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pect — for foquismo, who is in charge of pushing the masses to the side of the revolution, is, more than the revolutionaries, the counterrevolution itself.

The function of the focus is to provoke, provoke, with its sustained activity, a process of political reaction that, suppressing all other expectations and possibilities, corners and pushes the masses towards the path, towards the revolutionary exit. As this happens, the mass support for the focus will grow, which will translate into an expansion of the military action of the focus itself. In other words, the focus that he tries to generate — it is clear in the MLN and that allows him to be characterized as a foquista — is a dialectic of armed action-repression. Each operation produces a repressive response. It is all about being in a position to subsist in order to carry out a counter-response, an operation that is greater — or different — from the previous one. Why greater or different? Because in addition to provoking a response, Every operation tends to have a psychological impact on public opinion. This shocking effect is vital since, in the absence of a presence in the masses, it is what it can mean and give political relevance to the focus. The frequent demonstration of the bravery, audacity and effectiveness of the guerrillas is the only thing capable of keeping on the table the existence and validity of a political practice that does not seek any other way of externalizing itself. Persistence and operational dimension, on the other hand, create the prospect of victory, of success capable of producing the necessary recruitment to broaden the focus. The latter, locked in a military-only practice, lives according to the successes that he achieves in the military field. it is what can mean and give political relevance to the focus. The frequent demonstration of the bravery, audacity and effectiveness of the guerrillas is the only thing capable of keeping on the table the existence and validity of a political practice that does not seek any other way of externalizing itself. Persistence and operational dimension, on the other hand, create the prospect of victory, of success capable of producing the neces-

class consciousness to be acquired, as in Cuba, later, when the revolution is in power. Because it intends to come to power not through a process that involves the prior maturation of class consciousness, revolutionary, but through a detour, Let's say, it skips this stage.

Focus does not conceive of the revolution as a process of struggles, where the masses, through the experience of their participation in these struggles, fertilized by the political-ideological action of the revolutionary party that guides them, develop their revolutionary class consciousness, until revolutionary destruction of bourgeois power. Foquismo conceives of the revolution as a process of military struggles, parallel to the mass struggle, with which it has little or nothing to do. Process through which an armed minority generates, by operating, junctures that end up cornering the masses independently of their will, until they are forced to accept a revolutionary outcome that would put that armed minority in power.

Armed practice tends to generate political conjunctures that involve the closing of all doors, the closing of all avenues for action by the masses other than the door, the path of armed practice itself. The revolution is not conceived as the culmination, the crowning of a process through which, with their struggle, the masses are making their way as they develop and mature their revolutionary consciousness. For the foquismo, the revolution is a denouement, practically independent of the own political will of the masses, with which it is not necessary to confront, but to which it is not essential to win. The revolutionary outcome can then ensue without previously modifying, in depth, the political and ideological consciousness of the masses. The only thing that would be required is not to face these, not arouse their hostility. It will be enough to get their more or less superficial sympathy, or at least their neutrality. At no time will your active participation be required from the beginning of the process. This is so because — and it is a fundamental as-

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consciousness. Only the worker who understood that his class has historical interests antagonistic with those of the bourgeois class, only the worker, we say, who has already become class conscious, is able to perceive the economic struggle for what it is: as a level — the primary — of the class struggle. Otherwise, if the worker does not acquire class consciousness — which, according to what has been said, is political, ideological consciousness, which therefore does not arise spontaneously — he will be able to wage a thousand strikes for wages, large and still combative strikes — as there are so many times in USA — without ceasing to remain prisoners of bourgeois ideology. He will carry out these strikes — and that is the most common now — with a conscience similar to that of his employer: with the conscience of demanding a price increase for the merchandise he sells. For that matter, an increase in the price of your workforce, an increase in your salary. And not a change in the social system that entails the disappearance of property and therefore the disappearance of wages, the only way for the worker to stop being exploited. He will claim less exploitation but not that the exploitation disappears. Because to demand that exploitation disappear, you have to propose another type of society — socialism — and understand its status as exploited. Understand why and how he and others are exploited. And that already implies class consciousness.

The revolutionaries — rightly or wrongly — have always applied themselves to this, to producing that qualitative leap from the economist, trade union, “trade union” consciousness, and to the class consciousness, to the political consciousness. A leap that implies breaking with the bourgeois ideological tendency, which is dominant because it is the ideology of the ruling class, and accepting the revolutionary and socialist ideology that expresses the historical interests of the working class, which is, in the capitalist mode of production, the dominated class. Foquism as a conception aims to skip that stage. He wants

the point of acting in an organized manner at the union level? In short, focusism denies the need for a mass line, for work with and in the masses. Instead, it seeks to capture the sympathies of the masses, their adherence, decisively through their military actions, of the psychological impact that they produce. This is a consequence of their ignorance of the party's function: if there is no public political practice, what would be the point of acting in an organized manner at the union level? In short, focusism denies the need for a mass line, for work with and in the masses. Instead, it seeks to capture the sympathies of the masses, their adherence, decisively through their military actions, of the psychological impact that they produce. This is a consequence of their ignorance of the party's function: if there is no public political practice, what would be the point of acting in an organized manner at the union level? In short, focusism denies the need for a mass line, for work with and in the masses. Instead, it seeks to capture the sympathies of the masses, their adherence, decisively through their military actions, of the psychological impact that they produce.

Foquism implies, in this sense, a total alteration of the terms in which political action has always been conceived. It has aimed at a gradual and patient conquest of the consciousness of the masses. The gradual processing of the development of class consciousness from the elementary level of economic struggle. To do this, to avoid stagnation at that level, for the development of class consciousness to take place, is that the economic struggle should be under the political leadership of the revolutionary party. This "mattered" revolutionary ideology, the consciousness of the political objectives of the class, the consciousness, the knowledge of the own historical interests, of the class, in the working class unable to rise spontaneously to its understanding, starting only from experience at the level economic of the class struggle. Because, even, the perception of economic struggle itself as a primary level of class struggle, requires the prior acquisition of class

## Part 1

# I

Important things have happened in recent months. Facts that introduce variations large enough to justify rethinking tactical issues, which require further refinement within the new framework created by those events. **Without a doubt, the most important thing has been the repressive offensive and its effects, which are already well visible.** It seems to be a priority, before entering into any consideration, to make a balance, necessarily synthetic, of those effects of the repressive campaign, on the National Liberation Movement (MLN), its main objective.

Schematically the results obtained by the repression can be expressed thus:

1. Very important losses were caused, in cash to the MLN
2. They managed to seriously dismantle their infrastructure (premises, prongs, services, etc.).
3. Much of the armament and park fell into the hands of the repression.
4. Much of the cadres predictably best trained to support the operation of the MLN have been killed or detained

This is what emerges from the available information and these are the facts on which the reactionary propaganda insists.

But, in addition, two political results can be deduced:

# VIII

It is the practically exclusive importance given by the MLN to armed operations that defines its foquista character. It is not, as we have already said, that a Blanquista or “putchista” conception has been applied. It is not that they wanted to create a secret organization of conspirators that one day, by means of a blow of the hand, would take power. Foquismo — and the MLN in this case — do not totally and radically deny the role of the masses in the process. The characteristics of this role attributed to the masses, the function attributed to them, is precisely what characterizes foquism.

The foquista conception interests the masses almost exclusively as support and cover for specifically military action. He is not interested in the participation of the masses starring in the revolutionary process. He underestimates and even denies the need and the possibility of this happening. It therefore denies the need for political work among the masses, for a line of work for the masses. Of jobs for the masses to do and for them to become politicized by developing their class consciousness. It denies the need to organize and lead the struggle at the different levels (economic, political, ideological) in which the class struggle takes place. It does not consider an open, public policy aimed at the masses necessary. He therefore denies the need for a political organization, for a party. He underestimates the political importance and the possibility of developing a revolutionary line at the level of economic struggle, the need to intervene, directing, from the party, with its own line, union activity. This is a consequence of their ignorance of the party’s function: if there is no public political practice, what would be

basis of carrying out armed acts. Made for a long time with little or nothing explained in its sense, merely exhibited in its concise but shocking reality. That they gravitated for their own and surprising existence, in an environment so alien to the validity of armed events. These reached such a dimension that the advertising mechanisms of the system for a long time not only could not hide them, but even amplified them in advertising. Through this peculiar version of propaganda for the fact, the MLN aroused popular sympathy. Time would show that the way in which he obtained these sympathies, and the methods to which he set himself to obtain them, had clear limitations and even included serious risks. The mechanisms of recruitment of a revolutionary organization cannot be confined to the sustained production of shocking armed events. In doing so, all political practice, all revolutionary dynamics, are subordinated to the possibility of operating in a sustained manner. And if sustained operation does not generate a rapid outcome, if you have to operate sustainably for a long time and the dynamics, development, advancement, depends on the effectiveness, the psychological impact of the operations, you will be forced to vary the type of operations. If the situation continues, its dimension will have to be increased, the operational level will have to be raised. If the possibilities of increasing the political influence of an organization are decisively based on its ability to generate a linear and upward dynamic of armed operations, sooner or later it falls into the brink of a too rigid strategy, and therefore exposed to serious risks.

1. The potential that the MLN had developed has been unequivocally revealed, making clear an example of what can be done in this area.
2. It has been shown how a really important armed apparatus can be dismantled, dismantled and reduced, in relative terms, to a much lower level of operation, in a short time, if the criteria that guide its action are not adequate.

In those results obtained by the repression, the reactionary propaganda tries to found political conclusions. “The armed struggle is not viable in Uruguay and violence — like crime — does not pay,” say its spokesmen. “The armed struggle not only does not lead to power, it is counterproductive, it compromises the work of the masses and leaves the ‘militants who carry it out’ stuck”; the reformers chant.

The selectivity of the repression that shakes and strikes, occasionally reformism, but ultimately “forgives” tends to:

1. Reward, save the punishment, those who move politically within the guidelines provided by the system.
2. Leave a way out, a legalized and controllable escape, to social tensions. By selectively beating the revolutionaries, reformism benefits politically. It is in this way, the repression seems to indicate, that the class struggle must be processed.

The ruling classes want to impose that everyone play their game. An invented game, planned by them. A game in which they cannot lose. That well-known game: legal parties, controlled propaganda, periodic elections... and start again. In that game they have a card that “kills” all the others. It is repression. Politically speaking, the dictatorship. **Convincing everyone that this is so, that it is inevitably so, that their game is**

**natural, that it will always be so, is the political task of repression.**

Getting all revolutionaries to ask themselves, "If they did this so quickly with an organization like the MLN, what wouldn't they do with others?" Facilitate reformers and claudicans of all kinds with the alleged confirmation of their counterrevolutionary thesis: "violence does not pay," "the adventurers." To suggest to the hesitant the path of "good and of the law." The search, within the capitalist system, for the way to make it less bad... saving the system as such. **All that and much more is the «lesson» they want to make learn.** Many doubt. At the level of public opinion, it is almost inevitable that the great ebb of disappointment will arise in the face of the alleged failure of the armed route, of which many expected a more or less close revolutionary outcome. Many are afraid and fear paralyzes them. Many will be "burned" by negative experience.

All this happens every time the revolution suffers defeat. **And what will appear to be the dismantling of the MLN apparatus is, let's say it very clearly and thinking the words through, a serious defeat for the Uruguayan revolution. It is an important lost battle. It is not, cannot be and will not be the end of the war. It is not, of course, not the end of the class struggle. It exists and will exist, in different forms, with different levels at each moment, at each stage, until the system collapses.** It will be so because that struggle is born from the capitalist system itself, from its own exploitative and oppressive essence. It is a product of its organization and operation. As long as that system exists, there will inevitably be class struggle.

**Today's defeat is not the end of the armed struggle either. This exists and will exist as a level of the class struggle as long as the economic-social and political process of our country continues to occur within the current terms.** Because that level of armed struggle arises as a necessity raised by the characteristics of the process of economic-social and po-

vent the contradictions in your system from finding a true and definitive solution.

