becomes an organization with its own group interests and gives rise to a leadership which also has its own interests. The overall interests of an organization or the particular interests of its leadership are often in contradiction with the needs of the revolution in countries like ours where parties arise from the privileged bourgeois or petty-bourgeois levels of the population, which are separated from the exploited masses, rather than from the exploited masses themselves. It is not long before these contradictions express themselves in the postponement of revolutionary goals, procrastination in work, organizational egotism, sectarianism, and in incendiary rhetoric that does not correspond to actual practice.

Many times the party must use an "insurreccional" language to satisfy its adherents and to attract new members. But in reality its activities are designed exclusively to control student and worker organizations from above.

Isn't this really traditional politics refurbished with "new" language?

When the militants demand that real concrete revolutionary work begin, ideological and political conflicts soon appear. Revolutionary perspective becomes lost in a tangled web of internal fights, and revolutionary tasks are again postponed in the name of the struggle against opportunism.

When the party does succeed in initiating the insurrection,

its political leadership, after successive purges, must transform itself into military leadership. But the revolution is not like the theater, where actors can change their costumes between scenes. A political leadership cannot transform itself into a military leadership just because it wants to. It must first pass through the screening process of the struggle itself, which implacably selects the most capable and eliminates the less fitted, no matter how brilliant the latter may be politically.

The expert politician is not always the most appropriate person to lead a struggle that, above all in the initial stages, demands iron discipline and military qualities. When the party moves its entire leadership into the countryside, it unconsciously tends merely to carry its urban liberalism into a new scene. And so it fails, taking the insurrection down with it.

Then, too, all political parties give their militants a certain *esprit de corps*, pride, and feeling of superiority toward other organizations. A political party is a group driving toward power, toward the supremacy of the movement in which it participates. These attitudes make revolutionary unity impossible by creating mutual suspicion, rivalry, and even hatred between organizations.

The members of the ELN did not want to create one more party, a new element of confusion and fragmentation. That is why they always tried to build a disciplined military team at the same time as a "free association of revolutionaries."

Discipline and democracy are not opposed in a revolutionary military organization. Its internal life can combine subordination of lower to higher ranks in military questions, and democracy and freedom of expression in political matters. It would be absurd for a guerrilla band to stop for a democratic discussion while the enemy is attacking, but it is possible and even indispensable that all the guerrillas,

without distinction of rank, take part in the group's political decisions. This guarantees not only the militants' education, but also their adherence to the general line of the revolutionary movement.

The name ELN (Army of National Liberation) expressed the future objective of the work which had been undertaken rather than an existing reality. This goal was the formation of a revolutionary army for the whole people, for all the masses who had no party. In the complex Peruvian Marxist Left, the formation of such a group, no matter how small, was absolutely new. No such experiment—which contradicted methods that were, until that time, considered the only correct and feasible ones—had ever been attempted.

The ELN wanted the party to grow out of the peasant masses and the dense proletarian agricultural, manufacturing, and mining centers. It wanted the party to be fused with the people and to be their creation.

This aim is justified when one examines those masses, for the Peruvian peasantry is extremely backward and subject to ancient beliefs and prejudices. Many of these beliefs are conservative in nature and would work against any revolutionary development; others are positive and contain the seeds of future political growth. It is worthwhile recalling what Castro Pozo said: "The superstitious simplicity of the Indian soul is filled with contradictions, the consequence of the destruction of their [the Indians'] political, moral, and religious ideals through the imposition of other ideals that they have never understood or tried to make their own; they bear the negation of their personalities as well as their exploitation and servitude."³⁴

When the party, established in the city by people from the coastal middle class, is transferred to the countryside, an obvious imbalance is created between its objectives, methods, and concepts and the customs, traditions, senti-

ments, demands, and needs of the Indian masses. To overcome this contradiction it is necessary to take the actual level of the peasantry as one's starting point and to sow and cultivate rather than to transplant. A party created prematurely is always an obstacle, a wall placed between the masses and the revolution. It is not a question of calling on the masses to follow the party, but of building the party in the very heart of the masses. If the party grows out of the peasantry and the proletariat after a long process of struggle in which the revolutionaries and the exploited are inseparably united, then an authentic vanguard of the exploited shaped by themselves will have been achieved.

Finally, establishing a guerrilla band in the name of a party is also a kind of authorization to other parties, both new and old, to form their own guerrilla fronts, and this disperses and fragments the revolutionary forces.

Army and Front

To overcome the simultaneous problems of a people separate from the parties and a fragmented Marxist Left, the ELN proposed the formation of a very broad political front to be composed of all forces interested in the revolutionary transformation of the country and of an army which would draw combatants together regardless of their ideologies or political affiliations.

The objectives of such an army would be those of the revolution. Its leaders would be fighters of military and political ability irrespective of their party membership. It would be an authentic people's army because workers and peasants would join, even without being Marxists. It would be a revolutionary army in which the combatants, whether they were members of a political party or not, would be under a single command. This command would not base its

leadership on party interests, which are intrinsically limited and narrow, but on the higher general interests of the revolution. This command would have to be independent. The political front would be broad, nonexclusive, and would be in charge of political actions in support of the combatants.

These principles governed the course of relations between the ELN and other Left groups from 1962 until the days of the insurrection in 1965. However, its proposals were soon frustrated by the suspicious attitude of those organizations or by their simple refusal to support a struggle in which they did not see the possibility of success. The ELN was able to establish a possible basis for future joint cooperation only with the Communist Party, the FIR, and the Revolutionary Vanguard.

It must be recognized that the ELN's objective was unrealizable. The differences on the Left were too great to be overcome so early and, besides, it was impossible to establish real cooperation between a military organization which was just preparing to struggle and various established political organizations.

This is why the ELN tacitly recognized its mistake when it said, in a plan prepared toward the end of 1964 and published in 1965: "The immediate objective of our policy of unity is to form a broad front that will bring the entire people together. The front will not be the result of bureaucratic negotiations behind the backs of the masses. It will be the culmination of a stage of armed struggle on the part of the people in which action will bring all the popular forces together in deeds."

And it added: "No one can claim the leadership of the revolution for himself if he does not demonstrate in practice that he is at the forefront of the masses and that he is capable of leading them to victory. The leadership of a people is not a privilege but a grave responsibility bestowed by popular support."³⁵

MIR and ELN

The MIR published the Resolutions and Conclusions of the Assembly of its Central Committee in number 46 of its official organ, *Voz Rebelde*. In this document it critically analyzed some of the experiences of 1965:

Liaison between the guerrilla group "Pachacútec" of the MIR and "Javier Heraud" of the Army of National Liberation, which were operating in relatively close zones, was not achieved at the opportune moment. If this had been done in time, it would have strengthened the revolutionary armed forces and the objective of the repressive operations would certainly have been frustrated.

The lack of liaison, in spite of the fact that our Movement tried to establish it in April 1965 with another section of the revolutionary Left also engaged in organizing armed struggle, and which is in no way attributable to sectarianism in our Movement, had an adverse effect on the broadening of the process.³⁶ (Emphasis added—H.B.)

This statement, which was made after the 1965 reverses, does not tell the truth. In reality, the two organizations had been in contact since the middle of 1962—that is, three years before April 1965—and they were never able to come to an agreement that would permit them to integrate their work.

People who are not closely acquainted with the internal problems of Peruvian revolutionary organizations often ask why there were two leaderships and two guerrilla organizations in Peru.

In spite of the fact that both the MIR and the ELN were prepared to initiate guerrilla warfare, as events later demonstrated, their methods differed. The MIR emerged from an already existing political party with an established military leadership. The ELN felt that both party and leadership ought to arise from the struggle itself.

This primary difference became an obstacle to any effective coordination. Subsequent experience showed that coordination between two groups that are working secretly and are careful not to reveal their plans is impossible. The MIR and the ELN had only one alternative if they really wanted revolutionary unity, which was to merge.

The MIR maintained that the revolution should be led by a party: the MIR. The ELN believed that the leadership should be able to assimilate the other revolutionary forces that were operating in the country in 1962. Moreover, the ELN advocated the broad concept of a revolutionary army that we have already described, a plan designed to keep the army from being restricted to the members of one party.

In the unproductive conversations held between the two groups, the MIR maintained that it was necessary to join its organization in order to participate in the struggle, a requirement that contradicted the statements made subsequently in the Proclamation of 1965: "The revolution that we are initiating will be carried out by the peasants and the progressive and patriotic sectors of the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie under the leadership of the Revolutionary Party that must be formed in the heat of struggle, *a party in which the MIR considers itself a factor.*"³⁷ (Emphasis added—H.B.)

And Luis de la Puente himself stated in his speech of February 7, 1964: "If it is necessary to have unity in order to fight side by side with the peasants, to confront the power of the oligarchy, and to make the revolution possible, then we welcome that unity."³⁸

The ELN was not interested in participating in any leadership and it did not make that demand part of its conditions for reaching an agreement. It only asked that the guerrillas' definitive leadership arise from the struggle itself and not just from among the most "politicized" comrades, those possessing the highest political "level" or the

most political experience. It made this demand because it was perfectly aware that the survival of any future armed groups depended on it, and because it knew the limitations of conventional political leadership.

The ELN had said repeatedly that it was not interested in the leadership of the revolutionary movement, and that when the political front that it was proposing at that time was formed (with the participation of the FIR and the Communist Party, which had not yet split), it would not ask to be part of it. What the ELN wanted was for the military organizations to have command of the whole movement, for the political front to be subordinated to the military organization, and for the guerrilla groups not to have to belong to any specific political party. Instead, the armed bands should constitute a completely autonomous military organization.

This demand was even more justified if one takes into account that in that year, 1962, Hugo Blanco was the most outstanding figure in the peasant movement of La Convención. No one who wanted to organize an insurrection in Peru could afford to ignore the proportions that the land recovery movement was taking.

While it was true that the FIR and Blanco did not share the assumptions of guerrilla warfare, it would still have been possible to have reached an agreement with them; in any case, an agreement could have been precipitated by the actions undertaken. But it was absolutely incorrect to ignore them and pretend that they didn't exist. As we have seen previously, the peasantry was engaged in a process that could come to be revolutionary if it was supported and oriented from within. To conceive of the revolution as the exclusive task of one party meant, whether that intention was made explicit in public statements or not, closing the door on that possibility and so on the only guarantee of success for revolutionary action.

In 1962 the door was open for creative unity on the Left. The FIR had issued repeated calls with that in mind, and many of its militants and leaders were prepared to move toward revolutionary actions, including guerrilla warfare. The peasant unions would have given the guerrilla groups the bases they needed and the guerrillas would in turn have given the peasant movement a definitive revolutionary orientation. To block that possibility by trying to force the revolution, which by its very nature is complex and multifaceted, to flow along a single channel meant abandoning a promising mass movement and denying the guerrillas their best guarantee of victory.

Another difference between the organizations lay in how they thought the actions were to begin. The ELN favored immediate action to be initiated by an armed group that would, in the course of combat, build its own social base. The MIR believed that it was first necessary to build a social base among the peasantry by means of clandestine work in the countryside, using the method of "secret armed propaganda."³⁹

The ELN felt that it was impossible to carry out such propaganda under the repressive conditions that existed in 1962-1963. It was mistaken and naive, the ELN thought, to send revolutionary cadres into the countryside without having organized, armed, and trained them for combat, and it believed that such actions would only reveal the rebels' preliminary movements to the enemy. The ELN felt there was no alternative to establishing armed, mobile groups at predetermined points.

Practice subsequently demonstrated that it was possible to carry out such clandestine work without being suppressed. During almost all of 1964 the MIR was able to organize quietly among the peasants under relatively calm conditions. Nevertheless, the enemy's intelligence services kept the organizers under constant surveillance and pre-

pared for the later confrontation. It was possible to take time to prepare a peasant base, but this entailed certain risks and disadvantages which became apparent a year later when armed action had already begun.