Why? Because that solution implies socialism. Because that solution is outside the capitalist system, outside the system in which its domination governs. That is why the bourgeoisie seeks to change at the political and ideological level to try to avoid change at the economic-social level. And the political and ideological change, which takes the form of a political-ideological crisis, is regressive. It seeks a return to political and ideological forms that have already been surpassed by the previous distorted capitalist development itself.

On the other hand, the regressive process, in itself, is not without contradictions. It is not the more or less linear fluidity with which the reactionaries used to imagine it. The process of deterioration is reflected and has a particular impact on the different classes and class fractions and even on the different sectors of the bourgeois state apparatus. But considering these aspects would excessively separate us from the central theme.

The fact is that the process of deterioration (for which a solution within the framework of dependent capitalism is still not in sight) imposes the need for a monopoly on violence by the repressive state apparatus. It requires trying to restore the dominance of the reactionary ideology of the ruling classes in the ideological state apparatuses.

In the context of the crisis of capitalism dependent on our country, violence from below, violence out of control, anti-capitalist, is already intolerable for the system.

Valuing the scope of armed action, organizing and developing it, definitively demonstrating its viability in Uruguay, forcing to unmask the ideological myths of liberalism, contributing to uncovering many of the hidden springs of the royal class dictatorship, are historical merits of the MLN, whatever its final destination as a movement.

How did the MLN achieve those clearly relevant results? It can be said that he achieved them almost exclusively on the



the possibility of fracturing it, of challenging it. Demonstrating the possibility of opposing it frontally and lasting long, on the fringes and against bourgeois law, armed practice becomes a powerful element of disintegration of the system, both politically and ideologically.

Capitalism is, today more than ever, in need of unanimous acceptance of its rules of the game. Tendency in crisis in all its aspects, it is generating an increasingly rigid and closed system of domination. It is his way of defending himself, of trying to endure. As the contradictions inherent in the system deepen, it must apply an increasingly coercive, more repressive policy at all levels. As the capitalist state is the place where all contradictions are reflected and condensed, it is the bourgeois state apparatus that assumes the leading role in this increasingly tense effort to coercively stop the outcome of these contradictions, their solution.

Uruguayan social formation is an exemplary case of this. From a process of economic deterioration, whose roots are in the dependent capitalist structure of our country, gradual deterioration occurs at the political and ideological level. The forms, the traditional institutions at both levels, are no longer functional to guarantee the dominance of the bourgeoisie in the framework of the process of deterioration ultimately generated at the economic level. The ruling classes cannot resolve the contradictions that the functioning of dependent capitalism generates. Solving them would imply their death as ruling classes. The contradictions that slow down and push back development at the economic level can be resolved within the framework of a socialist organization, but this would imply a profound social change: a social revolution.

The ruling classes cannot accept it and since — in our social formation and until today — they have not found a way out, a model, a capitalist project that allows them to break free, to get out of the process of deterioration, their only visible perspective is to repress. In other words, trying to coercively pre-

litical deterioration that the ruling classes have not found and will not find a way out of. It is this impasse without exit that raises the need for a level of armed struggle, and as long as the process of deterioration continues, conditions for armed activity will continue to exist. There will always be organizations that take on the task for which the conditions are in place.

**In short, the armed struggle will not end, because there are organizations in a position to continue it. And it will continue.**

What should not last is the misconception that has prevailed here, until now, in this matter. What is in crisis — let us confidently define it — is the foquista conception. **The defeat that the Uruguayan revolution is suffering under this orientation is for us, revolutionaries, also our defeat.**

The path of revolution does not run in a flowery meadow. It is difficult, winding and paved with difficulties. Through it one advances and in it one learns and even falls. How often? How long? There is no crystal ball or wizard in these things that can predict the future. Here, you also make your way while walking. The march is long, we know that. **The only decisive thing is the will to keep going. Not to burn us like bonzes, for the sake of blind faith. But because the conditions in which the process unfolds make it essential and possible.** We will only abandon the path of armed action if a very important change in that process indicates that it is counterproductive for revolutionary purposes. Nothing to indicate that change has happened. Unlike. **The deterioration process is clearer and more serious than ever. Therefore, nothing indicates that we have to change the strategy, and in that strategy, the armed struggle occupies a fundamental place.**

Up until today, armed activity was oriented predominantly through the foquista conception. With this conception we disagreed from the beginning, we saw and pointed out their weaknesses, we did everything possible so that they were overcome,

we oriented our practice according to another line. Against all appearances, over our own insufficiencies, over our own mistakes, time, facts, have given us reason. We cannot be happy when we check it. In the face of so many murdered, bestially tortured, imprisoned MLN comrades, in the face of all that wonderful construction built over the years by the efforts of so many who gambled for the revolution and which today seems to be falling apart, we cannot feel satisfaction at the fact that it is punctually carried out. what we envisioned years ago. **Those dead are our dead, those tortured are our tortured. As ours as the companions of the Organization who today, who right now, are enduring the most savage torture, are playing their lives defending the principles, life and line of our Organization.**

So far from us, all sufficiency. Much further, obviously, the rogue attitude of the reformists, opportunists and cowards, who now ostentatiously spit out the counter-revolutionary hatred they hypocritically hid, when things were going better. The road is long, winding, paved with difficulties. It is almost impossible not to stumble, not even fall. Especially in the complex conditions, so particular to Venezuela. But from stumbling and falling you have to learn. Yes, the march is long and difficult. **That is why it would be unforgivable to trip twice on the same stone.** In order not to do it, to learn, it is necessary to analyze as objectively as possible what has happened in these hard months, and based on the conclusions of that analysis, the technique will have to be refined, its terms must be foreseen in more detail.

## VII

We said that, from the beginning, the conception of activity for the masses of the foquismo suffered from a contradiction. Contradiction never adequately resolved despite the different variations and inflections that the proquista line had in this matter. The contradiction was that while, on the one hand, organized activity in the masses was underestimated, based on a very pessimistic assessment of its possibilities, on the other hand, it was assumed, in the masses themselves, the political aptitude necessary to come to accept and sympathize with an armed activity conceived as parallel to popular struggles.

It consisted in considering, simultaneously, that the working class was “green” to accept a revolutionary mass line, but “mature” to accept an urban guerrilla military practice, parallel to the struggles of those same masses. This military practice would be parallel and not coincident or convergent with the workers’ struggles insofar as what was involved was the preparation of a clandestine armed apparatus capable of being able to dispute the power of the bourgeoisie. The entire mass policy of the MLN was subordinated to the achievement of this objective, it was put at the service of its achievement. The sympathies of the masses would be obtained through armed actions. In this way, a peculiar version of propaganda by the act (“sympathetic” armed events) supplemented, by periods, with forms of armed propaganda developed. There are positive and erroneous elements in this criterion.

Revolutionary violence can and does have, today and here, a positive scope, promoting class consciousness at the mass level. Actually violating the bourgeois “order,” demonstrating in fact

repeatedly invoked as proof of the need to create a guerrilla focus that would translate that combativeness at the political level as an alternative of power. This contradiction, the MLN hoped to overcome it through the ideological shock that constitutes the exemplary use of violence

## II

Like any revolutionary victory, the triumph of the Cuban Revolution had a stimulating effect in Latin America, helping to advance the process of struggle throughout the continent. **It demonstrated the viability of the armed struggle, evidenced the existence of conditions to start it.** He showed that even under certain precise and concrete conditions, victory could be obtained in a relatively short time. That was the Cuban experience. We do not want to expand here on the vast and varied repercussions that the Cuban Revolution had. From Cuba the revolutionaries learned many things. He also learned the counterrevolution.

Today we refer only to a conception of the armed struggle, which was presented as based on the Cuban experience. This conception known as “focus theory” or “focalism” systematized at the time by Régis Debray, especially in his work “Revolution in the Revolution?” It was intended to be a conceptualization of the Cuban experience. He tried to specify in some fairly precise strategic-tactical criteria, the lessons that, according to his supporters, could be drawn from the guerrilla war in Cuba. These strategic criteria were presented as generalizable, as applicable in most Latin American countries. Its influence was very great, motivating then, especially regarding its formulation by Debray, very intense controversies.

In our country there was also controversy in this regard, the influence of these conceptions was also strongly exerted. **Those conceptions were the ones that basically guided the MLN practice. Let's hurry to clarify the MLN line.** it was not, however, an orthodox, classical application of the fo-

cus criteria. Throughout its years of activity and even from its beginnings, this movement introduced variants, corrected or adapted the foquista concepts. The MLN strategic-tactical line has not been a mechanical transfer of the original and first focus line. These adaptations constitute the original, the own, the specific of the urban guerrilla experience (the Combat Tactical Units) that the MLN plays in Uruguay. **However, despite the great and very valuable creative effort applied to the adaptation of the foquismo to local conditions, this effort did not alter the basic foquista assumptions that inform the MLN practice.** This constitutes a clearly original and specific variant of the foquismo. That is why, given the great importance that the activity that this movement has in the process of the struggles in our country, it is useful before analyzing its performance, to carry out an evaluative balance of the criteria that constitute the focus of the armed struggle, such as they were formulated by their theorists, especially by Debray.

**Our Organization disagreed with focus since its emergence as a conception. We understand that the failures that the MLN is experiencing today, and with it the Uruguayan revolution, respond to the fact that the weaknesses of the focus approach were not overcome in a timely manner, by the MLN A whose efforts aimed at adapting the focus and not breaking with it.** This leads us, in the first place, to briefly expose the characteristics that we understand to be the most salient of the focus approach.

These are:

1. **The need to start the armed struggle as soon as possible, provided there are certain economic and social conditions that make it viable.** It was based on the fact that these conditions were given in almost all of the Latin American countries (Debray said that Uruguay and Chile were the exception, that in both countries

of the masses. In this aspect, his errors were of another type: They consisted of: 1<sup>st</sup>.) In the way in which he conceived obtaining this sympathy from the masses, in the tactic he set himself to try to obtain it. 2<sup>nd</sup>.) In the role assigned, within the process, to the masses whose sympathy was gradually acquiring. Both errors, of course, reflect the weaknesses of the foquista conception.

A just revolutionary political practice, in Uruguay today, must integrate armed action and mass action. But what is the central, the priority? What is the main aspect to which the other should be subordinated? The MLN underestimated the possibilities of a revolutionary political practice in the masses. Based on this, he underestimated the political activity organized in the unions and the public activity (legal or not) of political organizations. He denied the need to centralize political practice at all levels (union, public policy, clandestine political-military, theoretical-ideological) from an underground party. Paradoxically, he believed that it was possible to centralize the orientation of the masses from a military-only center, from the guerrillas, understood according to the foquista conception. He wanted to put a military head to the masses who did not recognize the degree of development necessary to make viable a revolutionary, ideological and political union line at that level, at the level of the masses. The social unrest, ultimately rooted in the economy, which he did not consider sufficient to make a revolutionary mass line viable, seemed to him yes, but enough to make it possible to support a military practice that, logically, supposes the existence of a level quite high in consciousness. The political-ideological backwardness of the working class, its only "economist" conscience, its "unionism," was invoked so as not to "burn" the few forces initially available by promoting revolutionary mass work there. But at the same time the protest consciousness, the level reached by economic struggles, the frequently demonstrated combativeness of them, was

struggle. Union action then seemed politically unprofitable, too limited or useless to some revolutionaries, impatient with the slowness with which the working class processes its rise from the level of economic struggle to the level of political struggle. They did not evaluate that this transit may be delayed further, it may not even occur if the economic struggle is led by reformism. They did not see that economic struggle, without ceasing to be, but under revolutionary leadership, is the primary foundation of the development of class consciousness, which is political consciousness, consciousness of historical class interests. But under reformist leadership, this maturation process can slow down, become distorted and freeze for long periods.

Even at the level of political struggle, the ideological backwardness of the dominated classes, their stubborn adherence to bourgeois ideology, electoralism, and bourgeois parties in the elections, operated in the same direction. What to do then?

When faced with this question, the armed struggle appeared to many revolutionaries as a shortcut that would shorten the process, shorten it by skipping stages. The disappointment about the possibilities of political development of the masses led to the adoption of the guerilla's foquista conception, contributed to suggesting as contradictory two aspects of the same political practice, which are only valid if they are dialectically united: armed action and mass action.

There is a precision here that we believe is fair and useful to do: underestimating the importance of a mass line, underestimating the possibilities and the vital political necessity of organized work in the masses, the MLN comrades did not deny, however, any role to the masses in the process. It is not fair, it seems to us, the accusation of "putschism," of "whiteness" that was thrown at them from reformism, previously in a low and sideways voice and now openly. The MLN tried not to be a conspiracy society that, with a surprise coup, would take power. The MLN sought, from the beginning, to arouse the sympathy

those conditions did not exist), as a consequence of their underdevelopment and backwardness.

2. **Political and even ideological conditions (called "subjective conditions") would develop as a consequence of the activity of the armed focus.** Hence, the existence or not of revolutionary political parties was considered as something secondary and surely not a priority. The sympathies aroused by the military activity of the focus had to be framed in organizations whose function was, almost exclusively, to contribute to the effort and military victory. More than parties, properly speaking, what was involved were organizations to support and sustain the military effort, with coverage tasks, logistical and propaganda support, recruitment, etc., focused on the development of the operational potential of the armed focus, and its increase. The development of the fight would be measured in terms of growth in operational capacity; success in terms of military success; and victory was military victory in war. The expectation and confidence in that victory, which would emerge from armed action was achievement and the essential requirement on the ideological plane.
3. **The war would be conceived in terms of guerrilla warfare, centered in the rural environment, under the protection of suitable geographical conditions (mountains, jungles, etc.) that made possible the concealment of the guerrillas and the feasible tactic of "hitting and disappearing »Always moving, characteristic of the rural guerrilla.** In its classic, original formulation, focalism denied the viability of the urban guerrilla. By definition "always in the presence of the enemy" always attainable by the latter, the urban guerrilla, it was said, was condemned to rapid annihilation.

lation. The armed and urban activity would only fulfill a complementary function of the rural guerrilla, who would be the protagonist of the confrontation, and who, through many small partial victories, would conquer the final victory, reducing to impotence the opposing army.

4. **The military activity of the outbreak would initiate a process where each action, each operation of the outbreak would motivate a general response, a response to repression.** To the extent that the guerrillas were operating with greater intensity, at higher levels, the repression would harden, it would become more general. To the extent that the harsh repression, becoming widespread, affected an ever-widening sector of the population, the greater the sympathies that the focus would attract and, therefore, the greater its possibilities for development. **In this ascending dialectic of action-repression, politico-social conditions increasingly favorable to military action would be generated, culminating in an ideal situation in which important sectors of the population, supporting the guerrilla, their armed vanguard, would impose the fall of the despotic government, only sustained by the privileged minority and the repressive apparatus, defeated in its efforts to militarily suppress the guerrillas.**

The generation of this dynamic — in short, the central approach of the foquismo — would emanate from the armed successes. These would generate the prospect of victory capable of attracting the masses within the framework of increasing political oppression. The guerrilla activity, the repressive response that it would inevitably produce, would close all the doors, all the ways that were not the way of the armed struggle, to the

This involved a particular understanding and a peculiar interpretation of these determining factors, as we will see.

Thus, armed action expresses the highest level of class struggle and in Uruguay, we say, it cannot express anything else. At least initially.

But what was and what is the level acquired by that class struggle here? At the economic level it has had a wide extension and a relative deepening, in recent times, in certain sectors. There is a trade union movement that is quantitatively important and capable of acting, sometimes, quite combatively for demands of a preferential wage type, although it also supports important political objectives, linked, above all, to the preservation of the autonomy of unions as class organs (struggles against union regulations or other attempts to institutionally integrate them into the state). But at the political and ideological level, the working class and all the working classes remain, to a high degree, prisoners of the influence of the ideological tendency of the ruling classes. They continue to conceive of political action in the terms proposed by bourgeois ideology. The Communist Party, as the most important force in the leadership of the labor movement, through the coherently reformist strategy and tactics that it has imposed on the class struggle, both economically and politically, only consolidates the predominance of the bourgeois ideological tendency. The Communist Party itself folds to it by “importing” it into the labor and popular movement and at the same time it sees itself as an increasingly prisoner of it.

The weight of bourgeois ideological predominance in the masses, reinforced by the workers’ reformism of the Communist Party, disconcerted in the eyes of some revolutionaries the viability of a revolutionary mass line. They identified the reformist modalities of action at the economic level of the class struggle with the economic struggle itself. This concealed from them the prospect of a revolutionary practice even at the economic level, the most elementary of the class

nant classes. It will represent the interests of the working class, of the working petty bourgeoisie, of the agricultural proletariat and also — at a stage at least — of the traditional urban petty bourgeoisie (owner of means of production) and of the poor and still middle petty bourgeoisie of the countryside (smallholders, small and still medium-sized owners and tenants, etc.). The working classes are beneficiaries of a socialist regime with which, of course, they have no objective contradictions. The petty-bourgeois sectors do not have to have antagonistic contradictions, in the immediate future, with the revolutionary process. Yes they have the ruling classes. The big landowners, the commercial fraction of the importing and exporting bourgeoisie, linked to imperialism, the industrial bourgeoisie associated or linked to imperialism, the imperialist monopolies, the financial fraction of the bourgeoisie, etc. Definitely, the entire bourgeoisie here, as in all of Latin America, is increasingly dependent and the imperialism on which it depends. All of them are and will be counterrevolutionaries.

The guerilla, the war in our country, therefore could not and cannot start being “patriotic” or “democratic.” Although it can become, in its development, “national” and eventually “democratic,” it is born a socialist and that will be the end, its dominant feature. Therefore, it will be confronted, from the bottom, by all the ruling classes. It has a character of class war even though it acquires, at an advanced stage, a character of national war, because if the process advances, the bourgeoisies of neighboring countries will intervene.

This armed struggle is the highest level of a stark and crude class struggle, which no possibility of alliances with “national” bourgeois sectors can, in essence, cloud even at the stage when it becomes a national war.

We enunciate all of this here, in a tone that, provisionally, may be schematic, because we only bring it up to locate, primarily, the conditions within which the focus practice moved.

masses, turning — necessarily — the people on the side of the revolution. In this way, a short, simple and direct path would be taken towards the “politicization of the masses,” their nucleation behind the armed guerrilla vanguard. From this point of view, the importance of all mass activity (union, propaganda, public policy) not aimed directly at favoring the war effort fell into underestimation. A mass activity involved distracting forces in aspects considered very secondary or even negative insofar as they could open up expectations and prospects that would eventually compete with the path of armed struggle. Furthermore, it was assumed that any organization, all public activity, would be quickly swept away by the repression once the action-repression mechanism activated by the guerrilla focus had been set in motion. It would be quickly swept away by the repression once the action-repression mechanism activated by the guerrilla focus was put into operation. It would be quickly swept away by the repression once the action-repression mechanism activated by the guerrilla focus was put into operation.

The elapsed time, the intense, rich and so many times painful experience carried out in these years by the Latin American revolutionary movements, have made clear the fatal mistakes of the foquismo.

1. **The simplicity of his conception of the conditions necessary to initiate and above all to carry forward the armed struggle.** This topic, vast and of defining importance, obviously deserves a particular consideration, which goes beyond the framework of this brief reference. It involves the analysis of the relations between the conditions of the economic level of the class struggle and the political and ideological levels (subjective conditions of the same and the consideration of the role of armed activity in relation to them. It implies the delimitation with the reformist currents, and leads, necessarily, to elucidate theoretical points of view, and to the criticism of

the social and ideological roots of the own pro-foco conception.

2. **The development of political conditions, much less that of ideological conditions, does not derive from guerrilla activity in the rather mechanical terms foreseen by the Foquismo.** The activity of the armed focus has not been shown as an adequate substitute, or even as a possible and viable substitute for party activity. This insufficiency is obvious as the fight continues. The political responses of both the dominant and dominated classes do not conform to the overly schematic and rectilinear projections of the foquismo. It is evident that an overly simplistic perspective on the structure and functioning of the political and ideological levels, whose importance was notoriously underestimated, weighed on this conception. On the other hand, the possibility of forcing by arms the change of the political conditions and the mentality, beliefs, of the people, was notoriously overestimated. The delay in the advancement of the so-called subjective conditions continued to weigh, frequently producing, the isolation of the rural focus, and thus creating the conditions for its annihilation.
3. **The rejection of the possibility of an urban guerrilla and the exclusivity claimed for the rural guerrilla,** is a matter judged by the facts. There has been and still is a wide practice of urban armed struggle. It is even notable that it is the latter that has been acquiring further development in Latin America and even worldwide.
4. **The cumulative and ascending mechanics of action-repression, which would lead to a favorable polarization of forces, generalizing and isolating the repression, and developing and rooting the focus, is not usually given.** Repression has learned to

## VI

In Uruguay, when the outbreak began to operate, there was no colonial situation. Uruguay is, of course, a dependent capitalist country but it is perhaps, now, one of the countries where the action of imperialism is exercised through mechanisms less visible to the masses. Imperialism exists, but it is seen much less than elsewhere. It would not be therefore an anti-colonial war.

There was no dictatorship. There was of course — and there is — a bourgeois class dictatorship, common to all capitalist countries, here exceptionally well veiled by the bourgeois-democratic form of state. Democratic liberalism is deeply rooted, as an ideology, in the consciousness of the people, even in the working class. The traditional parties, the petty-bourgeois and workers' reformism (especially embodied by the Communist Party) invariably contribute to consolidating in the dominated classes the influence of the bourgeois ideological tendency. This trend is increasingly integrated by the workers' reformism, which continues to designate itself, however, as "Marxist-Leninist."

But if it is not anticolonial or "democratic," what is the nature of the war that the pro-guerrilla guerrilla started? In general terms, what is, and will be, at least in its initial stage and for a long period, armed action in Uruguay? It had, has and will have for a long period, a decisively social character, a class character. It will, therefore, have a clearly socialist stamp and will thus be perceived by the ruling classes who, from Cuba, see in all armed popular action a danger, whatever they say. The armed struggle began and will be carried out based on the interest of the dominated classes against the interest of the domi-



We must answer: they have been made for political independence, of colonies or to restore bourgeois-liberal democracy.

1. To the second question: when does the guerrilla start and when does it end? We are, of course, in a position to answer it. The anticolonial guerrilla begins when the maturation of a dependent local bourgeoisie operating under the auspices of a favorable international situation, launches a national movement. It ends when formal political independence is achieved. The democratic, anti-dictatorial guerilla begins when the dictatorship, losing its social base, becomes “unbearable” for most people, including important sectors of the bourgeoisie. It ends with the restoration of bourgeois democracy.

In Uruguay, when the guerrillas began to operate: Was there a colonial situation? NOT. Was there a dictatorship situation? NOT. But if it was neither anticolonial nor democratic, what sense, what character, what objectives did the armed struggle that was beginning have? Answering these questions implies explaining the errors and successes of the MLN in solving two basic problems that we mentioned at the beginning: a) that of the guerrilla-mass link and b) that of the military destruction of the repressive apparatus.

maintain its selectivity, the ruling classes can and know how to adopt countermeasures that lock and reverse this dynamic. In its strategy, the counterrevolutionary activity of reformism and the handling of the old ideological myths of bourgeois liberalism, (elections, legality, etc.) have played a role of importance that the foquismo did not foresee.

### III

Most of the failures experienced in the years after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution can be attributed to the influence of the foquista conception. It was not the armed struggle that failed, those that clearly failed were the short-term expectations that the foquismo entails. **In the midst of these failures, it is undeniable — however — that the broad practice of armed struggle decisively contributed to modifying the patterns and characteristics of political action in Latin America .**

Armed practice radically changed the way of perceiving and facing the problems of the revolution. He raised to rethink these in concrete and precise terms. He put on the mat with pressing reality and urgency, the issues related to the concrete ways of achieving with violence, the destruction of bourgeois power. **Since then, the problem of the method to be used to develop the armed path of revolution has been unavoidably open. The problem of revolutionary military strategy .** All this implied a revaluation of employment, at all levels, of revolutionary violence.