In any case, these differences, which seemed in our eyes to be insurmountable in 1962, were small compared to the great tasks we wanted to undertake. Today many of these difficulties have been overcome.

It must be added that unity obtained by gaining the formal support of organizations but not by changing the concepts and methods of work would not have saved the movement from its subsequent fate. Actually, both the ELN and the MIR had major limitations that determined, in the final analysis, the reverses suffered in 1965.

But it would be superficial to point only to disagreement over tactics as the reason for the separation of the MIR and the ELN. One must examine the history of the Peruvian Left to understand why that division was possible.

The cause lay in the fact that almost all the members of the MIR and the ELN, or at least those cadres whose opinions carried decisive weight in the two organizations, were people who had been educated in opposing political camps. The MIR was produced by a split in the APRA, while the ELN was led by former Communist Party cadres. There was an invisible wall between these groups, made up of the prejudices that still tied them to their past, for the struggle between the APRA and the Communist Party had covered several decades of Peruvian political history and still influenced them, even though they wouldn't admit it. It was difficult for the two groups to find a common language.

Besides, the MIR itself was still heterogeneous, torn by polemics, fights, and internal struggles.

In general, in the years from 1962 to 1965 the insurrectional Left was far from having developed the concepts,

methods, and organizational structures that would have made real unity possible. Under those circumstances, any forced agreement would have been a hypocritical understanding, a halfway unity. This confusion was clearly reflected in subsequent actions and it was another of the factors which led to defeat. In order to triumph in 1965, the revolutionaries would have had previously to modify their working methods, making them more concrete and efficient.

With the ELN formed and coexisting with an already established organization—the MIR—an inevitable rivalry developed between the two groups. This competition led not only to wasteful duplication of efforts and tasks, but also worked against the development of a unified political line.

On September 9, 1965, both groups finally agreed to form a National Coordinating Command. It was too late. In Ayacucho and Cuzco, MIR and ELN guerrillas were fighting the same enemy and did not know that they had only to march for about ten days in order to join forces. Besides, the coordination agreed upon was propagandistic, limited, and therefore fictitious. The Command was established by elements in the city which had no contact with the combat units.

About forty-five days later Luis de la Puente, leader of the MIR, fell in Mesa Pelada. It was the result of not having surmounted shortsightedness, sectarianism, and lack of judgment soon enough, and of not having placed the needs of the revolution above the interests of groups and parties.

5 1965

The actions that took place in 1965 go from the taking of the Runatullo hacienda and the ambush at Yahuarina on June 9 to the liquidation of the "Javier Heraud" guerrilla unit and the disappearance of Guillermo Lobatón in December. They were seven months of intensive combat, above all on the central front commanded by Guillermo Lobatón and Máximo Velando.

The following guerrilla fronts existed toward the middle of 1965, from south to north:

1) The Mesa Pelada front in La Convención Province and the Department of Cuzco, commanded by Luis de la Puente Uceda. This was also the MIR's headquarters command.

2) The front in La Mar Province in the Department of Ayacucho, where the ELN guerrilla unit operated.

3) The front in Concepción and Juaja provinces, Department of Junín, where the MIR guerrilla units of Guillermo Lobatón and Máximo Velando were operating.

The MIR had organized a fourth front in the north in Ayabaca Province, Department of Piura. It was under the command of Gonzalo Fernández Gasco and Elio Portocarrero. It never went into action, a decision made by the MIR's national leadership.

Summary of the Actions

It is difficult to enumerate the battles which took place in 1965 due to the lack of sufficient documentation and to

the fact that almost all of the participants either died in combat, were murdered, or are fugitive. Nevertheless, a certain chronological order can be established in the actions that were publicized in the Lima press.

The first days of June:

. . . assault on a mine, demolition of a bridge on the Satipo highway just before the Runatullo hacienda . . . assault on that hacienda by one group and assault on the Andamarca police station by another, all on the same day . . .

. . . The two operations had extraordinary results. They were accompanied by armed propaganda everywhere, in the mine, in the hacienda, on the bridge, in the town. Meetings were held and foodstuffs from the deposits were distributed, there and all along the road . . .

. . . assault on the Algeria hacienda, which was converted into a community with its goods (animals and products) being distributed among the peasants.⁴⁰

June 9, 1965: battle at Yahuarina between seventeen guerrillas commanded by Máximo Velando and fifty or sixty Civil Guards armed with submachine guns under the command of Major Horacio Patiño. "The guerrillas killed nine and wounded several of the government force and took twelve prisoners, among them an officer. They were released without being mistreated."⁴¹

Battle of Pucutá: Guerrillas led by Guillermo Lobatón defeated a group of Rangers in their own encampment, capturing food and weapons "and causing numerous casualties, both dead and wounded."⁴²

September 25, 1965: capture of the Chapi hacienda by an ELN unit and death of the Carrillo brothers, its owners.*

The course of the next seven months can be divided into two clearly defined stages. The first was obviously successful

* With this action the existence of the Javier Heraud guerrilla front, which had been active since April of the same year, was revealed publicly for the first time.

for the guerrillas, who dealt hard-hitting and effective blows to the enemy. The second stage was the army's counter-offensive, supported politically by the bourgeois parties' counter-revolutionary front. The actions of Yahuarina and Pucutá belong to the first stage; the capture and death of Máximo Velando, the disappearance of Guillermo Lobatón, and the death of Luis de la Puente belong to the second.

There has been a great deal of talk about theoretical errors on the part of those who initiated the guerrilla war. It is true that in 1965 the leaders were restricted by the concepts and prejudices of their period. The documents produced during those years show confusion in describing the country and in the analysis of its social classes and national peculiarities. But this cannot in itself explain the defeat, since the Peruvian revolution is not the only one to have begun with confused, vague, or erroneous notions that were later corrected and sharpened during the course of struggle.*

Evidently, something more happened. We believe that part of the explanation of the defeat is to be found not in the guerrillas' general theoretical concepts, but in the manner in which they applied their tactics.

The Guerrillas of the MIR

The MIR distributed its men along the three previously mentioned fronts, although only two were in actual operation.† The object seems to have been to make the army disperse, forcing it to fight in several different places.

Before beginning to fight, the guerrilla cadres were occu-

* In this connection we can mention the article by Américo Pumaruna, "Perú, revolución, insurrección, guerrillas," published in Peru by the Vanguardia Revolucionaria group in 1966.

† It may be that the MIR's objective was to form still more guerrilla fronts. However, it lacked the means to do so.

pied chiefly with establishing the party. They tried to build it with some degree of success in all the zones before firing the first shot.

It seems that Mesa Pelada is the zone where they succeeded best, judging by the following statement in the analysis of the 1965 experiences made by the MIR Central Committee:

In the south the work of building the party and the *subsequent* organization of the masses were in full development. The extent and depth of that work were such that there is sufficient reason to state that if it had continued at the same rhythm the armed action would have had the broad and firm support of the masses. . . .

In the central zone the "Túpac Amaru" guerrilla unit was working hard to establish contact with the peasant masses of the zone. It possessed a vigorous and effective guerrilla capability, but it lagged behind in the construction of the party, which did not permit it to channel the support and extraordinary warmth which it awakened in the peasantry in a more organized and effective manner.⁴³ (Emphasis added—H.B.)

From this it can be deduced that the guerrillas were not all applying the same criterion to the construction of the party. While Lobatón and Velando established *direct* contact with the masses, de la Puente did it *through the party*.

Needless to say, work on the fronts could not be coordinated while the guerrillas were busy building an organization. Given the differences between the zones where they were working and the men who were doing the work, some fronts made more progress than others.

What was the political level they believed it was necessary to attain before beginning military operations? We don't know. What seems to have happened is that the army forced the MIR to reveal its plans and precipitated the fighting

when it detected the Mesa Pelada group at the beginning of 1965.

The lack of coordination between the fronts themselves and between the fronts and the propaganda organization in the city is obvious from the fact that when Lobatón opened fire in June, de la Puente was still not prepared and the northern front had not even begun its operations. Another indication is that the presence of the commander at Mesa Pelada was revealed prematurely.

In any case, it was impossible for the guerrillas to begin combat operations simultaneously, located as they were in zones with different characteristics, requiring different preparations, etc. This meant that they could not achieve their objective of making the enemy divide his forces. The army was able to face them on successive occasions with relative ease. They also forgot that the Peruvian army has more than 50,000 men under arms and that it can fight on several fronts, even if they all begin operations simultaneously. By separating their own forces, the guerrillas did not disperse the army, they only dispersed themselves.

The construction of the party, or of what has been called a "minimal party," before beginning operations, does not seem to have produced the desired results.

Because they are so scattered, Peruvian peasants are reluctant to form cells when they are first organized. Their communal spirit makes them prefer large assemblies to small, secret meetings. Even Hugo Blanco was unable to organize an effective party structure in spite of his influence in La Convención and Lares, and he noted "the difficulties that this task entails."⁴⁴

When party organizing was halted, the MIR was forced to recruit people who had still not been tested in the heat of battle, thus permitting enemy infiltration. Unreliable elements even reached the level of the "regional committees"

organized in each guerrilla zone, and participated in vital logistical work that, by definition, must be secret and strictly limited to the rebels.

That was how Albino Guzmán, a peasant who was a native of the southern zone and had been an "active participant in the peasant struggles in the period of Hugo Blanco,"⁴⁶ became part of the Regional Committee and participated in military preparations. He not only knew where the stores of weapons and food were located, but also the paths, the encampments, the guerrillas, the quality of their weaponry, and the members of the party—that is, the peasants who made up the liaison network. When he deserted he became the guerrillas' most effective enemy and the army's most active collaborator. The capture and liquidation of de la Puente and his comrades were due in great measure to him.

The MIR Central Committee called this most serious event "accidental." However, no one who has studied the many examples of people who deserted guerrilla units and became army collaborators throughout the history of guerrilla movements would consider this an accidental happening. It is the result of a concept, of a method of work that allowed the guerrilla unit to fall into the hands of collaborators by recruiting and promoting individuals to the highest levels of the organization without first making them pass through the indispensable test of active combat.

When the party is formed on the basis of political "consciousness" and not on the basis of action it may be numerically large, but qualitatively it is weak and ineffective in difficult moments. Perhaps the fact that the guerrillas in the central zone "lagged behind in the construction of the party," as the MIR Central Committee pointed out in its report, was what allowed them to fight the enemy longer and more effectively.

The guerrillas of the southern zone had just arrived there

and were unfamiliar with conditions in the valley, although they were enthusiastic over the signs they found everywhere of Hugo Blanco's efforts in organizing peasant unions. They devoted themselves to renewing his work in order to prepare a clandestine party organization that would support the guerrilla unit, providing it with supplies and information.

It would appear that they thus satisfied one of the conditions of guerrilla warfare, that of basing it on the people. But actually the guerrilla unit was inadvertently transformed from a fighting organization into a nucleus of political activists and organizers.

The work of preparing the guerrilla *foco* was impressive. There were certainly many peasants who worked with the guerrillas and no great effort was needed to assume the leadership of the valley's peasant union organization. But when the army arrived, many of the wavering elements went over to the enemy, facilitating the army's discovery of the supplies which the rebels had so laboriously concealed.

On the other hand, the guerrilla unit was so busy with political work that it neglected its military preparations. Its men lacked sufficient mobility to escape the army's encirclement and install themselves in a distant location. To have done that they would have had to abandon, at one stroke, not only the work which they had been engaged in for more than a year but the idea that had guided that work.

Something more can be added concerning the dispersal of the guerrilla forces. When two or three guerrilla fronts begin to operate in the face of a numerous enemy force in a country as large as Peru, any communication between them is impossible unless it is carried out through the cities. And it is precisely in the cities that the adversary's intelligence services operate with the greatest efficiency.