The revolution has been talked about for many decades in these countries. But it had been little time for her in particular. Nothing was raised regarding the specific ways in which the revolutionary process would take shape. **In general the void that this problem with no foreseeable solution left, was filled with the myth of the so-called «proletarian insurrection» conceived in terms of a generalized popular uprising, with people going out into the streets, barricades, etc.** Myth inherited from the last century and that the Paris

to the movement of the “Doctor Castro” that came out, without problems, photographed on the covers of “Life.”

What did imperialism expect? At first he supported Batista. When he saw that it was worn, he abandoned it. The “Marines” did not land there as they would a few years later in Santo Domingo. They resigned themselves to the fact that “Doctor Castro” — after all, a young and inexperienced liberal guerrilla fighter, they thought — turned to the military dictatorship. Then the bourgeois political trips of that neighboring island would see to it that things got back on track democratically... in favor of imperialism and its dependent bourgeoisie.

These Yankee forecasts seemed to come true at first. A bourgeois lawyer, Doctor Urrutia, received the presidency from the hands of victorious Fidel. Miró Cardona was prime minister and respectable figures formed his cabinet. It is a time after Batista fell that the radicalization of the Cuban Revolution took place, its rapid turn towards new objectives: towards socialist objectives. We are not going to describe that process that would separate us from our subject. Suffice it to remember that Urrutia had to resign, that Miró Cardona fled to Miami, that several ministers of the first hour passed to the counterrevolution...

Imperialism and bourgeoisie waited for a mere replacement of government personnel and a change in social system came out. They would never again expose themselves to such surprises in Latin America. Every revolution must henceforth count on foreign intervention backed by the local bourgeoisie. In the Uruguayan case, when bourgeois domination is ever in danger, intervention will come. Based on what can be foreseen now, the most probable is that the bourgeoisie of Brazil will intervene. This is another item that is important to retain.

Summing up. If we refer to the historical experiences of victorious urban guerrillas or to the triumphant experience of Latin American focus guerrillas, to the question from the beginning: why are guerrillas made, what are their objectives?

therefore, to try to attract the adherence of bourgeois sectors around a revolutionary policy, even if it is seen as “national.” The tasks of the Uruguayan revolution point to a transition to socialism and the national aspect of these tasks is inevitably subordinate to that, its essential content.

There have been guerrillas whose objective has been simply to achieve changes at the political level (to overthrow a military dictatorship, for example) and to carry out certain economic-social reforms (agrarian reforms, for example). Such was the case of the guerrillas in Cuba, in their own guerrilla period in the Sierra Maestra. The guerrillas did not start there with socialist objectives, although militants who were, without a doubt, already socialists like Che, acted in their ranks from the beginning.

Fidel’s ideology in his argument “History will absolve me” after the attack on Moncada, is the ideology of a petty bourgeois, liberal and reformist. No more. The economic program of “July 26” under the influence of the economist Felipe Pazos, was developmental, postulated a national capitalist development that included, as always in these cases, and as ECLAC advised, measures of agrarian reform and various social reforms. The political objective was to overthrow Batista’s military dictatorship to restore parliamentary democracy, bourgeois liberal democracy. The socio-economic objective was landowner land reform, the fight against foreign monopolies, “national” capitalist development, “social justice”... capitalist.

Tribute was thus paid to the petty-bourgeois utopia of independent capitalism, without the “injustices” and the “abuses” of foreign monopolies. A pre-monopoly and “human” capitalism with the worker...

With this program, faced with a corrupt dictatorship, applying for the first time in Latin America the strategy of the rural guerrilla focus, the guerrilla group, in a short time, behind them all the people, including the Cuban colony, to send funds

Commune of 1871, the Soviet October or the Catalan July 18, realizing it with realities, contributed to keeping alive in the imagination of the people.

It is not that insurrections of this type cannot be carried out. It is not that they are, under any conditions, impossible. The “Cordobazo” of May ’69 and similar days in Rosario, Tucumán and other cities, show more than enough and with very close examples that the era of generalized, street popular insurrections is far from over. **The problem is that the insurrection becomes a myth, a comfortable, opportunistically manageable myth, if it is isolated from concrete, habitual and daily political practice.** And that is what reformism did and does for many years. That is what the social democracy of the old socialist parties did first, which ended up expressly renouncing violence, insurrection and revolution. That is what the neo-socialists of the communist parties who still speak of revolution did and do while doing what is possible so that it does not come.

Reformism places the insurrection in the sky of unattainable ideals. Exalting her verbally, she tries — in deeds — to prevent her from preparing. **In this disagreement, in this inconsistency between their counterrevolutionary political practice and their verbalism about a final insurrectionary outcome, they seek to support their eternal affirmation that “conditions are lacking” every time they try to advance the process of political struggle, applying means not included in his very limited recipe book.** This is basically limited to two things: a) at the economic level of the class struggle, wage action for action, carried out with the greatest respect for bourgeois and therefore peaceful “legality”; b) at the political level, parliamentarism, electoralism, as a way to politically capitalize the results of the economic struggle. **By confining its practice at all levels within the increasingly narrow frameworks of bourgeois legality, reformism creates the conditions for its increasing integration into the**

**system.** It hinders and tries to prevent the development of the conditions for its destruction.

It is obvious that if the revolutionary plan and project are not present guiding the daily practice of the struggle at all levels, the conditions for a revolutionary outcome will never be processed. **The capitalist system will not be destroyed by following the rules of the game that it gives itself to ensure its continuity. That continuity is what helps maintain who agrees to do only what bourgeois legality allows, that is, only what legality handled by the bourgeoisie recommends that it be done.** For this reason, only a growing reformism can emerge from the reformist line, a growing retreat from the famous insurrectionary outcome that they postpone for an indefinable “opportune moment.” That is why they cannot, nor do they want to, formulate any strategic-military guidelines.

By converting the idea of the “proletarian insurrection” into myth, the reformers make it a legitimate pretext for their counterrevolutionary practice, so useful to the system. Far from representing an alternative opposed to it, aimed at destroying it, it becomes daily practice, in concrete and daily events, in a way of “perfecting” it, of correcting it in its most extreme and visible manifestations of injustice.

It is important to insist on this, because the myth of an unfathomable future insurrection, sudden and miraculously arisen, without anyone preparing it, as the paradoxical end of an ultralegalist practice, is the counterpart of another entrenched myth: **that of the invincibility of repression.** “The revolution will be possible when there are conditions” say the communist parties and with them all the reformers add “the day of the revolution will come then.” “But those who, before that day, violate the laws, taking up arms, will be fatally defeated,” they affirm. And from there they always condemn as “putchistas,” “adventurers,” “profiteers” those who do not resign themselves to traveling on the electoral dead

of nation is the one that involves the disappearance of capitalism, socialism. Thus the “national interest” of the bourgeoisie has nothing in common with the national interest of the working classes. But in anticolonial revolutions it is generally the bourgeois nationalist ideology that predominates and unites behind the local ruling classes, the population as a whole. The reality of class struggle then darkens, behind the “patriotic” ideology. Then it is easy to mobilize all the people, without distinction, after the guerrillas. It quickly gains “national” support for a “national”... bourgeois war. **If the war is not anticolonial but social — and it will be so in Uruguay — there will be as many “patriotisms” as social classes are in a position to generate ideological tendencies. There will be a bourgeois “nationalism” that will be the ideological cover of the real dependence on the empire. And there will be a workers’ and popular nationalism that will be the projection, at the level of the national question, of socialist theory and the ideological contents founded on it.**

The urban guerrilla will never have the support of “the whole nation” here, no matter how much it proclaims itself nationalist. It will only have the support of those classes that are interested in socialism. This will happen because our revolution will be social and not anti-colonial. Because it faces and will face a bourgeoisie that, even though it is dependent in reality, economically, politically and ideologically, has formally already established political independence, it has already structured its state as a “sovereign” state. It is not possible here — and this is useful to retain it — a national, anti-imperialist struggle, outside the class struggle. In other words: the central and priority is the revolution against the dependent national bourgeoisie, and only through it will the true struggle for the national cause of the people develop.

All revolutionary military policy will be, then, a class military policy, which in all its stages must coincide with the interests of the working class and other working classes. It is useless,

**colonial armies can go. The “national” armies of the dependent national bourgeoisies, on the other hand, when the revolutions are social, anti-capitalist, resist to the end.** They must be militarily defeated, destroyed. This puts on the table, from the outset, an essential difference between the dimension of the military task to which the bourgeois revolutions for political independence and the revolutions of the classes dominated by their national liberation are facing.

Of the three anticolonial revolutions that we mentioned before, the respective urban guerrillas had as their essential task, to generate political conditions that set the stage for compromise solutions between the ruling classes of their countries and those of the imperialist countries. **In Uruguay, where formal independence has already been achieved, the function of the urban guerrilla is to help overthrow the power of the local ruling classes, allied to imperialism. Their political-military task is, therefore, much more complex and essentially different.** Hence, it is not possible for us to simply collect as an “example” the experience of those anti-colonial urban guerrillas, a temptation that is not always avoided by those who meditate or write on these topics.

**The objectives of the revolution condition all revolutionary politics, without excluding its military aspects.** Hence, prior to any other consideration, define the objectives or, in general terms, the character of the revolutionary process in which the political-military practice will be inscribed.

**In the wars for independence, the cause is “national,” that is, it is the cause of the local ruling classes, generally assumed at the level of concrete militancy, by the small local bourgeoisies, imbued with the ideology of those ruling classes.** This point should be made since it is impossible to conceive an idea of nation, of homeland, alien to a class content. The nation is nothing but the bourgeois nation, where the bourgeois dominate, when this concept is handled by the bourgeoisie. From a class point of view, the only acceptable concept

end, waiting for that hypothetical day when the revolution miraculously descends from the idealistic sky in which the cheap talk of the capitulators.

This absurd conception, disguised with pseudo-scientific phraseologies, was for a long time the predominant one on the left. Before each failure, before each defeat of the revolution, it is, once again, to rehabilitate it as an inviolable dogma. With each triumph of the revolution, it is about adopting it, it is about inventing pseudo-demonstrations that the revolution is actually advancing by applying the doctrines... of the reformists.

But despite their inexhaustible “controversial” resources, the reformers cannot and will not destroy the facts. **And it is in the field of events that the viability of the armed struggle has been demonstrated, already definitively incorporated into the political strategy of the revolutionary organizations.**

The current problem is that of the precise characteristics that this strategy must have in each social, national or regional formation.

It is not on the table a controversy around the adoption of urban or rural guerrillas as exclusive or excluding forms. There does not lie there the useful analysis that can be carried out around the experience of past or current armed struggle. The central theme is the analysis of the foquista conception that in its primary and orthodox formulation supported the rural guerrilla as a priority and exclusive form, but that later also adapted to urban guerrilla forms. It is this focusist conception in all its variations that is in crisis and not the armed struggle, which maintains its validity. **The armed struggle as we conceive it, as a fundamental aspect of the political practice of an underground party that also acts, based on a harmonious and global strategy, at the mass level. It is this correct conception of the struggle that is reaffirmed by the experience gathered.**

## IV

The development of the struggle totally changed in recent years the terms in which the struggle was traditionally considered in Latin America. It meant the overcoming, surely definitive, of a long stage in which that fight was conceived according to two guidelines:

to. at the economic level of the class struggle: mass, union activity, with a demanding content, fundamentally wage, processed by traditional methods (strikes, strikes, acts, etc.) practiced within the framework of bourgeois legality.

b. at the political level of the class struggle: activity of legal parties with their traditional methods (public premises, events, propaganda, publications, ideological diffusion, etc.) decisively aimed at obtaining electoral results.

The way to come to power (falsely identified with the government) was the vote. Obtaining increasingly numerous parliamentary representations meant stages towards this outcome. **Violence at both the economic and political levels of the class struggle — they said — was negative since it implied putting up obstacles, “pretending” obstacles to the electoral route.** Conceived this as the only possible way to get to “power” and this being the cardinal problem of political practice, everything had to contribute to keeping this way open. In other words: **the obtaining of power was politically decisive, coming to power through the electoral route and the elections being somewhat “legal,” one had to be within the law to be able to vote... and thus be able to come to power.**

1. **What is the guerrilla for, what are its objectives, its program? There have been guerrillas whose objective was only the conquest of national independence. Putting it in class terms, this independence means replacing direct political domination by the imperialist metropolitan bourgeoisie, exercised through the bourgeois, metropolitan state apparatus, replacing it, we say, by domination by the local bourgeoisie, through a state apparatus bourgeois local, «national».** The national bourgeoisies in the current imperialist stage of capitalism are — we know — dependent bourgeoisies and the states they create are only half sovereign.

We do not want to downplay the importance of these processes of struggle for political independence, nor deny the possibilities of revolutionary action that they can enable at certain junctures. We simply want to flesh out, from a classist point of view, the essence of an issue around which there is more and more hubbub and confusion.

Wars for independence were the protagonists, for example, of the IRA in Ireland, led by the bourgeois nationalist De Valera; IRGUN ZVAL LEUMI led by the Jewish fascist Menahen Beguin in Israel; EOKA led by Greek-Cypriot fascist colonel GRIVAS in Cyprus. All guerrilla wars for national independence, anti-colonial, against English domination. Not liberation wars, with a socialist and anti-bourgeois meaning.

The English imperialists did not want — of course — to leave. The guerrilla, in the three cases cited, almost exclusively urban, carried out relatively brief wars against them. We will not give details here. Brief and journalistic information, but sufficient for the purposes, is found in books such as Taber’s “Flea War.”

England — a decadent empire like France — resisted to some extent. When the balance of economic and — fundamentally — political costs was clearly in deficit, they left. **Because the**

# V

The practice of the urban guerrilla in our country by the UTC of the MLN supposed, from the beginning, the introduction of variants in the orthodox foquista scheme. The most obvious: the urban character of the guerrillas, which at the time many denied as viable.

But the guerrilla basically rethinks two political problems:

1. **the problem of the characteristics that, in conditions of urban guerrilla**, cover the guerrilla's connection with the masses and the politics to be developed in relation to this. In other words, the problem of the concrete modalities according to which, when the guerrillas act in an urban environment, the popular sympathy that can promote their action is politically capitalized;
2. **the problem of how the military destruction of the repressive apparatus, a prerequisite for the destruction of bourgeois power, is processed through urban guerrilla practice.**

The mere formulation of these two questions clearly leads us to ask ourselves two questions that are prior, because the answers we give them will depend on the type of solution we give to the two problems raised above.

*The two questions are: 1<sup>st</sup>.) What is the guerrilla doing for, what are its objectives, its program? 2<sup>nd</sup>.) When does the guerrilla struggle begin and when does it end?*

This has been and is the core of the reformist, electoralist political approach. Based on this approach, all violence should be rejected because it jeopardizes the elections, and therefore the possibility of coming to power. **This “argumentation” is complemented by identifying legalism with the possibility of carrying out any type of mass activity. Even at the union level, “contact with the masses” can only be maintained by acting “legally.”** Violence only gives “pretexts” to repression, repression that fatally “isolates,” such part of the reasoning that the reformers do. At the level of the economic struggle, violence “pretexts” repression, isolates, harms the activity of the masses and can even pretend that the reaction hinders the only way — necessarily electoral and therefore necessarily legal — to come to power. It would then be “infantilism,” “spontaneity.” And there the reformists fatten up with the errors of anarcho-syndicalism, which by effectively subordinating the political level to the economic level of the class struggle, by not proposing a clear solution to the problem of the destruction of bourgeois power, is “gifted »For too easy criticism of the reformists.

**For our part and years ago — we repeat it for the doubts — we maintain that the objective of violence at the level of economic struggle, IS NOT ONLY not even MAINLY the obtaining of economic demands in themselves. That the function of violence in the economic struggle is to contribute — understand CONTRIBUTE — to raise the level of these struggles to a political level.** Contribute (along with the other media: propaganda, ideological struggle, legal public struggle or not) to raise the economic struggle as much as possible, to the level of political struggle. Contribute to raising trade union awareness of economic interest that animates the economic struggle. **We contribute, we say, to raising it to political consciousness, of political interest, which is the consciousness necessary to destroy the**

**bourgeois political power — the bourgeois state — the ultimate objective of all revolutionary political practice.**

Destruction of the capitalist state, destruction of the bourgeois power that is necessarily violent, that cannot be achieved by arriving (assuming that it can be...) through elections to occupy certain official positions (in the Houses or even in the Presidency) which are just a few elements and not the most important, through which the bourgeois power operates. And as it is impossible, it was never seen, nor can anyone sensibly claim that the capitalist state will “go extinct” to make way for socialism, nor that the bourgeoisie will peacefully “donate” their properties to the people or will peacefully renounce their domination and to their power, **these must be destroyed by force.**

Only the bourgeois cheeks, knowingly lying, speak that capitalism has changed in its essence. That it is now “people’s capitalism” as the Yankee ideologues and Korea say here, repeated by Rafael Caldera. Only the vivillos — or papanatas — reformists believe that they are going to change him, little by little, with “wise” parliamentary laws. Or that there may be a “good” capitalism, led by a “national bourgeoisie,” that some invent every time things get half ugly...

**The affirmation of this need for revolutionary violence, the need for revolution, and the theoretical-practical overcoming of petty-bourgeois reformism (nationalist or Christian Democrat, “populist” they say) or worker (social-democrat, Trotskyist, or communist, “Marxist” they say) has been the fundamental contribution that Latin American armed organizations have made to the upward process of the struggles of our peoples.**

An organization is truly revolutionary if the problem of power is really posed and solved, and the problem of power is only solved with an adequate line of practice of violence, that is, with an adequate military line. In short, the demonstration

that there will only be socialism with revolution, that is, with violent destruction of the bourgeois state. That there will only be violent destruction of the state, of bourgeois power, with proper political-military practice, are all contributions made in these years by the armed organizations of the continent. In other words. **No organization is truly revolutionary until it has posed and solved the problems of the violent, military aspect of its political practice.**

**There is no revolutionary politics without revolutionary theory. There is no revolutionary policy without a revolutionary military line.** All this has been made clear, and clarifying this has been an invaluable contribution. It has advanced the class struggle at all levels.

But reality is dialectical. When certain checks have been made, new problems arise from those checks. When you have reached a higher, higher level of understanding, practice, and experience (and understanding — except for coffee charlatans — always indicates experience, practice) new problems, also at a higher, finer level They require our attention and must be resolved.

Our country has not been, as some predicted, an exception in the process of advance of the Latin American revolution. Here we have also practically lived those experiences. Here there has been and is a vast and fruitful political-military practice. Analyzing it, delving into its content, really understanding the causes and the meaning of its advances and its setbacks, is a decisive task today that we cannot avoid.



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## IX

Here we go monday 27

When we started this series of notes we pointed out that the experiences of urban guerrillas (Israel, Ireland, Cyprus) had developed within struggles for political independence. Cuba, an inspiring experience of the foquista conception, offered the example of an anti-dictatorial guerilla carried out for the restoration of the institutions of bourgeois democracy. We said that neither of these two situations occurred in Uruguay when the focus began to operate: it is a country, at least formally, independent and “democratic.” The emergence of the focus was therefore based on social reasons.

Then a contradiction could appear between the chosen method — the focus — and the — social — objectives of its action. Contradiction emanating from the fact that social (socialist) objectives impose the need for mass participation — implied by mass politics — conceived in terms other than indiscriminate, “polyclass” popular support than non-socialist (national or democratic) objectives ) of the other guerrillas could raise. Especially when — as we have already seen — after Cuba, the dependent bourgeoisies of Latin America have tenaciously opposed any fracture of the bourgeois “order.”

This contradiction imposed on the MLN, as a Uruguayan focus version, various adaptations of its conception. It was based on the assumption that guerrilla action, if it were able to give it ascending continuity, if it managed to produce increasingly frequent and greater impacts, would produce increasingly harsh and generalized repressive measures. Before each major operation, MLN sympathizers waited for

the military coup or the coup delivered by the MLN itself. To avoid hostility from the masses, the MLN took care for a long time in choosing “friendly” targets, where possible tried to carry out bloodless operations, without confrontation: expropriations, equipment, propaganda or obvious retaliation. The alternative was clear: if institutional normality persisted, the repression appeared to be quite ineffective. The focus, having reached a certain degree of development, generated a growth dynamic, maintained it is true based on a “crescendo” of operability. This growth, still compromised by eventual tactical errors, did not seem to meet decisive obstacles for a time in the framework of a “democratic” regime. The other possibility was that democracy would make way for more authoritarian, even dictatorial, forms, which, although they might be more repressive, would generate more favorable political conditions for the focus to extend its influence. In the democratic framework, the repression was ineffective; outside the democratic framework, a political conjuncture of the type that traditionally consolidated the guerrilla armed struggle was created. Before a dictatorship, The guerrillas would then go on to embody the fight for lost democracy, generating a situation of the Cuban type. The MLN seems to have moved within this perspective for a long time. Based on this, the underestimation towards the ideological and political struggle was consolidated.

Any form of public activity, they said, was to “burn” the militants and sympathizers, eating a future in which only those who were able to organize to fight in the strictest secrecy would subsist. Therefore, they said, it was negative to “give face” by holding a political line publicly in public or union political activity. Politics was then, it was said, the patient preparation of a clandestine armed apparatus capable of competing for power over the bourgeoisie. With slight variations, this line was applied until the late 1970s when the proximity of the elections posed a difficult problem for foquismo.

During the entire period 66–70, awaiting the dictatorship that would sweep away all forms of political and even public union activity, the MLN shied away from all controversy with reformism. The reformist positions around particular events were only discussed and confronted in specific places. This was all the easier to do because, by virtue of its own pro-conception, the guerrillas lacked representatives, “visible representatives” at the mass public level and did not even postulate any line or criteria for work at this level, which was considered negative general. This well-known and well-known situation of the parallel and uninterrupted action of the urban guerrilla of the MLN and the Communist Party was created, which without colliding with it, continued to develop its reformist practice at the mass level. When the guerrillas broke with the Communist Parties throughout Latin America, in Uruguay both coexisted peacefully without attacking or interfering. Simply, each one recorded his disbelief in the other’s methods and entrusted himself to an indeterminate future, to settle that “tactical” difference that was not even insisted on.

The guerrillas could, therefore, grow, without questioning or compromising the reformist dominance at the mass level, at the union level, under cover of the abandonment that the profococonception proclaimed regarding mass action. Of course, in reality the reformist practice and the guerrilla practice were contradictory. The “agreement,” the distribution of areas of influence, could only be transitory. All revolutionary practice is objectively contradictory to all reformist practice. In those sectors — the students, certain unions — where sympathies for the MLN took more or less organized forms, the clash with the reformists inevitably occurred. Only the determination of the leaders, the weight of their authority based on the prestige of the military apparatus, allowed this clash, implicit in the reality of things, it did not become generalized or acquire a dimension of controversy, of ideological struggle of an anti-reformist line.