When a revolutionary organization has spent years struggling in both the city and the countryside under the most

difficult conditions, liaison which operates through the urban centers is quite feasible. But when that experience does not exist and, on the contrary, there is a whole tradition of laxness and carelessness in the style of work, and when the organization has never really gone through periods of difficult clandestine struggle, making contact through the cities means handing militants over to the enemy.

In Latin America many valuable guerrilla cadres have fallen prisoner or been murdered when they made futile attempts to establish contact with the cities. The best-known example of this is Fabricio Ojeda in Venezuela. Máximo Velando, the man who led the Yahuarina ambush, was arrested in Puerto Bermúdez and later tortured and murdered while presumably trying to make contact with his own organization.

The Security Zones

An important part of the MIR's concept of insurrection involved the so-called security zones. Even though this idea was not developed in any document or theoretical statement, there were repeated references to the "security zones" or hideaways in MIR manifestos before the operations began and even afterward, when the party analyzed its defeat.

It seems that the MIR leadership thought that the guerrillas could choose some inaccessible locations, so plentiful in our mountainous countryside, fill them with deposits of food and ammunition, and then seal them and mine all the access routes to keep the army away. This may well have been what led Luis de la Puente to take refuge in Mesa Pelada, a high, unpopulated area in the northern part of the department isolated from any peasant center.

As late as September 5, a little more than a month before de la Puente's death, the MIR said in one of its communi-

qués: "Anyone who dares approach Illarec Ch'aska will be annihilated!"⁴⁶

And the MIR's Central Committee recognized the existence of a defensive plan for the guerrilla base in its analysis of the 1965 experiences:

On the other hand, the grave error was committed of revealing the presence in that place of Major Luis de la Puente, Secretary General of the Movement. As a result, the enemy focused its attention on that zone, and what should have been the Command's rear guard became the front line. This notwithstanding, *defensive preparations in the zone, such as mine fields* and the activities of the guerrillas themselves, kept the repressive forces from penetrating the area for quite some time.⁴⁷ (Emphasis added—H.B.)

The security bases were to have been created in the central and southern zones, but the latter area is where there were fewest. In the central zone, Lobatón and Velando's guerrilla units had to abandon this effort in the face of the enemy's onslaught. This was precisely why they were able to survive for a longer period of time. In Mesa Pelada, on the other hand, where other factors such as de la Puente's illness and the lack of adequate military training on the part of the rest of the band made it impossible for them to mobilize rapidly, the guerrillas were surrounded and their own security zone turned into a death trap.

This demonstrated that no place is inaccessible for an army with some counter-guerrilla training. Only excessive naiveté could have led to the belief that where the guerrillas can go, the army can't. The concept of a security zone is not only absolutely contrary to guerrilla tactics, but is dangerous as well because it gives the combatants false confidence in the protection they can derive from the terrain.

In the first stage of the war, the guerrilla's only security

resides in himself, in his ability to move from one place to another, and in his knowledge of the terrain. To limit him to certain zones is equivalent to taking away his only defense: his mobility. Guerrillas in the southern zone were helpless when, after trusting in their caches and in supplies being brought by their liaison networks, the stores fell into enemy hands and the networks were destroyed. In the last analysis, the security zone is a vestige of the tactics of armed self-defense which have been tried so often in Latin America.

Those who say that the failure in Peru was due to the mechanical repetition of Cuban tactics should recall Debray:

Under these conditions for the guerrilla force to attempt to occupy a fixed base or to depend on a security zone, even one of several thousand square kilometers in area, is, to all appearances, to deprive itself of its best weapon, mobility, to permit itself to be contained within a zone of operations, and to allow the enemy to use its most effective weapons. The notion of the security zone raised to a fetish is the fixed encampment set up in reputedly inaccessible spots. This reliance on the characteristics of the terrain is always dangerous; after all, no place is inaccessible; if anyone has been able to reach it, then so can the enemy.⁴⁸

In this as in other regards, we find that the practices of the MIR and those of the Cuban guerrillas are in contradiction.

In Peru, de la Puente and his comrades tried to establish security zones before they began their operations, but in Cuba, according to Debray, "it was only in April, 1958, after 17 months of continuous fighting, that the rebels set up a firm guerrilla base in the center of the Sierra Maestra."⁴⁹

By ignoring this important contradiction, poorly informed commentators have attributed the defeat in Peru to an

attempt to copy the Cuban experience. Huberman and Sweezy have gone so far as to ask, referring to Debray and the "disastrous attempt of the Peruvian MIR": "When it is considered that de la Puente had spent time in Cuba and was consciously trying to apply the lessons of the Cuban experience, one can only ask: Why did Debray evade the issue? Was he perhaps afraid that an analysis of the failure in Peru would cast doubts on the validity of his own theory?"⁵⁰

The reply is clear. De la Puente tried to create a new method that, according to him, was more in accord with the Peruvian reality. He attempted to combine a peasant base with a party, and a party with a guerrilla unit. But he returned unconsciously to the outmoded tactics of self-defense, and in so doing turned the guerrilla unit into a sedentary group that was condemned to death for that very reason.

We can say, on the basis of the evidence now available to us, that the front in the central zone was the only one that really fought the army during 1965 and that could carry out repeated actions successfully, engaging in a very mobile campaign until Guillermo Lobatón's disappearance. It is very important to study the experience of Guillermo Lobatón and his group in an analysis of the 1965 defeat. We are unable to do so because we lack documents and reliable accounts.

It is possible that the guerrillas of the central zone, whose greatest influence lay in the communities of Concepción, withdrew toward the forests of Jauja Province in the belief that they would be able to hold out there more effectively. Having thus abandoned their security zone—and let us note in passing that the Yahuarina ambush was carried out in the hope of defending that zone by stopping the army⁵¹—they moved farther and farther away toward unpopulated areas. The last news of Lobatón placed him at

the Obenteni mission in a region inhabited by forest dwellers and visited by Catholic missionaries. It seems that the final battle took place there.

Lobatón's group may have perished because it was unable to resolve a contradiction inherent in Peruvian geography. The population which can support the guerrilla struggle lives in open areas, while the forests are almost unpopulated.

The Changes in La Convención

As we have said previously, the peasantry of La Convención had union and even political experience, since it had struggled against the large landowners after having been organized in unions. Revolutionary ideas were not new to these peasants, who were quite ready to respond with words and even deeds.

Nevertheless, something had changed.

First, there had been social changes. Hope in reformist measures had been generated by Blanco's campaign, the unions, the military junta's agrarian law, and Belaúnde's agrarian reform. There were but a few large landowners remaining and a great proportion of the peasantry had been assured of the possession of its holdings. The slogan "Land or Death" no longer had such urgent meaning. And with the expulsion of the large landowners the "class front" that had functioned in Blanco's time was broken up.

Second, political changes had taken place. The replacement of Prado's administration by Belaúnde's reformism was reflected in the presence of agrarian reform officials and in the expectations rich peasants placed in cooperative organizations financed by the state. It is true that the reformist road is a false and demagogic one, but it was still attractive to the small landowners.

La Convención was the object of special attention on the

part of both national and imperialist agencies, since it had been the focal point of conflict. Resources, loans, social investigators, and another type of investigator—agents—all flowed into the valley.

Third, there had been a period of extensive disagreement between Blanco and de la Puente. The Provincial Federation's influence had declined in the valley. Many peasants had become scabs either through corruption or fear and were a potential "social base" for the army when it arrived.

The mere fact that, in spite of all these extremely important changes, many of the peasants collaborated with the guerrillas spontaneously and at great sacrifice shows the revolutionary potential of the Peruvian peasantry.

Nevertheless, the choice of La Convención as a zone of operations, probably made because of a desire to succeed Blanco in the leadership of the peasantry, was purely mechanical. It would have been correct in 1962; in 1965 it entailed great risks.

6

The Ayacucho Front

La Mar Province is located in the central range of the Andes within the acute angle formed by the deep, narrow canyons of the Pampas and Apurímac rivers.

The communities of Chungui and Ancco are perched on the summits of the range, almost 16,000 feet above sea level. From these heights hundreds of little streams run rapidly down incredibly steep precipices toward the Pampas and the Apurímac. In the south the precipices are barren and baked by an implacable sun. In the northwest they are covered with thick, eternally humid forests.

There are no roads. The traveler who dares to cross the province has to use a mule or go by foot, painfully climbing and descending gigantic stone stairways and crossing interminable bogs and enormous accumulations of sand.

There is little arable land, and what exists is poor. The Indian communities grow potatoes and *ocas* on the heights. On the slopes and in the warm zones they grow corn and sugarcane and coffee and cacao in the "forest eyebrow." After transporting their meager crops on muleback for several days, the peasants sell them at low prices in the roadside markets. These markets are their point of contact with capitalist civilization, whose spearhead penetrates farther and farther into the Andes as the road advances.

The vast majority of Indians speak only Quechua, although some of the young people do go to school in the provincial capital.

According to the 1940 census, the province had 38,590

inhabitants. Of these, 35,129 lived in the countryside and 3,461 in the towns. The 1961 census showed 40,961 inhabitants over five years of age, of whom 32,598 did not speak Spanish or know how to read and write.⁵²

Land ownership is shared by the communities and the haciendas, and there are numerous points of conflict. The *yanaconas*—Indians who are forced to serve on the haciendas—almost always want to free themselves from the haciendas and join the communities.

Historical Background

The province has had a violent history.

In 1922 the Indians of Ancco and Chungui revolted "because of the many robberies and abuses committed by those who headed the municipal and district governments."⁵³ The authorities charged the Indians money on various pretexts and overwhelmed them with taxes.

At noon on December 12, 1922, Indians of both sexes, young and old alike, from the communities of Llachua-pampa, Illaura, Pampahuasi, Retama-pampa, etc., marched on the house of some local landowners, the Añaños, in Patibamba and surrounded the towns of San Miguel and Tambo for several days.

The country was then under the civilian reformist dictatorship of Leguía, who had built his power on the financial aid of the United States and Great Britain. The uprising was only heard as a distant echo in the soft life of the capital. The government sent reinforcements to "control the Indians."

Thus, for several weeks 150 soldiers armed with machine guns went from one town to another in the province. The result of the "pacification" campaign was, according to official statistics, 430 Indian casualties including dead and wounded, more than 1,400 homes burned in many towns

and villages, and incalculable losses in all kinds of produce.

Fray José Pacífico Jorge, a Spaniard who was head of the Franciscan Mission in La Mar Province during those years, wrote a moving letter to the Prefect of Ayacucho, who had instigated the massacre. The document contains a vivid description of the crimes committed by the "pacification" force.

Horrified by the crimes that I have just witnessed in La Mar Province, I am writing you this letter before recovering from the profound impression that all that I have seen produced in my spirit.

In pursuit of my sacred mission I have had to travel through all the towns and villages of this people during the days when blood was shed, needlessly, in this defenseless province.

I saw more than 200 huts burned in the village of Lacc-huapampa, inhabited by more than 2,000 Indians. Their unfortunate owners were shot down as they fled, terrified, toward the nearby hills and ravines by those who, after setting fire to the huts, devoted themselves to hunting down the poor Indians as though they were deer or forest animals.

In Illaura itself I saw three people dying in a shocking scene. Two were old people and one was a four-year-old child. They had been pulled out of a half-burned hut and their bodies were covered with horrible burns. The old people died slowly in the midst of terrible pain and the little child died just a few moments after he had been pulled from the ashes. Before these people died I administered the last rites of our holy religion.

In Lacc-huapampa I saw another crime that moved me deeply. A poor woman with a baby nursing at her breast fled from her hut in the opposite direction from the fires that were being set in that town. One of those criminals shot her in the back with his rifle, and she and her baby fell to the ground. . . . I was not able to approach the victims to administer the sacraments for fear of being shot down myself, since the criminals did not seem to have consciences and acted without anyone being able to restrain their excesses and their passions.

In the other villages of La Mar I saw scenes of indescribable pain. There were poor Indians dying with horrible bullet wounds and only a few old relatives (the young were still hidden) by their side, crying over the illness that had no cure. Corpses of men, women, and even children were lying here and there on the ground. They remained unburied for many days, and some of them gave off an unbearable odor. Is it possible that so many crimes will go unpunished?⁵⁴

The memory of this massacre has become part of the people's tradition. Even today the inhabitants of Chungui are known for their bravery and presence of mind.

The Chungui community, like all of the Indian communities, has had to remain constantly on the alert against the land grabbers, landowners, and shyster lawyers.

The procedure is well known. The shyster falsifies the deeds and goes before the judge of the Primary Court of Claims demanding the possession of lands which were supposedly taken from him by the community. The legal machinery, greased by the plaintiff's bribes, functions rapidly, and a decision is quickly made supporting the claim.

Meanwhile the community, which is the true landowner, learns of the plot only when the shyster appears to recover "his land" protected by the judge and the police. What is to be done then? If they obey the court's decision, they lose their houses and crops and have to move to still higher and poorer areas. If they resist, they will be accused of being "invaders" and will be massacred.

In 1963, Chungui decided to resist a shyster's plot collectively and in an organized fashion. The police, disarmed by the angry community, had to return to the provincial capital.

But the matter did not rest there. The "Indians" had resisted the authorities and that is a crime for which one pays dearly in Peru. The community's representative, gov-

error, and mayor were all quickly arrested and taken to Ayacucho.

But the marvellous collective strength of the peasants remained invincible. Day and night the community, under almost military conditions, remained on the alert against its enemies. Hundreds of eyes and ears noted every strange movement in order to keep their lands from being invaded. Their officials were finally released, and the second battle had been won.

Chapi, the largest hacienda in the province, was also a hotbed of discontent and the center where abuses and intrigues were planned against the peasants. It extends over a great part of the province. From the Pampas and Apurímac rivers, the lands of Chapi rise to the high plateau and descend to the forest. It takes several days on foot and muleback to cover them all.

Cattle raising and the production of unrefined cane alcohol are its main activities. It is divided into four *pagos*, and each *pago* has to serve the hacienda during that part of the year determined by the owners. Workers are paid not in salaries, but in alcohol and coca. The Carrillos, owners of the hacienda, were notorious for their hard and cruel treatment of the peasants.

In 1956, the French explorer Michel Perrin described his adventure at the Chapi hacienda in a moving book.⁵⁵ He went there with his student, Teresa Gutiérrez, looking for the headwaters of the Upper Amazon.

Deceived by Miguel Carrillo, who told him that the Apurímac River was navigable at the point where it passed his hacienda, Perrin tried to cross in a flimsy raft. He was caught by the rushing water and carried for about six miles. He miraculously reached shore, but Teresa was drowned.

In his courageous book, Perrin denounced Carrillo's intrigues, his behavior, which is like that of a feudal lord, and his control over the Indian peons. He also demonstrated

point by point that Carrillo knew the danger involved in crossing the river, but nevertheless urged him to attempt it. Carrillo's purpose was to arrange for Perrin's disappearance, sure that Teresa, who was wearing a life preserver, would survive the tragedy.

"Inattentive readers have sometimes asked me, 'What was Miguel Carrillo's role?'" wrote Perrin.

I believe that I have stated it clearly since the accident, first to the police, then to the Peruvian courts, and finally in these pages. Four years later I can only confirm what I said then, and I do so with full knowledge of the meaning of my words: Carrillo is guilty of premeditated murder. Who was intended? I certainly was. Both Teresa and I, or perhaps Teresa alone? I don't think so. On the contrary, it is possible that, as people have pointed out to me, he thought that I would be the only one to disappear, and that the peons would bring him Teresa. It may also be that he wanted us all to die, since the death of the peons meant nothing to him.⁵⁶

But the Carrillos were masters of the province and had powerful friends in Lima. And even though the tragic death of the young San Marcos university student, Teresa Gutiérrez, moved the entire nation, the case was covered up very quickly and Perrin was forced to leave Peru.

Chapi faces La Convención, which is located on the other side of the Apurímac River. Its peons had only to cross the river to discover that on the other side there were unions and that the people there demanded salaries.

The response to the demands made by workers forced to serve the Carrillos without pay had always been violent. The rebels were hung, whipped, and imprisoned in irons in the main house of the hacienda. In January 1963, Miguel Carrillo personally strangled and then beheaded Julián Huamán, a tenant farmer from Oronjoy, one of the *pagos* of the hacienda. Huamán had dared to sue Carrillo for a bull of his that Carrillo had sold without the owner's con-

sent. Not satisfied with murdering Huamán, Carrillo threatened to do the same to anyone else who complained in the future.

The peasants rebelled at this crime. On January 8, 1963, the women of Oronjoy seized and bound Miguel Carrillo and took him, without harming him in the least, to the justice of the peace at Chungui, in whose office they drew up a long list of complaints.

The peasants' reaction was, despite everything, measured and calm. The document that they prepared on this occasion is one of the most damning pieces of evidence against large landowners' abuses and proves beyond question the Carrillos' sinister conduct.

Among the many abuses listed, they accused the Carrillos of having raped the following peasant women: Ignacia Orihuela, Lorenza Balboa de Huamán, Mercedes Pacheco de Huamán, Rosa Santa Cruz de Sánchez, Evarista Sánchez de Cose, and the wife and youngest daughter of tenant farmer Emilio Contreras. They accused Miguel Carrillo of having abused and seriously injured Catalina Orihuela de Ccorahua, and of having stolen cattle and horses from ten tenant farmers.

As is customary in these cases, long, tedious proceedings were initiated. In spite of being guilty of a murder committed in the presence of numerous witnesses, Miguel Carrillo was immediately released and the plaintiffs were arrested for "violating Sr. Carrillo's freedom."

The judicial machinery controlled by the large landowners of the zone now began to function rapidly. The complainants were accused of stealing 20,000 soles and were imprisoned for four years. On December 20, 1966, the higher court in Ayacucho handed down an incredible decision:

None of these accusations [i.e., murder, abuses, assaults] were supported by any evidence given at the trial and in no

way lessen the crime committed against the private property of the victim, Carrillo Cazorla, as well as the theft of goods and foodstuffs from his store at Oronjoy, and his injuries. . . .

We find that the accused, Basilio Huamán Ccorahua, Virginia Huamán Berrocal, and Marcelina Castro Ccaicuri, are guilty of crimes against the personal freedom of Miguel Carrillo Cazorla, as well as of having injured him and stolen his foodstuffs. We sentenced the first defendant to six months in the departmental prison of this city . . . the last two to six months in prison on a conditional basis and to the payment of 10,000 soles in damages, which they will pay jointly with those who have already been sentenced. . . .

Saturnino and Emeterio Huamán, relatives of the victim, were imprisoned for four years while the "plaintiff" Miguel Carrillo enjoyed complete freedom. The peasants maintained communication from prison with their fellow victims, encouraging them to keep their morale up and to continue resisting the Carrillos' oppression.

This was the situation in La Mar Province when the guerrillas arrived.

La Mar, 1965

April in Chinchibamba, a small village in the forest.

We are but a few individuals who move only at night to avoid encounters with the peasants. We don't want them to know of our presence yet, but they can't be deceived. They discover our tracks, see us through the foliage, and hear our steps. The rumor spreads and fantastic explanations are invented: that we are cattle thieves, *pishtacos*,* Communists . . . But what do they know about Communists except what they have heard from the village priest, the *Aprista* landowner, and the prejudiced schoolteacher?

* According to local superstitions, the *pishtacos* are murderers who sell human fat.

We obstinately continue to travel at night. Our food supply gives out and for several weeks we eat little or nothing. Finally there is no other solution. We have to speak to the peasants.

We begin to make friends. There are different reactions. Some of them distrust us, others perhaps fear us, but none of them refuses to help us. When we first sized each other up, the word *papay* ["papa"] separated us. The *papay* is the boss, all whites and mestizos, all foreigners. We have to cease being "papas"—the success or failure of our mission depends on it.

The language is another barrier. Very few of us speak Quechua (I know only a few words, and those I pronounce very badly). One comrade knows the Quechua spoken in the Cuzco region, which is pronounced differently. Only one of us knows the local pronunciation.

In spite of these difficulties our friendships grow and there are frequent invitations. We explain who we are, why we have come, and, in the process, our language becomes more understandable to them. We have to be careful of the words we use, because the peasants are hearing many of them for the first time. Those who know Quechua act as interpreters or speak to the peasants themselves.

These peasants live in their own world, with its tragedies, its rivalries, and its happy moments. They are members of a community and are not basically dissatisfied with their lot. They don't feel that they are victims since they are used to seeing poverty as their inevitable fate. They are defending themselves against an aspiring landowner who wants to use fraudulent titles to take over communal lands. They threw out the shyster and the police protecting him prudently withdrew. The community's officials were later arrested.

This is the world we must become part of, and we are cordially, even enthusiastically, welcomed.

June 1965. We are no longer "papas." Now we are

"brothers."* We help them in whatever ways we can. Everyone needs a doctor. There are no doctors or medicine, and people die from lack of care. An aspirin tablet has incalculable value. We treat the sick and distribute the few tablets we have, which is a double reason why we are welcome. Many are in agreement with our objectives. Others just listen and two or three distrust us, but at least almost everyone knows that we are not thieves or bandits. They no longer fear us and we can go into any home, sure of finding food and aid.

We discover that the population of this village is sparse and seasonal. Most people live farther up and only come into the ravines and to the banks of the Apurímac River for a few months. We want to contact the entire population, but going up to the higher areas poses the tactical problems of how to travel and where to hide. It is not just a problem of terrain, but also of equipment. It's no laughing matter to spend a night under the stars at 15,000 feet. We would need overcoats, scarves, and thick clothing, but we don't have them, and even if we did they would be too heavy to carry on the 10,000-foot climb to the peak. Nevertheless, we take the risk, climbing painfully up one night with a pitiless rain soaking us to the bone.

We learn some interesting things 15,000 feet above sea level. It's possible to withstand the cold by walking at night and resting during the daytime in the hollows heated by the weak sun of the high plateau. If one marches constantly the cold doesn't matter; and it's good training, in that it accus-

* We used the words *compañero* and comrade very little. The term "brother" spread spontaneously throughout the zone. It is more expressive and it is closer to the psychology of the peasants who identify love and friendship with family links (one's best friend is always a "spiritual" relative). Thus, a guerrilla was referred to as Brother So-and-So. And to find out if someone was worthy of trust, we asked if he was a brother or not.

toms one to move about in darkness. Visibility is a hundred times better at night. It is necessary only to pull oneself up to the top of a peak to see as far as one could march in a couple of days. A good pair of binoculars and the problem is solved. Caves are good protection from aviation and guerrillas can hide in rocky areas, which are good natural camouflage. Will future rebels republish the descriptions of the legendary exploits of the *montoneros*, those guerrillas of the nineteenth and the first years of the twentieth century? They should, because it would be one of the most interesting contributions to guerrilla tactics in Latin America.

Peruvian guerrillas must become accustomed to traveling constantly from the mountains to the forests and back again. They have to descend almost vertical slopes with no paths, protected by the vegetation which grows on the eastern Andes, and then climb up again to the heights without any transition. They have to live perpetually between 4,000 and 16,500 feet above sea level. It does not require supermen, but one does have to be completely adapted to our diabolical geography.