Of course, the leadership of the MLN agreed to this commitment based on the notion of its transience. Because it was thought that, in the short term, the action of the focus would lead to the death of democratic forms, of bourgeois "legality." And with it the death of reformism. Since the existence of legality is vital for the Communist Party, once it has disappeared, the Communist Party would be out of the game and would be forced to put itself at the tail of the MLN the only organization that due to its characteristics would have been in a position to subsist by operating under the harshest political and repressive conditions. The MLN under these conditions would polarize — as had happened in Cuba — all anti-dictatorial opinion and would lead the fight for democratic restoration. The weapons gave them the possibility of leading a fight of which it would be the military and political vanguard. The incarnation of a military practice, then fully validated, inevitably shared by all, since the dictatorship would have closed all other doors, would have canceled, by its very existence, all other routes. Thus generating with its armed practice a qualitative modification at the political level (the dictatorship and a focus of armed resistance to it) the guerrilla would find, after repelling, against the grain of the situation, a period of "introduction," would be found, we said in a situation of social validation at the mass level. At the level of the entire people, attracting polyclass support, since of polyclass interest — as in Cuba — would be the anti-dictatorial struggle. The guerrilla then, rid of reformist or any kind of "competition," it would thus acquire, without "sterile polemics," without "theoretical talks," without "divisions," almost without the need to speak, speaking with its facts, without stopping to be a guerrilla — focco — would thus acquire the leadership of the masses. The total leadership of the masses since it would be the only thing that would remain standing and with a military aptitude that had then become totally "functional" within the conditions of the anti-dictatorial struggle. The total leadership

that kind of public action of the focus is the necessary correlate of the foquista conception in the military plane. Despite its adaptations of which we have reported throughout this series of works, the Uruguayan version of foquismo conclusively demonstrated its error, its invalidity, both on the military level and on the level of public action. Both failures are but two sides of the same coin. Failure on both levels will continue to be inevitable as long as the focus does not thoroughly review its conception. To the extent that it continues to be a focus, no revolutionary movement will be able to effectively channel the efforts of the Uruguayan revolution. On the contrary, it will contribute to generating conditions capable of jeopardizing the entire process.

**Foquismo, the validity of the foquista conception, can only contribute to abort the development of the Uruguayan revolutionary process.** Of course, this does not prevent the recognition of the motivation and the revolutionary nature of the activity of the comrades who, sharing the misguided conception of the proquista, developed the MLN. What is the recognition of these comrades as revolutionaries? They definitively validated the military practice that they introduced in Uruguay. His attitude implies a thorough and definitive break with the current power structure. It attacks it on the most sensitive level, on the level of questioning, of the monopoly of force by the bourgeois state. They contributed to some extent, indirectly and partially, to deteriorate the bourgeois ideological hegemony over the masses, even acting from a non-proletarian, petty-bourgeois perspective. **Are the comrades who have participated in the focus activity revolutionary? Yes. Is focalism an effective revolutionary conception? No. Foquism is a mistaken revolutionary conception and as such negative and dangerous for the revolution.**

The enormous impediment, the immense team accumulated by the MLN with a view to a “war” defined in concrete terms of harassment, was yet another factor of weakness. The fall of a large number of houses and large warehouses of arms and ammunition operated morally in a negative direction and accentuated the bad effects of the deficit in political training of the militants. Received a few blows, the climate of demoralization won the movement and precipitated its defeat. Decompartmentation then showed its dire effects.

The precariousness of the political framework achieved for the supporters of the outbreak evidenced its limited utility. It even became impossible to orchestrate a sufficiently large public campaign against torture. There was a great paradox that repressive action with characteristics similar to those of Brazil or Algeria could be surreptitiously lived within the totally inadequate ideological framework of the MLN, without causing a sufficient public reaction. **A movement of sympathy is not equivalent to a political party. A movement of ideologically amorphous sympathies, in short, lacking any other strategy and tactic other than mere sympathy with armed events and its emotional adherence to them is not enough. A political party is something else.**

The foquista conception tolerates the framing of sympathies in movements of sympathizers with military action. The foquista conception does not tolerate the existence of a party, which is incompatible with it. But the sympathizer movement demonstrates its ineffectiveness as a form of public action. It is still valid that the focus is exclusive of a public political practice despite the appearances that came to have in its Uruguayan version. **Only a true political party with mass insertion and public action is capable of assuming at the mass level the responsibilities inherent in its connection with a military practice.** An amorphous movement of sympathizers is not capable of adequately assuming those responsibilities. The Uruguayan experience shows this conclusively. The failure of

of the masses since it would be the only thing that would remain standing and with a military aptitude that had then become totally “functional” within the conditions of the anti-dictatorial struggle. The total leadership of the masses since it would be the only thing that would remain standing and with a military aptitude that had then become totally “functional” within the conditions of the anti-dictatorial struggle.

Reformism, for its part, bet on the survival of democratic forms, avoiding situations that could compromise its validity in everything within its reach. Leaning on the foquista presidency, he clung to his leadership of the mass movement, carefully trying to remove it from any activity that could compromise the validity of the laws. He refrained from publicly criticizing — although he carried out an incessant ideological campaign surreptitiously — the guerrillas, to whom he even dedicated, at times, very discreet smiles... He trusted the leadership of the Communist Party that the repression would crush the focus before it could generate a volume of armed operations sufficient to question the “institutional legality” that reformism — which all reformisms — needs to live.

The absence — by virtue of the foquista conception — of a political practice at the mass level convergent with the revolutionary military activity of the guerrillas enabled this policy since, in this way, the existence and development of the armed focus did not come to interfere Nor to question their control over the leadership of the mass movement. Where the MLN supporters organized and acted on their own criteria, they were harshly attacked by the Communist Party. But as this happened only occasionally and in limited sectors, it was not necessary, neither for the Communist Party, to give a general controversy specifically against the MLN. Thus, for years, this curious parallelism could subsist, that “peaceful coexistence” between a rising guerilla and a Communist Party that has the predominance in the leadership of the mass movement.

But from this situation there was still a not inconsiderable advantage for the Communist Party. Those who, in the revolutionary field, tried to develop at the level of the masses, a revolutionary line, those who tried to converge the two aspects of revolutionary political practice, the military and that of the masses, were then pressed, surrounded by two forces that did not they interfered, they developed in parallel, without facing each other. Those who postulated the need for armed action now but simultaneously and convergent — and not parallel — with mass action, obviously suffered at the same time from attacks by reformism at the mass level and competition at the military level from pro-armed action that He decisively channeled the sympathies of the sectors most willing to revolutionary action since 1968. The polarization towards the ML-Nand his foquista conception of the major revolutionary forces, which would not play in the fight against reformism, notoriously weakened the revolutionary line at the mass level and ensured the survival of the reformist dominance at that level.

It is true that the action of the M.L.N. developed the forces of revolution. But his foquista conception did not allow a sufficiently strong revolutionary position to be developed at the mass level, so that the political-ideological scope of the reformist line of the Communist Party was sufficiently clarified at a general level. That is the ambiguous political result — a foreseeable result on the other hand — of the development of the foquista in our country. What would certainly grow would be the military potential of the M.L.N., the pro-guerilla guerrilla. Would that suffice?

channel the democratic-liberal and national conditions of the masses.

How to avoid the “anesthesia” generated sooner or later by operative persistence? How to avoid the negative repercussions of unfriendly actions? The MLN never found any other solution to this problem than the increase in the operational level, and the success of this alleged solution supposed that given the increase in the level of operation, certain political responses were going to be given by the enemy. The failure of the MLN is largely due to the fact that the enemy’s responses were not as expected. Vulnerable by its own quantitative development, the armed foquista apparatus did not manage, however, through its military practice, to produce the political changes that were expected. As a large clandestine army, it was gradually isolated from the masses, enduring the vulnerability that its inadequate dimension attached to it, without nevertheless reaping the necessary mass adherence. Working with torture, the repression hit the MLN where it was weak, at the level of formation of its militant cadres, in the lack of homogeneity of its political leadership, which was cracked at the intermediate levels and still in the head by treason. Through the effects of torture, the infra is quickly dismantled. The inadequate, quantitative dimension then demonstrated its dangerousness. The mass arrests of militants evidenced this. in the inhomogeneity of his political leadership, which was cracked at the intermediate levels and still in the head by treason. Through the effects of torture, the infra is quickly dismantled. The inadequate, quantitative dimension then demonstrated its dangerousness. The mass arrests of militants evidenced this. in the inhomogeneity of his political leadership, which was cracked at the intermediate levels and still in the head by treason. Through the effects of torture, the infra is quickly dismantled. The inadequate, quantitative dimension then demonstrated its dangerousness. The mass arrests of militants evidenced this.

els of operation, always reversible. A strategy that presupposes the foreseeable increase by the enemy; it becomes unadaptable to the political situation of society in general. Even in the framework of a process of economic and social deterioration and deterioration at all levels, this process has different rhythms. It can even go backwards in its development. Junctions may be created temporarily favorable to the bourgeoisie. And an armed apparatus operating on the assumption of an ever increasing level of operations is not in a position to relax its military practice in response to these events. Therefore, receptivity in the masses can be difficult or even inadequate.

Military practice fatally involves at a certain moment, or at a certain level of its development, “unfriendly” actions. The acceptance of antipathetic actions, supposes the previous modification of the ideology in increasingly wide popular sectors. Only in this way will they be able to accept the unpleasantness that inevitably results from military practice at a certain level of their development. It is a basic mistake of the foquismo to suppose that the military facts can become unfailingly sympathetic, if the ideological conquest of the masses is ignored, at a certain moment they become unfriendly . **But the ideological conquest of the masses supposes the activity of a party, and the acceptance of a long-term struggle.**

The creation of a party, that is, the existence of a public political practice linked to the activity of the armed apparatus, implies ideological definitions, sooner or later implies the adoption of theoretical positions. It supposes of course the public confrontation with the hostile ideological currents. In short, it supposes everything that supposes a public political practice. And this is incompatible, as such, with the political ideological conception, which is what enables the possibility of connecting armed practice with the prevailing ideology. The attempt to reconcile a revolutionary practice with the bourgeois ideological hegemony, concretized in the search to revolutionary

## X

In April, approximately the moment in which the noted weaknesses of the foquista conception made crisis within the MLN can be located. This crisis, recorded even in captured and published internal documents, was reflected in the very clear visualization by the MLN leadership of two problems which we had alluded to when starting this series of works. These two fundamental problems are: 1.) The problem constituted by the difficulties that the urban guerrillas face in achieving the destruction of the repressive apparatus through guerrilla military practice exclusively. 2.) The problem of widening the circle of popular sympathies aroused by guerrilla action after verifying that on that date and always, according to published documents, the leadership of the MLNHe considered that he had already capitalized politically on the sympathies of those sectors that, due to their greater politicization, would be in a position to be captured through the pro-military military practice. With a “technical” appearance, one, more ostensibly political, the other, the pressing validity of both problems evidenced that the practice of the foquista was beginning to reach the limits of its possibilities of development as such. These two problems are closely linked. They are two aspects, on different planes, of the same political problem for which the pro-vision conception cannot offer, under any circumstances, a final solution. With a “technical” appearance, one, more ostensibly political, the other, the pressing validity of both problems evidenced that the practice of the foquista was beginning to reach the limits of its possibilities of development as such. These two problems are closely linked. They are two

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Let us begin with the first aspect, that is, the more specifically «technical» problem, constituted by the difficulties that the urban guerrilla (any urban guerrilla) faces in order to conquer the final victory through exclusively guerrilla practice within the framework of a fight that is neither anti-colonial nor “democratic.”

In previous works we had pointed out that the urban guerrilla practice, as has been given in international experience, — we cited the cases of IRGUN in Israel, the IRA in Ireland, the EOKA in Cyprus — had the fundamental objective of obtaining national liberation, of national independence, through anti-colonial struggles. We added then — we repeat it now for the benefit of recapitulation — that on other occasions the urban guerrilla had had the political objective of fighting against situations of dictatorship. In other words, in some cases it was a matter of obtaining formal national independence, and in others the restoration of bourgeois “democratic” type regimes. When we insist on raising the difficulties of the urban guerrilla as a form of military action, capable of achieving a final victory acting as such, that is, as urban guerrilla, we are referring to those cases such as the MLN, in which urban guerrilla action does not have independence, “democracy” or transformations as its fundamental objective. deep social. We believe that the specifically military difficulties that arise in urban guerrilla ac-

economic-social level at the political level, hardening the forms of political domination; and on the ideological plane, breaking the bourgeois ideological hegemony over the masses.