Large landholdings prevail in the high regions, but the landowners, who are merciless exploiters, live under the same primitive conditions as the peasants. The only place in the whole zone where we found beds was at Chapi. Landowners in other areas sleep on rudimentary platforms or on sheepskins and eat *mote** and potatoes boiled in salt and water, just as their serfs do.

While these are large landholdings, their size indicates not wealth but avarice and criminal neglect. Greedy, ignorant, and miserly, the landowners are the main obstacle to progress. They not only stubbornly oppose schools and make life difficult for the teachers, but they also keep their laborers from cultivating more land than they think is appropriate.

* *Mote* is boiled corn.

punish those who breed too much livestock, and carry out fierce reprisals against offenders. Their mental poverty means hopeless material poverty for hundreds of families. Afraid of having to work like their serfs, and knowing that they themselves are useless and parasitical, they fiercely defend the prerogatives which allow them to live off the peasants.

While the workers on the haciendas are more exploited than the members of the communities and their social problems are more violent in nature, they also see their condition more clearly. We don't need to convince them that the boss is their enemy. They know this and hate him wholeheartedly. Many of them have tried to form unions or build schools, and have been punished with a few lashes, imprisonment in the main house of the hacienda, or a denunciation to the authorities for engaging in "Communist agitation." "Why do you want to go to school, to learn to steal?" growls the landowner.

There are discontented people everywhere and they receive us enthusiastically. When we begin our operations against the landowners, which is indispensable for earning their complete trust, their enthusiasm grows. Our armed propaganda, which consists not in speeches but in concrete actions against the landowners, produces results.

It hasn't taken us long to expel the large landowners, many of whom fled before we reached them. The workers are beginning to realize how different it is to live without bosses. All our actions have their support.

After we take Chapi,* many of them dance with pure joy. They even learn to lift their right fists and shout, "Communist!" After we withdraw and a strong force of Civil Guards occupies the main house, some of the workers cry

* The capture of Chapi, in which the hated Carrillo landowners died, took place on September 25, 1965. It is still the subject of a military investigation.

openly and the guards ask them, "Aren't you ashamed to feel sorry for those bastards?" The first song with the tune of a *huayno*—a popular dance—was composed by a trader who walked over the mountains spreading the news of our victories. "The guerrillas picked potatoes at Chapi," playing in rudimentary Spanish on the words *papa* (potato) and *papay* (boss).

The guerrillas' supporters increase and the first peasants join the band. Many others promise to do the same in Sojos, Muyo, Palljas, and Chapi. We begin to see how, in a very moving way, a strong link is being forged between the peasantry and our unit. With the landowners removed and the army unable to locate us, we become the only authority in the zone.

But we have made some serious mistakes. Our friends and their contact with us, whether open or supposedly secret, are well known. One day a peasant tells his wife that he guided us to such and such a place, she tells a neighbor, and the neighbor tells everyone else. Another day a young man who has gotten drunk at a town festival shouts proudly that he is a Communist and a friend of the guerrillas. On another occasion we ourselves give someone away by visiting him in broad daylight. Not everyone can be trusted. There are stool pigeons, ex-major domos from the haciendas, people who betray others, or inform on them, or simply store up information for the future.

We finally realize the danger and encourage our supporters to join the guerrilla band. Some of them follow our advice immediately; others say that nothing will happen to them, that we shouldn't worry, and that, in any case, they know how to take care of themselves.

October 1965. The first army patrols appear. They are small mobile groups that pretend to be guerrilla units. "Do you know where our comrades are?" they ask the peasants. "We're bringing them messages from Lima." The device is

too clumsy for them to succeed in learning our whereabouts, but some of the more naive peasants reveal themselves. We warn them of the danger, but it's too late.

When the invasion finally comes, all of our supporters are tortured and shot. The terrible vengeance extends to their nearest relatives, their crops, and even their homes, which are remorselessly burned. The soldiers have regressed to the days of 1922. It is planned barbarism to terrorize the population and inflict exemplary punishment for their friendship toward us.

But it also reveals cowardice and insecurity. On no occasion did the troops use persuasion or separate the guilty from the innocent. It was more practical to kill them all than to carry out an investigation. How could they convince the people that they were defending a just cause when their desperation impelled them to end the danger as quickly as possible without regard to the means they employed? In slaughtering their victims, they were really trying to stifle their own fear.

All of which contains extremely valuable lessons. The first is that the peasants are willing to help. The second is that it is necessary to protect the lives of one's supporters as carefully as one protects one's own. Our survival depends on our mobility, but the survival of our supporters depends on secrecy. We observed the first requirement up to a point, but we were sadly remiss in the second.

There are differences between the Indian who lives in the communities and the *yanacóna*. The former is, in practice, a small landowner who works independently, cultivates his small parcel of land, consumes his products, sells coffee and cacao in town, and only consults the community when he needs to know which land should be cultivated (in the case of forest land) and for collective work in opening and maintaining roads. He is affected by two fundamental problems:

the large landholdings, which tend to grow at the expense of communal lands, and the low prices he receives from the merchants for his products—while the large landowners drive him off the best soil, the merchants keep him in poverty.

The communal farmers defend themselves from the large landowners and often keep them in check through the exercise of their marvellous collective strength, but they still do not suspect the motives of the merchants because they are accustomed to a disadvantageous relationship in which there is only one demand for all of their offers. They are united before the large landowners, but they face the merchants individually. These shopkeepers are generally the wealthier members of the community—if a tiny store which sells a few clothes, matches, and canned goods that few people buy may be called wealth—and they are among the town “notables.” They are frequently the first and most active informers for the army.

While the merchant is lodged in the community like a foreign body, the large landowner infiltrates it. He wins people over, buys or pressures the community’s governor and the justice of the peace, and terrorizes the schoolteacher.

This small world is connected with the outside by itinerant traders who operate out of the provincial or departmental capital or the towns, and who are completely and exclusively devoted to trade in a pitifully few manufactured products. Some of them are good people with a certain sympathy for the Left—they have children in universities and secondary schools who are influenced by the new ideas—and others are spontaneous police informers.

The government agents’ first reaction when they knew of our presence was to mercilessly interrogate the communal officials at the Ayacucho Prefecture of Police and force them, under threat of death, to report in the future on everything that happened. Some became informers, while others

remained loyal. The members of a community respect their own authorities and they always prefer their mayor, their representative, and their governor to a strange person from a faraway place. The terror of the communal officials was a dangerous factor working against us.

Dogmatism may lessen the effectiveness of a militant, but it can be fatal to a guerrilla. He encounters new problems of all sorts in the countryside, and he must solve them with political clarity and an open mind, without losing sight of the objectives that caused him to take up arms. He will frequently have to deal with land disputes between members of a community or hacienda workers, small family quarrels, or rivalries between one town and another. He will be consulted and asked to intercede before such and such a person and to try to sway him in one direction or the other. He can’t refuse, because then the party with the grievance may be offended.

In Ayacucho, as in other localities, the landowners have serfs that they call tenants who are forced to work for them, often without a salary, in exchange for a piece of land. The need to use cheap or free manpower in work on the hacienda generates great resistance and compels the owner to employ violence, which in turn sharpens the conflict further. Today it is someone who didn’t come to work and has to be brought by force so that he won’t set a bad example. Tomorrow it will be a bull that the boss seizes from its owner in order to sell it to some merchant. Another day it will be necessary to keep a peasant from cultivating too much land so that he won’t make money in competition with the boss. This series of large and small abuses creates an atmosphere of hatred and an ever-present opportunity for action.

Large landholdings are declining everywhere in the zone where we were operating, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain them. The landowners sell their prop-

erty or leave, abandoning the crops to their serfs. Less and less is being produced, and hunger begins to reach into the home of even the small landowner. The old edifice, eaten away by the years, is collapsing. Are we regressing toward a rural society of numerous miserly small landowners, or toward a liberating social class? Are we going to wait for these serfs, who are potential revolutionaries due to the contradictions that exist between them and the large landowners, to become egotistical petty-bourgeois farmers as a result of this spontaneous land reform? Will the Peruvian oligarchy, consisting for the most part of big bankers and rich coastal landowners, decide someday to sacrifice its poor relatives in the mountains for the sake of carrying out a demagogical agrarian reform that would deprive the revolution of one of its most solid bases? If we begin now, that mass of peasants will be our ally. If we leave it until tomorrow, the task may be even more difficult. Society changes, and the seeming immobility of the Peruvian countryside is an illusion.

The serf and the member of a rural community are closely related. The former often has land in a nearby community or, if not, he may have relatives there and vice versa, which makes these groups interconnected and intermingled. This is an advantage for us. Any action carried out against the large landowner will have favorable repercussions in the community, and the aid that we give the community will soon be known on the hacienda.

Our most affectionate hosts were those who, in other times, had attempted to organize their brothers in order collectively to demand the payment of salaries and to protest against abuses. These people, who persuaded their fellows to refuse to work for the boss, who stirred the desire for independence, and who were the defenseless victims of cruel reprisals, were the most faithful supporters of the guerrilla unit and the first to join it. I would like to pay

the most sincere tribute in these lines to Nemesio Junco, the mestizo ferryman on the Sojos hacienda, a mature, upright man, almost unbelievably affectionate and sincere, and thoroughly good. Our first brother and our first recruit, he was captured and shot at Sojos. There are others, but I cannot give their names without risking their lives. They were seized by the new possibilities that guerrilla warfare opened before them and by the truth that suddenly appeared in all its stark reality before their primitive eyes. They became our best propagandists. They had an unforgettable way of lifting their rifles in their strong, work-hardened hands as they talked to their brothers in their native language and said: "Brothers, the landowners are through. *This* is respect!"

These are the facts. Did we have peasant support? If by that is meant a general and well-elaborated theoretical conviction and massive and well-organized aid, then evidently we did not. To ask for that kind of support would be to deal with metaphysics, not realities. If, on the other hand, by peasant support we mean the collaboration of most of the people, originating in their certainty that we were there to defend them, then we did have it and, moreover, it surpassed anything we had expected.

The Campa Indians lived to the north and the east of our positions. In the beginning they populated all of Chinchibamba,* but for the last few decades they have been pushed deeper and deeper into the forest. Those who work independently farm and trade, even though they continue to observe their ancestral customs. Others, the rebels, have gone to live in the mountains in places where the white man's greed does not yet reach. They have returned to a collective life under their chiefs, but without exploiters, and they have

* The word Chinchibamba is derived from *Chunchuypampa* or *pampa* of *chunchos* (forest dwellers).

been attacked without pity. Just as in earlier "barbarous" times, their towns were assaulted by the large landowners who put the adults to flight and took the children—under pretext of "civilizing" them—to be raised like slaves on the haciendas. These primitive men then spent the rest of their lives serving the boss.

At Osambre, one of the haciendas that employs such methods in this, in the middle of the twentieth century, the Campas are segregated in two compartments, one for men and the other for women. They are naturally paid no salary, and are forbidden to have any contact with the outside world. (And very few strangers ever go to such remote places.) The owner, a Yugoslav of unknown background who appeared quite mysteriously, is very familiar with the forest and with the customs, habits, and language of its inhabitants, and so can exploit them more effectively—at times mercilessly. Whatever horrible abuses are committed there, including the deaths of his workers, are ignored by the police, if they even learn about them (the nearest civilized town is Quillabamba, the provincial capital, which can be reached only after six days on foot over mountain paths). Since no government officials ever go there, the owner is lord and master of the zone.

The Catholic and Protestant religions, filled with myths and fantasies, are ideally suited to the boss's purposes. The fear of God is mixed in primitive imaginations with the fear of the boss: to attack the boss is to attack God. Although some Campas, instinctively attracted by freedom, succeed in escaping the forest, they don't get very far because the boss knows the forest as well as they do, and possesses the money and weapons to pursue them. Since such a bad example would have a dangerous effect on the other slaves, the fugitive is usually killed. Sometimes, in spite of the boss's rule against it, one of the members of the community facing the hacienda and a Campa woman fall in love. Then, just as in

the movies, he must steal her and carry her off as far away as possible in order to escape the boss's anger.

An immediate task for the guerrillas, and their best propaganda, would be to approach and make friends with the rebel Campas, liberate the slaves, and expel the oppressive landowner. But this will not be easy. While there is a visible difference between the Quechua peasants and the guerrillas, there is a still greater difference between the latter and the forest dwellers. Before they can understand each other there must be a long process of adaptation in which the guerrillas learn new languages and customs.

After numerous experiences had made us well liked by the local inhabitants, over-confidence proved to be our undoing. One success after another caused us to overestimate our own strength. There were also some desertions that lowered the number of guerrillas and thus affected our firepower.

We were actually a small group. In the most difficult moments there were barely thirteen of us. One reason for this was that our lack of communication with the urban centers made it impossible for us to depend on a steady flow of recruits. We were also surrounded. The encirclement did not threaten the existence of the guerrilla unit, which even under such conditions could operate comfortably, but it did keep us from setting up reliable lines of communication with the outside. By the end of 1965 our efforts to do this had failed.

One of our errors certainly lay in not considering that type of liaison sufficiently important, and in depending on recruiting men in the zone where we were operating. Our intention was to provide ourselves with supplies and guerrillas right on the spot. The provisions were easy, especially for a group as small as ours. The recruiting was feasible but it was too lengthy a process due to the slow-

ness with which a peasant makes a decision. The peasant may finally choose to join the guerrilla unit, but before doing so he will think it over carefully and take his time about weighing all the possibilities. However, a guerrilla unit needs to recruit rapidly and in quantity in order to strengthen the group and bring it up to the best combat level.

The small size of our unit kept us from undertaking any large-scale operations against the army. Nevertheless, we trusted in our knowledge of the terrain and in the numerous friends that we had everywhere. We began to move about by day along known roads, relying on the people's reports and neglecting the most elementary precautions. Our confidence was based on the fruitless efforts the army was making to locate us and on its fear of crossing rivers, streams, and broken areas in the terrain that we were watching.

We knew that as long as we stayed constantly on the move we were not in imminent danger. We were helped by the irregular nature of the terrain, which abounded in immense heights, formidable canyons, and slopes that were very difficult to climb, and which made an effective encirclement almost impossible. The enemy actually controlled only the best-known passes, which were just the ones we did not use.

For a long time the guerrillas and the soldiers played hide and seek, looking for each other and fighting brief engagements. If the guerrilla unit had remained faithful to the principle of mobility, of which it was perfectly capable, and had attempted to move far way toward other zones that were just as populated as where it was operating, it would have thwarted the army and survived.

But when a guerrilla thinks that he controls the terrain and is perfectly familiar with it, he begins unconsciously to fix himself to that area. And then he is lost, because not all of the information he has received is correct, and he does

not have all of the information about his enemy that he ought to have.

By the end of 1965 the clashes had become unfavorable for the guerrillas, and on December 17 the unit was surprised by an army detachment at a place known as Tíncoj. Three comrades—one of them Edgardo Tello—died in that combat. The rest of the guerrillas were scattered and with a forest as dense and on ground as broken as the scene of our operations, it was impossible for us to find each other. We were not able to regroup in spite of all our efforts. Perhaps a larger unit would have been able to get over those difficult moments even though it had suffered heavy casualties, but there were very few of us, and the loss of each man was a real blow.

With the guerrilla unit dispersed, its men were left to die one by one under the guns of their hunters. The individual fate of each of the comrades is not known. Some died in combat, while others were captured, jailed, and then shot by Army Intelligence. The rest are still being hunted throughout the country.

Comrades of the ELN also died in 1967 by Che's side in the epic of Ñancahuazú. They were Juan Pablo Chang Navarro (El Chino), José Cabrera Flores (El Negro), and Lucio Galván (Eustaquio).

The Causes of the Failure

Why did we not succeed? What was the cause of the Ayacucho failure?

The collapse and liquidation of the guerrilla band were certainly not due to lack of peasant support. As we have seen earlier, that support was shown in a number of ways. The area, with broken terrain unfamiliar to the army, was well chosen.

The roots of the failure must be sought in the guerrilla unit itself and in its leadership.

In this case as in others, a group of men, most of them from the city, tried to operate militarily in an unknown environment.

Lack of knowledge of the terrain is a disadvantage that can be quickly overcome if the group is alert and active. The guerrilla unit did in fact overcome this problem. But it did not always use its knowledge, and often preferred the easier but much more dangerous way of moving, which was along known roads.

In doing this, the unit left a trail of information behind which many peasants were not able to keep secret when they were tortured and murdered. The guerrilla band did not foresee, in practice, the severity of the repression to come.

The guerrillas made many friends but they did not know how to take care of them. Everyone knew their supporters, and when the army came all it had to do was to shoot them in order to terrorize the rest of the population.

Despite friendship, language was always a barrier that separated the rebels from the natives. Peasants identify Spanish with the boss, especially in those places like Ayacucho which have a very large Quechua population. For the guerrillas to gain the trust of the peasantry they must be able to speak Quechua, and not just any Quechua, but the dialect spoken in the zone where they are operating (there are significant variations in the language from region to region in Peru).

Customs are another barrier. A high degree of discipline is required for a group of men to learn to respect, imitate, and *love* the ancient customs of the peasants and not hurt their feelings through clumsiness. Discipline, warm affection for the peasants, and modesty are not always characteristics of young students or of politicians filled with an intellectual self-sufficiency that offends simple people and which origi-

nates in daily habits that are often just the opposite of the way of life of country people.

In spite of the good will that they earned, the guerrillas lacked a deep understanding of local customs. That would have allowed them to distinguish the traitors from their friends with greater precision and to obtain better and more pertinent information concerning the enemy's movements.

Guerrilla tactics, when applied strictly—with their characteristics of mobility, evasion and secrecy, rapid attack and withdrawal—demand a high degree of physical fitness on the part of the combatants and a leadership with great military ability. The entire group must operate with iron discipline and perfect coordination. The ELN's guerrilla unit, like all the others operating that year, did not possess these qualities to the degree required to overcome the inevitable problems and face a large, well-trained enemy force.

Under present circumstances it is still possible for a small group of men to operate in peasant zones successfully. But in order to do so, they must rigorously apply the guerrilla principles that were more or less disregarded by the rebels in 1965. And they must link their action to that of the masses in the struggle for the latter's deeply felt local and national demands.

A team with great political, organizational, and military ability is required, one that will be formed not in the liberalism of the urban Left but in the heat of combat. And it must conduct itself in such a way that it will attract new recruits from among the natives of the region.

When peasants see guerrillas who have just arrived from the city speak and act in their defense, they sympathize and collaborate with them. But when they see their own brothers in the revolutionary army, speaking their own language with their own accent, they follow them without having to think much more about it.

7

Some Final Notes

By the end of 1965 the guerrilla movement had been totally liquidated. The cadres who died in battle were the product of many years of struggle and possessed qualities of brilliant leadership for political persuasion; they were not, however, prepared to deal with the problems created by the revolutionary military movement at this point in Peruvian history.

City and Countryside

The 1965 actions took place almost entirely in the countryside. They didn't affect either the cities or Peru's long strip of coast where important production centers, several mines and oil centers, steel mills, and cane plantations with an agricultural proletariat having a long tradition of struggle are all located.

Two factors contributed to the failure of the urban centers of the coastal and mountain areas to act in support of the guerrillas. They were: a) the guerrillas' conception of the war they were going to initiate, and b) the urban centers' lack of means.

Both for the MIR and the ELN, the guerrilla war had to move from the countryside to the cities. In the first stage, its fundamental purpose was to win the support of the peasant masses and build a strong fighting vanguard, but this led not only to a neglect of the cities, but even to the issue of careful directives so that no premature action would be carried out there.

The goal was to establish a leadership in the countryside. It was feared that if an urban organization began to move too soon it would act on its own, thus creating problems of authority. But two factors worked against the guerrilla unit's retaining command of the movement.

First, one must realize how small both groups were. Opening four fronts in the mountains was already an effort beyond their capacity. It was practically impossible at the same time to set up an organization that would operate in both rural and urban regions. Therefore, almost all of the cadres were in the countryside when the uprising began.

If we add to this the disagreement which existed in the rest of the Left, from the Trotskyists to the Communist Party, as to the timeliness of the insurrection, and the Left's moral "solidarity" but lack of practical help, we will realize why, toward the middle of 1965, the cities remained calm while fighting was going on in the interior. This calm was broken only by the activity of the repressive forces and by some isolated uprisings carried out by elements not under the command of either of the active organizations.

More generally, we must remember the characteristics of Peruvian social life. Our country, which still has not achieved total social, economic, and cultural integration, never reacts as a whole. Strong barriers separate the people who live in the countryside from the city dwellers, the workers from the peasants, those who live in the mountains from those who live on the coast, the north from the south. Powerful actions which take place in certain zones have no repercussions in the rest of the country. That is what has happened throughout our history, and that is what happened in 1965 when the bloody battles in the mountains had no effect on the coast, where the people remained indifferent and did not react to the guerrilla war as the guerrillas had expected them to.

It is true that the guerrillas shook the reactionaries and

the oligarchy, since the latter saw quite clearly the danger that our units represented to their stability, above all in a country with as explosive an economic situation as Peru's. But the people did not understand this because they lacked the same power of analysis. Nor did there exist a capable and active political leadership that could take advantage of what was happening for an effective propaganda campaign based on the example of the guerrillas. All the Left did was to publish a few timid messages in support of the guerrillas that did not reach beyond its own small sphere of influence.

However, it must be noted that through their actions the guerrillas in a few months created greater repercussions than had the Left in its entire history. But these repercussions did not include support actions by the people.

The mission that the combatants had given their few activists in the cities was to serve as point of liaison and coordination within our country and with the exterior. They were to supply men, arms, and equipment and to spread propaganda. These tasks were too great for such small groups, which soon lost all contact with the guerrillas when the latter were encircled.

Guerrillas and Peasants

The guerrillas were in a difficult position in regard to the peasant masses. For centuries there has been a tremendous imbalance in Peru between the urban middle and working classes, from which the guerrillas came, and the peasantry.

The man from the city discriminates against and feels superior to the man from the country, especially the Quechua peasant. And inversely, the latter distrusts the man from the city. The peasant has always seen him as the exploiter, the man who has come to take away his land, the master.

A very large proportion of our peasant population speaks only Quechua, and those who are bilingual prefer to speak their native language. They use Spanish only when they have to speak to the landowner. The division also exists in customs. The behavior of city dwellers often seems strange to the peasants and amuses or displeases them.

It is a question, then, of a social division which has deep historical roots in the colonial and republican periods and which can only be overcome by the efforts of the guerrillas themselves.

This may help explain why the process of recruitment of new guerrillas from the places where fighting was going on was very slow. But it could not have been otherwise, since these barriers were compounded by the frugal way in which the people who live in our countryside measure time—not in days, but in harvests.

The guerrillas needed, therefore, action and time to convince the peasants that the method they had adopted was correct: action to show them that they were really prepared to fight against their enemies, and time to carry out a good propaganda campaign to clarify each action both to groups and to individuals.

Meanwhile, the army was acting also. It was an army that knew, through the experiences their U.S. advisors had acquired in other countries, that a guerrilla unit must be smashed at the very beginning if it is to be destroyed at all.

The guerrillas lost this battle against time because most of them lacked the necessary ability to adapt rapidly, not only to the terrain, but also to the daily life, language, and customs of the peasants. This is a process which normally takes years. But anyone who wants to engage successfully in warfare in the Peruvian countryside must accomplish it in months.