None of these conditions were generated when the focus began to operate as such, nor are they currently generated. Nor will they be generated with adequate characteristics if the process works only spontaneously. This necessitates concrete political action in the structuring of a party that operates at the public level, at the mass level, and clandestinely as a military practice. Non-focus military practice, of course, since the conditions for focus are not created. Naturally as these conditions of social despair of the masses, of hardening of the political structure, of deterioration of the ideological influence of the bourgeoisie, are generated and accentuated, the military aspect of political work will become increasingly relevant, to the point of clearly dominating the public action aspect, non-military, at the mass level. The military aspect of the work will grow as the situation at the mass level becomes more favorable to a revolutionary outcome. **However, at no time will action at the mass level, public action, specifically political party action, be dispensed with and is no longer necessary.** In the perspective of an insurrectional outcome, this is obviously essential. Insurrection means — we said it — active participation of an important sector of the masses. It means carrying out prior political work on the army, especially, of course, at its lower troop echelons, as prerequisites, in addition to the prior development of a relatively important armed apparatus.

There is one aspect that we do not want to omit and that in April the leadership of the MLN was raised as one of the main obstacles that its action encountered. He consists of the so-called “anesthesia” of the masses against the impact sought by the actions. An armed apparatus cannot fix its strategy to the need to always carry out actions in a linearly ascending direction or by changing its field. A conception of prolonged struggle implies the acceptance, as in Vietnam, of different lev-



leadership levels. Nothing that has happened is too strange if you start from the content of the foquista conception. **It is politics that must direct weapons and not weapons that direct politics. War is not just a technical problem. It is — neither more nor less — politics by other means.**

Under what conditions could an armed apparatus alone successfully carry out revolutionary action? Answering this question implies, to a certain extent, delimiting the chances of success of any new focus attempts. These would be viable if the material conditions of life of the masses have experienced a very marked decline, while the bourgeois ideological predominance begins to seriously break down. It would be viable when the routes enabled by the system, that is, the union struggle, the electoral action, the public propaganda action, are obstructed, or even when they are open, they are obviously inoperative for the masses. This of course would have been objectified, in that situation, in concrete provisions and acts of repression. **In short, an armed apparatus could carry out a political activity by itself, without a party, when the spontaneous evolution of the process generated generalized, intense and compressed social unrest.** Foquismo would only be viable in the framework of a great despair of the masses who could not find political channels to express themselves. In short, focus would be viable, when social motivations had a dimension and depth much greater than they currently have. This would allow, in the name of these social motivations, to generate a dynamic of massive popular support for the focus. It would allow to effectively massify the process of armed struggle in a short time. Only under these conditions would the foquismo achieve an insertion or an effective political capitalization of the masses. The configuration of these conditions may still require a more or less prolonged period; This will depend on the speed that the process of economic-social deterioration acquires and on the efficiency with which this deterioration at the

tion, insofar as it is oriented towards objectives of social transformation, are real and of a general nature. In our opinion, the difficulties to obtain military victory over the bourgeois repressive apparatus operating as an urban guerrilla are not exclusive to the foquismo, but have general scope and validity. We think that whenever urban guerrilla activity has objectives of profound social transformation, The specific forms of armed action embodied by urban guerrilla practice are insufficient, by themselves, to achieve victory, that is, the destruction of the repressive armed apparatus.

In the aforementioned cases of anti-colonial struggle, the urban guerrilla habitually operated as a factor of political pressure rather than as a factor of decision in the military field.

The urban guerrilla in Israel, in Cyprus, even in Ireland, operated as an aid to the achievement of a compromise solution, always feasible, insofar as the objectives pursued, that is, the attainment of national independence, did not compromise the foundations of the capitalist system. Obtaining independence in all these countries appeared to be compatible with the validity in them of the capitalist system. A colonial power suppresses and resists independence movements until the cost weighs more on the balance of costs (military costs and above all political costs, prestige costs) and advantages. At the moment when the military and political cost of conserving the colony is greater than the advantages obtained from it, the colonialists negotiate and — as in the cases cited — leave.

Why is this possible? Because normally it is the local ruling classes, the local bourgeoisie, who somehow achieve a “modus vivendi” even with the previously dominant imperialist power, who gains power and who exercises domination from formal independence. There is no break with the previously dominant capitalist system there. There is no break with the capitalist system there. There is only — let us say — a readjustment within it. This does not imply underestimating the importance of the movements of the anti-colonial struggle for independence, nor

the possibilities that they generate. But it is useful to specify the true scope of the objectives pursued by these movements because they condition the possibilities and the validity of the urban guerrilla as a form of armed action. And as we are talking about Uruguayan urban guerrillas, we always refer to the examples of anti-colonial struggle based on this methodology of military action.

In the case of dictatorships, that is, of political regimes located outside bourgeois "legality," a somewhat similar phenomenon occurs. Dictatorships resist while they can, but if the situation of armed conflict supported by the guerrillas continues, that is, if the dictatorship proves its ineffectiveness as a factor in restoring "order," the ruling classes finally end up abandoning the dictatorship and to negotiate the reestablishment of the liberal-democratic forms. This is also possible, as in the previous case, insofar as the dictatorial collapse and the "democratic" restoration do not imply profound social transformations. This is the case exemplified by the Cuban Revolution in its entire first stage, that is, in the guerrilla stage. As is well known, the process of radicalization and deepening of the Cuban Revolution was after the guerrillas came to power, that is, after the collapse of the dictatorship and the liquidation of its repressive apparatus. The radical nature of the elimination of the repressive apparatus was precisely what made the subsequent process of radicalization feasible. It is well known that these democratic-bourgeois revolutions usually stumble, in short, on the stumbling block constituted by the persistence, as an organized structure, of the repressive apparatus constituted in the dictatorial stage. The fact that this has not happened in Cuba does not modify the bourgeois-democratic character of the Cuban Revolution in its initial stage. It is well known that it acquired a social, radical reformist and ultimately socialist turn, throughout a process that spanned a couple of years after the collapse of the Batista dictatorship.

The decision of a more or less isolated group outweighs the behavior of social classes. This attitude is perfectly in keeping with the ideological position of certain petty-bourgeois sectors, specifically the educated petty bourgeoisie, the so-called "intelligenza" that operates in our country as a social force quite apart from the fundamental social classes, largely as a product of the delay in the level of consciousness of the working class. It is sometimes difficult to determine to what extent this behavior of petty-bourgeois groups really responds to the interests of the working class or to concerns of breaking through into the current social hierarchy. To what extent is his revolutionary spirit not determined by the presence of a bourgeoisie that blocks his expectations of bourgeois "social advancement" within the framework of a stagnant social formation.

Be that as it may, this foquista conception implies in the military the need to create a clandestine army. The need to create a clandestine army poses a reduced level of requirements for recruitment. When we say clandestine army, we are not referring of course to an armed apparatus of considerable quantitative dimension such as the MLN. A low level of demand for recruitment, together with a low level of demand regarding the political-ideological formation of the cadres, accentuates their vulnerability to repression. Politically ill-formed cadres are vulnerable to repression. The short-term conception underestimates the need to compartmentalize. The security aspect is underestimated insofar as it is considered easy to replace lost pictures and the period of the fight is considered short.

We believe these circumstances are at the bottom of the MLN's defeat beginning in April. **It is very difficult for a movement that develops within the framework of the foquista conception to overcome these weaknesses, which are only surmountable based on a long-term approach.** Even the open treasons registered at the leadership level in the MLN, apart from its anecdotal aspect, show the underestimation of the necessary political homogeneity at the

What is fundamentally about is to sustain the morale of the movement and the revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses, through deeds. So the facts have to be constant, sustained and of increasing importance. It is the constantly growing importance of the facts that the advance of the revolution means. It is the constantly increasing importance of the facts or the variation of the terrain on which they are made, which sustains the morality of the movement. Recruitment is defined around the propensity to do facts. The propensity to perform acts is defined in terms of a sentimental and emotional spirit. The sentimental and emotional spirit is generated in the facts. This ideology is viable, it is obvious, as the engine of a movement conceived in short-term terms. It is functional in a movement based on the assumption that its path will be made up of constant successes since the possibility of always operating in an upward direction means permanent success. The line sustained on the basis of always operating in an ascending direction supposes the underestimation of the enemy. Underestimation that is not supported by any conjuncture analysis. The facts have demonstrated the ruinous scope of this criterion.

Está implícita en la concepción enunciada, la pertinencia y la necesidad de ampliar constantemente los efectivos. La concepción cortoplacista conduce a la conclusión de que es necesario crear un ejército clandestino al menor plazo posible. Si la coyuntura política puede ser forzada, digamos así, a partir de acciones armadas, cuanto mayores sean las acciones armadas, cuanto mayor sea el aparato armado, más fácil y rápidamente se forzará la coyuntura política. Está implícita en este criterio la concepción voluntarista. Va unida a ello la confianza en el efecto multiplicador de las acciones armadas. Cualquier tipo de estructura social, política, económica, puede ser deformada y modificada con las armas, en el sentido en que lo desean voluntariamente quienes empuñan esas armas.

Political activity becomes a subjective decision of an operative group and not the product of a global process in society.

In short, if the rural pro-guerrilla guerrilla group was able to gain power in Cuba, it was due to the fact that the objectives that they were proposing, also in this case, were not incompatible with the capitalist system and did not even have a too deep reformist character that made it not viable within the capitalist system.

The guerrilla, urban or rural, as a form of armed struggle, will have the possibility of obtaining victory to the extent that the objectives it sets are not incompatible with the validity of the capitalist system.

We understand as victory the achievement of the objective pursued. In other words, we understand that the anti-colonial urban guerrilla gains victory to the extent that it achieves independence, which is the end that is formulated, and that the democratic restoration guerrilla — let's call it that — achieves victory to the extent that it achieves the collapse of the dictatorship, which is the end that is postulated.

What happens to the repressive apparatus? In the first case, in the case of colonial wars, the colonial occupation army leaves for their country. Because the occupying army can leave the occupied country. In the second case, in the case of the "democratic" guerrilla, the army changes command or demobilizes, as in Cuba.

What both processes have in common is that the capitalist system still stands. The capitalist system does not appear to be questioned by guerrilla action, and that is precisely where the possibility of victory lies through the concrete form of military action involved in the guerrillas.

What happens instead if it is a revolution with a clear social content? What happens if the profound change of the social system is implicit in the activity of the urban guerrilla, if what is at stake is the system itself? The ruling classes in this case cannot yield. In Latin America, especially from the Cuban experience, it has become very clear, both for imperialism and for the local ruling classes, for the local bourgeoisie, that there

is no longer room to negotiate. The ruling classes cannot indeed negotiate their disappearance and cannot even negotiate, at this stage of the process, too radical changes in the social system, even if they do not immediately imply the disappearance of the capitalist system as such.

The possibilities of the system to “digest” reforms in the economic-political context of the continent are extremely limited. The alternative, therefore, for the Latin American ruling classes and imperialism, is to resist to the end all kinds of armed movements that question their domination. The army that depends on these classes cannot leave their country. The local bourgeois army cannot take the ships and planes and leave, it has to fight, succeed or capitulate. Nor can it accept that the “seditious” of yesterday are the rulers of tomorrow. Those local armies will resist. Their defeat will be the end of the system and therefore they will resist to the end.

The crude question must then be asked: Can an urban guerrilla alone achieve on the military level the destruction of the repressive apparatus? In other words: Is the urban guerrilla a militarily ideal way to consummate a revolution with radical social transformation objectives, a socialist-type revolution? Of course, also in the case of a social revolution, the central purpose of the urban guerrilla is to process the political conditions that lead to the collapse of the armed apparatus of the ruling classes. Collapse that would not occur as a result of a military defeat in a direct military confrontation, hand in hand, let’s say, with the guerrillas. Everything seems to indicate that its function is not to seek victory, in a hand-to-hand confrontation with the army. Its function is to generate the political conditions that enable this victorious military decision. But to arrive at that victory, other forms of struggle need to be developed, which are no longer guerrilla-type.