The guerrilla unit was defeated before a close relationship had been established between its members and the

peasants. This process, which is essential for the future of the revolution, was cut short.

There is a class factor at the bottom of all of this. The petty-bourgeois origin of the guerrillas gave them all the virtues and defects appropriate to this social sector of our country.

While they possess daring, imagination, and romanticism, these advanced groups of the petty bourgeoisie have always been susceptible to sectarianism, an excessive love of publicity, the desire to lead, and a tendency to underestimate the adversary. This is why, at the same time that they displayed abundant heroism in battling the enemy and audacity in throwing themselves into a dangerous fight, they were incapable of assimilating themselves in a short period of time into a peasantry that observed their sudden appearance with surprise and bewilderment.

There was another difference. The ideals proclaimed by the guerrillas necessarily appeared remote to the peasants, who were interested above all in their concrete and even local demands. While the guerrillas advocated social revolution, the peasants wanted more tangible things, the realization of small demands that the revolutionaries were not always successful in incorporating into their program—in spite of the fact that these demands are the means for raising the people to a higher level of consciousness. The guerrillas' program was much more complicated and their goals much more distant.

During his entire existence the peasant is separated from the life of the nation and is unaware of the great national problems, even though he suffers their consequences. In general, there is no developed national consciousness in Peru. It has been systematically retarded by the ruling groups. Naturally, this consciousness does not exist in the countryside either. It is true that the peasants understand the meaning of the problems if they are explained in clear

and simple language, but they do not feel them in their own flesh, as immediate, pressing issues which would make them fight.

The key problem for us at this stage lies in moving toward the peasantry, in making their worries and desires our own in order then to carry the peasants on toward higher objectives, in making the most of all the issues that arise from the struggle for land and the defense against the large landowners. It is not a question of moving into a peasant zone and calling on the inhabitants to follow us. We must unite ourselves with them and with their leaders and stand by their side in every eventuality. Their immediate local objectives must be incorporated into the general and ultimate objectives of the revolution.

Does this mean that we must modify our position to the extent of temporarily abandoning immediate armed actions?

Not in our opinion. It simply means that the guerrillas must be absolutely clear about the social framework within which they are going to move, and that they must use that framework as their starting point in planning and carrying out their actions. It means that guerrillas must broaden or limit their goals in accord with the social milieu in which they are working.

At the same time, it is necessary to consider the guerrilla struggle in the broadest possible terms, seeing it as part of a national struggle in which numerous revolutionary forces which may employ different methods have come into play. It is still possible that there may be new experiences similar to those of Hugo Blanco, since even the bourgeois agrarian reform, enacted in a timid law, has not been applied. Peru is very large and has many differing realities. The guerrillas must be ready to unite their efforts with those of other revolutionary groups, even though the latter may use different tactics.

The rebels must take into account the characteristics of

the Peruvian peasantry. One is respect and obedience to communal authorities. The governor, representative, and mayor of the community represent the will of all its members and their decisions are obeyed without any discussion. What effect does this have on the guerrillas? The members of the communities react collectively rather than individually, and the opinion of their authorities will determine to a great degree their attitude toward the revolutionaries. The guerrillas are not working with a simple mass but with an organism, a unity possessing its own power structure which must be respected if the outsiders are not to lose the people's trust or even come to be disliked by them. This will also allow the guerrillas, at certain times, to make use of a powerful collective force.

In 1965 the guerrillas were not able to make their methods one with those of the peasantry. The peasants and the guerrillas took separate paths because the guerrillas did not link themselves in time with the social upsurge that had been taking place in the countryside since 1965.

Summing up, we can say that the guerrillas must act and work not only for the distant objectives of the revolution, but also for the immediate ones of the peasants, and not only *for* the peasants, but *with* them.

Base and Leadership

The delay in seeing all the factors that were operating against the guerrillas and taking steps in time to correct them was due to the nature of many of the leading cadres.

It is true that the leaders were characterized by great honesty and revolutionary conviction, proven by the fact that they died fighting for their ideals. Nevertheless, they possessed too many other qualities and lacked too many to be able to deal adequately with the circumstances which arose.

We have already mentioned that the qualities of a party leader are not sufficient for the leader of an armed group. Physical adeptness, knowledge of the terrain, and skill in combat are all needed, and they are qualities that not all the leaders possessed in 1965. The decision to fight is not enough to make a man a guerrilla. Many comrades, who could have been excellent cadres in the urban resistance or in a liaison network, went to the countryside inspired by heroic determination but did not have the necessary stamina in spite of their iron wills. Without wanting to, they became a burden for their other, more physically fit, comrades and for the guerrilla unit as a whole. A more objective and pragmatic selection of the personnel would have secured better combat teams.

Meanwhile, hidden in the rank and file of the guerrillas and in the peasant masses were the cadres that a more careful process of selection would have raised to the positions of command that they would surely have earned in battle. But that process, which by its nature is long and slow, did not occur because the struggle was brief and violent.

Survival and Expansion

It is possible, as has been demonstrated in several countries in Latin America, for militarily able cadres who are politically convinced of the correctness of their struggle to survive despite violent and repeated attacks by armies experienced in counter-guerrilla warfare. The guerrilla unit can survive even without adequate "subjective" conditions in the population among which it is operating.

The problem lies in whether the unit can develop to the point at which it really endangers the system and the stability of the regime as a whole. Given all of the social characteristics that we have noted repeatedly—disconnection, imbalances, isolation—it is possible for a guerrilla

band to survive for many years without having any effect on the system's vital points.

Guerrilla warfare is not dangerous for the ruling classes so long as it does not exacerbate other social contradictions, giving rise to forms of action that will work in conjunction with it.

In order to do this it is necessary to break with rigid systems of thought and action. Clinging to a single plan of action is always dangerous because it leads revolutionaries to a struggle that is isolated and one dimensional, exclusive and sectarian, closing off any possibilities of growth for the guerrilla unit.

We ought to add that dogmatism is more characteristic of those who carry out propaganda in favor of armed struggle than of those who engage in it.

Arms and Politics

Does armed struggle exclude politics? The answer has always been no, that there can be no contradiction between the two because, under the conditions that prevail in our countries, armed struggle is essentially a political struggle.

Our guerrillas must be able politicians at the same time that they are efficient soldiers, but they must not be the only politicians. While the armed struggle is developing in certain zones in the country, the political struggle must be carried throughout the nation in the most diversified forms.

What defines revolutionary conduct and distinguishes it from opportunism are its objectives and the consistent fashion in which they are pursued, and the subordination of all tactics to the only strategic objective which a person who calls himself a revolutionary can have: the seizure of power. When an organization or a group of revolutionaries sets the seizure of power as its objective and does not

lose sight of that goal, all forms of action are possible and none should be rejected.

Strikes, passive resistance, public demonstrations, and mass mobilizations all allow guerrilla actions to be felt in the rest of the country and serve to overcome the guerrillas' isolation. Armed struggle in the countryside ought not necessarily to be reflected in terrorist activities in the cities except when it is absolutely necessary, politically clear, explainable to the people, and when it corresponds to the level the masses have achieved in their own action.

The situation in the countryside is similar. If the guerrillas resign themselves only to carrying out armed actions, their position will be more difficult than if they combine them with organizing the peasants and encouraging them to wage mass struggle for clear and concrete objectives.

We should not forget that all the peasant actions recorded in the history of our country have been collective in nature and carried out in the peasants' own name with leaders who have emerged from those same oppressed masses. The guerrilla unit can offer a revolutionary perspective to the peasant struggle through its operations, but it cannot replace that struggle. The guerrilla unit is only part of the whole; it is not the totality of the struggle.

By its mobile nature, the guerrilla band is everywhere and nowhere. When it is not present, the masses must defend themselves by their own means against enemy repression by organizing around the most outstanding leaders of the peasant resistance.

When the guerrillas were liquidated in 1965, the people were left defenseless, completely at the mercy of the army. This was the logical outcome of only organizing the peasants around the guerrilla band, in order to provide it with food and men, without considering the possibility of such a repression. The people were not prepared

for this contingency because the guerrilla unit had not had time to prepare them nor had it even thought about the matter. In any case, it would not have been able to ready the people since it was still regarded as an alien body. The resistance must be organized by men who have emerged from the people themselves, the natives of that zone, accustomed to the kind of fight that did not take place here after the defeat of the guerrillas.

Mountains and Forests

It is essential to note that the geography of our country has forced the peasant population to concentrate itself in valleys and high zones, precisely where it is difficult and dangerous to carry on a guerrilla war of the kind known until now.

When we analyze the 1965 experience we see clearly how all of the guerrilla fronts were forced to withdraw into the forest zones of eastern Peru. They are the securest areas from the military point of view, but not from the political, because they have only a minimal population. The most densely populated zones are in the mountains and not the forest.

This is a problem which has still not been solved and which will appear again in future guerrilla actions. It will be overcome only when the guerrillas find ways of operating in the mountains and on the high, open plateaus. This is possible. Our country has a great guerrilla tradition, and the *montoneros* always operated in the Andes.

In short, the rebels will either have to learn how to make war in the mountains or they will have to stay in the forest. In the latter case, they will have to find effective means of influencing the peasantry of the mountains. For a long time those techniques will be political and propagandistic.

Does this mean that a party will have to be formed? At

this time it should be, as long as it assures a sufficiently important role to the peasants in the leadership of the struggle, and provided that it does not give birth to a false leadership which becomes an obstacle to the free expression of the masses, and that it favors the growth of new revolutionary cadres arising from the people themselves. Only this way can the guerrilla band lay the foundations for a party through revolutionary action against the enemy.

Why 1965?

Was 1965 the appropriate year to initiate an insurrectional process in our country? Many critics of guerrilla warfare have asked this question, only to respond immediately that it wasn't.

It must be recognized that, to the broad masses in our country the Belaúnde government still appeared an instrument of reform, thus creating illusions and hope. The people had not assimilated the experience of the massacres except in the zones that were directly affected, and the administrative corruption and immorality of the government officials had not been revealed in all their reality before the eyes of the urban population. Thus, when the guerrillas burst onto the national scene shaking the foundations of the reactionary regime, the people were not able to grasp their exact meaning and justification.

We have said that we cannot wait for the proper subjective conditions before initiating the revolution. That is true, but we failed insofar as we did not wait for the guerrillas to have sufficiently obvious justification for beginning their operations, a justification that we needed in order to be able to give the masses the first objective explanations of our position. Despite the fact that the entire people cannot now and will not be able in the near future to

understand the necessity of profoundly revolutionizing the system and replacing it with another, the reasons for beginning the rebellion must nevertheless be easily comprehensible.

Ideologically, our attitude was based on an underestimation of the cities. We thought that if guerrilla warfare began in the midst of the peasant population there was no reason to find a justification for it in terms of the bourgeois politics which are foreign, distant, and unknown to the peasantry.

That is completely true as far as the peasantry is concerned, but not in regard to the country as a whole. Thus we closed the road to successful revolutionary agitation among the urban masses. The workers and the poor and middle sectors of the cities were becoming increasingly disillusioned with bourgeois politics, but this was not sufficient to impel them to support actively armed rebellion against the system. Under these conditions, the attitude of the urban population was limited to vague sympathy on the part of some, enthusiasm in small—mainly student—sectors, and indifference on the part of the majority.

There was a powerful and decisive subjective reason for the early initiation of the armed struggle. Our groups were oriented toward action and found in it their only reason for existence. They had to choose very quickly between immediate action and long, gradual development as a party with an uncertain revolutionary future.

This was clearest in the ELN. Every revolutionary body has its own laws of growth and operation which it must fulfill or fall apart. If our organizations, and particularly the ELN, had not risen in arms within a brief period of time, they would have entered a fatal period of disintegration. Through action they bolstered their *esprit de corps* and strengthened themselves; in long passivity, engaged in interminable preparatory work, they ran the risk of collapsing as their members became discouraged.

In view of the process which followed Belaúnde's victory at the polls and determined his fall at the hands of the same people whom he had served so obsequiously, we can say that in later years there will be many opportunities for initiating an insurrectionary action which would have been fully justified in the eyes of the people.

But in 1965 we took up arms guided only by our own sense of readiness.

Lastly, neither organization knew the other's plans due to the reserve which existed between us. When the MIR announced that it was initiating guerrilla warfare at the beginning of 1965, the ELN was not, objectively, ready to do the same, but it had to move up the date of departure for its guerrillas from fear that a general repression would take its militants out of action.

It is possible that something similar occurred on the MIR fronts, this time through a lack of coordination—that, for example, the ambush at Yahuarina in which the first shot was fired on June 9, 1965, caught Luis de la Puente by surprise in Cuzco, where he had not finished his preparations. And it is possible that it took the guerrilla unit on the northern front, which had only just begun to get ready, still more by surprise. The result was that the army faced groups with different degrees of experience, some of which were not fully prepared for combat.

8

Conclusions

We have been reproached from different points of view for not elaborating a coherent ideological framework and not offering the masses a structured program.

This is partially true. It should not be forgotten that our insurrectionary Left developed from established political parties, and that as a result much of what it has said in regard to ideology and program reflects the transition from old concepts to new ones; this is clear from its statements on the existence and behavior of social classes, the composition of the oligarchy and its relationship with imperialism, the objectives and stages of the revolution, etc.

It is also true that because of insufficient and interrupted theoretical work, the Peruvian Left as a whole has not developed an interpretation of Peruvian reality based on serious study. It has always approached that reality from the point of view of its own preconceived systems. In Peru it has already become a cliché that since the death of Mariátegui, Marxists have ceased to study our reality with precision and a scientific spirit.

We do not deny this. It is partially the result of our ideological heritage which still keeps us from seeing social changes clearly and leads us into a dogmatism which raises its head on every possible occasion.

But before fixing the program for each stage of the revolution with absolute precision, and at the same time making sure that it works theoretically, practically, and realistically,

the Marxist Left ought to decide upon its general and final objectives with complete clarity.

What is the ultimate goal? In our countries it cannot be anything but socialism. "Either socialist revolution or the caricature of a revolution," Che said once. Every day the masses understand more clearly that "revolution" is a synonym for "socialism." We only deceive ourselves by talking about transitional forms that, as far as the enemy is concerned, are just euphemisms to cover up our true ends.

What kind of socialism do we want? The kind that assures the oppressed masses the effective exercise of power, participation in all the affairs of state, and broad control over the decisions affecting their own lives. The dictatorship of the proletariat can only be exercised through that unrestricted participation by the majority of the people which is the ultimate and decisive guarantee of the strength of the revolutionary regime.

In Peru, only an authentic socialism can assure national integration based on the community of interest of the entire people. Our revolution should seek, from the very beginning, political forms that will enable it to retain the support of the masses and avoid bureaucratic rigidity.

We know that this will not be easy in a country which, like ours, has always lived under the worst forms of domination, but we are confident that the revolutionary process, if it is guided by leaders who have sprung from the people and who are conscious of the problems of contemporary socialism, will achieve an effective and real socialism.

Meanwhile, we repeat that the peoples' armed struggle—complex, multiple, rich, and varied—is the only road left for liberating Latin America. The early failures suffered in Peru do not prove that it is futile to fight the oppressor. They simply show that we must correct our ideas, examine reality better, link ourselves to the people, train our fighters

more adequately, and eliminate sectarianism and divisions within the revolutionary camp.

To achieve all of this, we must be objective and analytical in order to overcome our errors at the same time that we maintain our determination to continue the road we have undertaken with firmness and zeal.

In these pages we have tried to make a calm analysis of past events, and to invite others to engage in new and promising experiences.

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Appendices

APPENDIX I Estimated Distribution and Density of the Peruvian Population by Regions

Region	Population ¹		Surface		Density
	Inhabitants	%	In thousand km ²	%	Inhab. per km ²
Coast	3,433,801	33.0	141	11.0	24.4
Mountains	5,853,714	56.1	340	26.4	17.2
Forest	1,132,842	10.9	804	62.6	1.4
<i>Total</i>	10,420,357	100.0	1,285	100.0	8.1

Source: Estimates of the Inter-American Committee on Agricultural Development (1966) based on the results Sixth National Peruvian Population Census (1961), National Planning Institute, National Bureau of Statistics and Censuses, March 1964.

¹ Including the population omitted by the census, which is estimated at 412,781 persons, and the forest population estimated at 100,830 persons.

APPENDIX II
Distribution of the Peruvian Urban
and Rural Population by Regions

Region	Total ¹	Composition		% of rural population in region
		Urban	Rural	
Coast	3,433,801	2,594,888	838,913	24.4
Mountains	5,853,714	1,789,931	4,063,783	69.4
Forest	1,132,842	313,359	819,483 ²	72.3
<i>Total</i>	10,420,357	4,698,178	5,722,179	54.9

Source: Estimates of the Inter-American Committee on Agricultural Development (1966) based on the Sixth National Population Census. National Bureau of Statistics and Censuses, March 1964.

¹ Includes the population which was omitted and the forest population.

² Includes the forest population, all of which is considered rural population.

APPENDIX III
Peru: Use of the Land

Classification	Surface		
	Total (in thousands of hectares)	In % of total area	In % of area in farms
<i>Total area</i>	128.5	100.0	—
Area in farms	18.6	14.5	100.0
Under cultivation	2.5	2.0	13.7
Natural pastureland	9.1	7.1	49.1
Forests and hills	2.2	1.8	12.3
Arable but not cultivated	1.3	1.0	7.2
Unproductive land	3.2	2.6	17.7

Source: Prepared by the Inter-American Committee on Agricultural Development (1966) based on information provided by the Peruvian Agricultural and Cattle Raising Census, July 2, 1961. Preliminary report, November 1963. National Planning Institute, Lima.

Note: Figures may not add up exactly due to rounding off.

APPENDIX IV
Agricultural and Cattle Raising Units
with Lands Registered in Peru
(by size and type of holding)

<i>Hectares</i>	<i>Independent units cultivated individually</i>			
	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Thousands of hectares</i>	<i>%</i>
Less than 1	277,895	34.4	121	0.7
From 1 to 5	395,061	48.9	878	5.4
From 5 to 20	101,115	12.5	827	5.0
From 20 to 100	23,374	2.9	926	5.6
From 100 to 500	7,374	0.9	1,460	8.9
From 500 to 1,000	1,415	0.2	963	5.9
From 1,000 to 2,500	1,020	0.1	1,507	9.2
More than 2,500	965	0.1	9,750	59.3
<i>Total</i>	808,219	100.0	16,432	100.0

Source: Inter-American Committee on Agricultural Development (1966), using information provided by the National Planning Institute of Peru. Data sampling, 1963.

Note: Figures may not add up exactly due to rounding off.

<i>Units individually cultivated by comuneros¹</i>				<i>Units cultivated collectively²</i>			
<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Thousands of hectares</i>		<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Thousands of hectares</i>	
		<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>			<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>
13,025	30.3	7	1.3	—	—	—	—
22,296	51.9	49	8.7	—	—	—	—
5,973	13.9	51	9.0	111	13.7	1	0.1
957	2.2	40	7.0	297	36.7	14	0.9
544	1.3	122	21.5	158	19.6	43	2.7
118	0.3	67	11.7	52	6.4	35	2.2
18	0.04	24	4.3	78	9.7	127	7.9
14	0.03	208	36.6	112	13.9	1,384	86.2
42,945	100.0	568	100.0	808	100.0	1,604	100.0

¹ *Comuneros:* those who individually cultivate land assigned to them by the community to which they belong. The units of an area in excess of reasonable individual needs (approximately twenty hectares or more) are included in this table without that meaning that they are cultivated by only one *comunero*. There are a total of 1,519 recognized Indian communities, and an estimated 3,000 unrecognized communities.

² Land reserved by the community for common use (generally pastureland) or for emergency use.

APPENDIX V
Agricultural and Cattle Raising Units
with Land Registered in Peru¹
(totals)

Hectares	Number	%	Thousands of hectares	%
Less than 1	290,900	34.2	128	0.6
From 1 to 5	417,357	49.0	927	4.9
From 5 to 20	107,199	12.6	879	4.7
From 20 to 100	24,628	2.9	980	5.2
From 100 to 500	8,081	0.9	1,625	8.7
From 500 to 1,000	1,585	0.2	1,065	6.2
From 1,000 to 2,500	1,116	0.1	1,659	8.8
More than 2,500	1,091	0.1	11,342	60.9
<i>Total</i>	851,957	100.0	18,605	100.0

Source: Inter-American Committee on Agricultural Development (1966) using information provided by the National Planning Institute of Peru. Data by sampling, 1963.

¹ U.S. land investments form a fundamental part of large landholdings in Peru. By usurpation or legal maneuvers, these interests have landholdings that are often as large as entire provinces, as in the case of the Cerro de Pasco Copper Corporation which has 320,000 hectares of grazing land and a total of 500,000 hectares of land, most of which is unproductive. (Other enterprises, such as W. R. Grace and Company, the Gildemeister group, and Le Tourneau, Inc., own a total of 1.5 million hectares.) Foreign investment is also linked, under different names, to foreign exploitation of our national wealth. For example, Cerro de Pasco controls the metallurgical industry and 60 percent of power production through the Light and Power Company. W. R. Grace and Company, a large landholding firm, operates sugar mills and controls textile industries, the largest national paint factory, and the Pan American Grace Air Line (Panagra). There is a close relationship, as usually occurs in the case of U.S. investors, between U.S. political circles and these enterprises. For example, W. I. Monell, the president of Grace, was Secretary of Defense from 1949 to 1957, and the directors of several U.S. firms in Peru are on the Board of Directors of the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York.

APPENDIX VI
Distribution of Rural Families in Peru
According to the Socioeconomic Status
of the Head of the Family

	Number	%
<i>Total rural families</i>	1,123,462 ¹	100.0
A. Operators of large multi-family farms	10,462	0.9
1. Owners	8,380	0.7
2. Tenants ²	1,632	0.2
3. Others	450	—
B. Operations of medium-sized multi-family farms	23,250	2.1
1. Owners	18,995	1.7
2. Tenants ²	3,162	0.3
3. Others	1,093	0.1
C. Administrators and supervisors of multi-family farms	7,034	0.6
D. Operators of family farms	87,156	7.8
1. Owners	68,662	6.1
2. Tenants ²	15,542	1.4
3. Others	2,952	0.3
E. Operators of sub-family farms	648,637	57.7
1. Owners	535,018	47.6
2. Tenants ²	87,012	7.7
3. Others	26,607	2.4
F. Operators of family or sub-family farms with a communal landowning systems	46,959	4.2
G. Agricultural workers with precarious landownership and landless workers	299,964	26.7

1. Sharecroppers ³	34,728	3.1
2. Overseers and specialized agricultural workers	26,500	2.4
3. Permanent agricultural workers	—	—
4. Seasonal agricultural workers ⁴	—	—
5. Unskilled agricultural workers	238,736	21.2

Source: Estimates of the Inter-American Committee on Agricultural Development (1966) based on the 1961 Peruvian Agricultural and Cattle Raising Census, the principal results of which were obtained by sampling in November 1963; and the Sixth Peruvian National Population Census, 1961. The figures for the Indian communities are doubtful.

Note: Figures may not add up exactly due to rounding off.

¹ Includes the population omitted and excludes the forest population.

² Includes *yanaconas*.

³ Includes *aparceros*.

⁴ Includes *colonos*.

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