In short, the urban guerrilla, if it is a social revolution, seems to have the ideal function of preparing the leap, the qualitative transition to another form of struggle through which if the de-

mass level. The focus rules out profound ideological modification, even of its own militants. Why? Because it is supposed that armed activity will generate a dynamic, the dynamic that we enunciated before, that makes obvious all this complex process visualized in the foquista conception, as too cumbersome. In short, armed struggle allows capitalizing bourgeois ideological values for the revolution. So there is no need to even argue with reformism. This is unnecessary, since the dynamics generated by the armed operations will drag reformism to the terrain of the revolution where it will be a caboose, or it will be destroyed by repression. In reality the political function in the foquista conception is deposited in the hands of the reaction. It is the repression in charge of persuading the people of the advantages of the revolution. For this to be possible and easy, it is necessary that revolutionaries do not present complex options, ideologies, complicated problems to the people. For this to be possible and easy, it is necessary that revolutionaries do not present complex options, ideologies, complicated problems to the people. For this to be possible and easy, it is necessary that revolutionaries do not present complex options, ideologies, complicated problems to the people.

It is necessary that the revolutionary focus maintains an extremely broad position in the ideological that does not hinder the accession of anyone, since it is expected that the accession will be massive, in the quantitative sense and massive in terms of the ideological level of the adherents. The cause is first social, then it is democratic and then patriotic. And everyone must be able to enroll in it. The form of propaganda must not have theoretical or ideological complexities, it must be accessible to all. Folklore is obviously the most effective way for this type of preaching. Propaganda content is emotional, not rational. The rational limits the possibility of adhesion and it is complicated; the emotional reaches everyone. Theory is of course dispensed with. It is the facts that define.

**aims to be a shortcut precisely because of the fact that it would be an attempt to quickly channel the bourgeois ideology itself towards the revolutionary cause.**

How would these political effects be achieved? Striking actions are needed to achieve them. The psychological impact requires a “crescendo,” a gradual and sustained intensification of actions. If you return to operating levels already exceeded, the impact effect decreases or disappears. The political effects of the operation volatilize if it does not follow a steadily ascending course. An effect similar to that of the intensification or expansion of the magnitude of the operations is achieved by varying the nature of these. Varying the type of operations and increasing the level of these in those branches or operational variants already carried out are the two ways to persist in achieving the psychological impact. The psychological impact generates sympathy.

In the expectation that the democratic and national revolutionary objectives are achieved by this method, it is not in the interest of developing this sympathy in the sense of a conversion, let us say, ideological, of a profound modification of the ideology of the people, since this does not it would be necessary.

The whole process is of course conceived as brief, a brevity that does not rule out a lasting of some years. The decisive factor is operational activity. The only thing that matters substantially is the development of the armed apparatus. Political capitalization can be done in terms of mere sympathy precariously framed in a mass movement, basically conceived as a fish tank where to fish, as a place of recruitment, as a place of recurrence to obtain the necessary support for the armed apparatus.

The political channeling of the sympathies obtained does not take the form of the party. This implies that the corresponding movement lacks a clear political, ideological and mass line. The focus really rules out a mass policy. The focus rules out the organization of a party, the only way to develop this policy at the

cisive victory can be achieved in the framework of the war in urban environment, is the insurrection.

The urban guerrilla, therefore, we believe, only legitimizes itself as a preamble and necessary and essential preparation for the insurrection. Insurrectional process that, of course, can take various forms, but which always involves the participation of sectors of the masses of a certain volume. It is impossible to conceive of an insurrection without mass participation. The criterion that must be supported in this matter is not plebiscitary, it is not electoral. It is not necessary to wait for half plus one of the inhabitants of a city to decide to rise up in arms to make an insurrection. This which may seem obvious, however, must be specified, because frequently, perhaps due to the weight of the electoral ideology itself that the ruling classes introduce into the proletariat, there is a tendency to assume or conceive of an insurrectional process as a kind of plenary mobilization, or slightly less, of the masses. This is what is frequently translated through popular statements that are often heard, such as “going out,” “something is going to happen here,” “going to have to go out,” etc.

An insurrectional process, of course, can include massive street demonstrations, but it is evident that this is not the substance. Like all armed action, an insurrection is decided centrally by operations, by armed combat and not by demonstrations on the street. Therefore, when we refer to the necessary participation of the masses in an insurrectionary uprising, we refer to a series of mass actions of different levels in the understanding that the most dynamic sector of the masses participates.

If we started from the basis that the direct participation of the majority of the population or the majority of the working class, even, is necessary. There has never been an insurrection with these characteristics. It is assumed that, when speaking of the masses, the most conscious, combative sectors are alluded to, that is, those sectors of the masses that, in fact, due to previ-

ous political work carried out by the party, are in a position to take an active part in such a movement. Mass participation is what there was in Spain in the year 36, it is what there was in Santo Domingo. By mass participation is meant participation of a sector of the masses. Not necessarily half plus one of the members of the population or the working class.

Another insurrectional possibility that is absolutely not ruled out in Latin America, which is relevant since we cite the example of Santo Domingo, is the one that can make its way in the midst of a confrontation between military sectors, where one of them won politically through political work, deliberately or through a conjunctural situation that drives it in that sense, politically won, we say, for the popular cause, receives and admits the support of the masses and eventually the support of the urban guerrilla itself.

In our opinion, any form of insurrectional action necessarily presupposes a prior military practice and the existence of a previously organized clandestine military apparatus with sufficient operational capacity and sufficient experience to channel, frame and bring to fruition an insurrectional process. This should be pointed out because the balance of the experiences of urban insurrections carried out in previous periods, leads to surprising findings. For these purposes, reference should be made to books such as "The armed insurrection" by A. Neuberger, edited by "The Armored Rose" in Argentina. The balance of the urban insurrections carried out in the 1920s, for example, in Europe and China by the communist parties, then encouraged by the Komintern for a revolutionary orientation, it shows that one of the fundamental factors of its failure has been the poor previous preparation. The little previous development of a specifically military, professionalized apparatus, we will say so, in military practice before the insurrection. Although the participation of the masses evidently emerges as an indispensable requirement, essential for the success of an urban armed insurrection, the balance of the accumulated ex-

**conceiving forms of popular power, and systematic criticism of the legal-political levels of organization of the dependent bourgeois state, and criticism of the political ideology that supports and informs this dependent bourgeois-state structure.**

Trying to summarize the military aspects of the foquista practice, let us state the following points: the foquismo in the MLN version postulates the criterion that armed activity alone can generate the political conditions of the revolution. What does the generation of these political conditions consist of? In the first place, the initial activity of the focus polarizes around it the opinion of the most politicized sectors. The sustained activity of the focus would generate repression, and this would sooner or later lead to the alteration of the democratic institutional framework. Starting from the existence of a dictatorship, the fight against it would polarize around the focus, the whole of political opinion that is no longer revolutionary, not just left, but even liberal. As long as the focus was sustained, always operating at higher levels, this would end up generating foreign intervention. She would put next to the focus the whole of the country. In political terms, the guerrilla war initiated by social motivations, would later acquire a democratic political content and later, in the final stage, a national war content. The focus would thus generate, starting backwards, let's say, the political conditions that traditionally (the Cuban case for example) generated the dictatorship. Instead of being a response to a stark dictatorship or colonial situation, the focus would generate them. Rather than being a response to open dictatorship, the focus would bring open dictatorship. Rather than being a response to direct foreign domination, the focus would attract direct foreign domination. By virtue of this, the focus would capitalize without the need for prior ideological struggle, that is, without the need to break the bourgeois ideological structures, it would capitalize on the very values of bourgeois ideology: liberal democratism and nationalism. **The focus strategy**

**radical change, will also undoubtedly be an insurrection for national ends.**

Associating socialist values with nationalist ideological values, we understand that it is an important element to expand the ideological sphere of action of the revolution. We do not want to enter here into a theoretical analysis regarding the content and scope of “patriotism” as ideology. We only want to formulate the hypothesis of its implementation as an ideological element without implying denying the need for adjustments to locate it in the general socialist conception. It is different, it seems to us since we are in this, the assessment that must be made of the liberal-democratic ideology. We said more than once already, that the operating scheme of the focus, supposed the initiation of military activity from social motivations, then prolonged towards the rehabilitation of liberal democracy, once the same action of the focus had generated sufficient and prolonged repressive factors after defending the national cause, insofar as it motivated an intervention. On the link between the social motivations of the armed struggle and the national struggle, we have suggested something above.

Regarding the link of social motivations with liberal-democratic ideological values, we think that behavior should be different. We do not believe that liberal-democratic institutionality is the goal of the struggle under any circumstances. We believe that a genuinely revolutionary movement has to postulate, as far as possible and compatible with the level of popular understanding, objectives of political organization different from the traditional bourgeois-state organization. The bourgeois state structure must be denounced and fought on the ideological plane from now on. We therefore do not share at all the perspective of a stage of pro-democratic struggle, as the focus would propose. **The Uruguayan revolution will be socialist and national, but it should not be liberal-democratic. You must postulate a totally different power structure. This implies the work of**

perience clearly demonstrates that the development of a clandestine armed apparatus is another requirement, no less indispensable for the success. This is still valid even if support is obtained from a more or less important sector of the bourgeois army itself. professionalized, we will say so, in military practice before the insurrection. Although the participation of the masses evidently emerges as an indispensable requirement, essential for the success of an urban armed insurrection, the balance of the accumulated experience clearly demonstrates that the development of a clandestine armed apparatus is another requirement, no less indispensable for the success. This is still valid even if support is obtained from a more or less important sector of the bourgeois army itself. professionalized, we will say so, in military practice before the insurrection. Although the participation of the masses evidently emerges as an indispensable requirement, essential for the success of an urban armed insurrection, the balance of the accumulated experience clearly demonstrates that the development of a clandestine armed apparatus is another requirement, no less indispensable for the success. This is still valid even if support is obtained from a more or less important sector of the bourgeois army itself. The balance of accumulated experience clearly shows that the development of a clandestine armed apparatus is another, no less indispensable requirement for success. This is still valid even if support is obtained from a more or less important sector of the bourgeois army itself. The balance of accumulated experience clearly shows that the development of a clandestine armed apparatus is another, no less indispensable requirement for success. This is still valid even if support is obtained from a more or less important sector of the bourgeois army itself.

Of course, a third element that must be permanently taken into account — we hope to develop this more widely on another occasion — is the essential need for political work on the repressive apparatus of the ruling classes.

We can define three requirements as indispensable for the success of an urban armed insurrection, that is: 1) The participation of important sectors of the masses through actions of different levels; 2) The previous existence of a clandestine armed apparatus with military experience already acquired that would lead the process; 3) The existence of previous political work on the elements of the repressive apparatus. These three requirements obviously presuppose the existence of a thorough prior political work, which can only be taken over by the party as an organization capable of developing, promoting and harmonizing these various activities from a center of common leadership.

This conception of armed insurrection leads, once again, to the conclusion that party structuring is the fundamental goal in the stage of processing the conditions for insurrection, and not the other way around. In other words, armed action is processed through a political center and the political center is not processed through armed action.

Let us make some more precision, because when we speak of insurrection there is a risk that this term will be somewhat emptied of content. The armed struggle in Latin America has been soaked from the beginning with the notion that its fundamental and almost unique form is the guerrilla, that in the general mind, the term insurrection says little, evokes little. Or what it evokes is precisely the idea of crowds taking to the streets, etc. When we refer to urban armed insurrection, we are referring to things like "bogotazo," type "cordobazo," type Santo Domingo, with the active participation, in addition, of a previously developed armed apparatus, all under the leadership of a revolutionary party.

We understand that in Córdoba, in Bogotá, in Santo Domingo, the conditions existed for a mass participation in the insurrection. What did not exist in Córdoba, what did not exist in Bogotá, what did not exist even in Santo Domingo (where that role was assumed by a fraction of the army) was

for this independence to endure and become a reality is to overcome of the bourgeois structure in our country. Uruguay, within the framework of the capitalist system, is destined for the gradual loss of its independence. **Only by ceasing to be a capitalist can it retain its status as an independent nation. Uruguay will be independent to the extent that it is socialist. In this way, socialism and nationalism arrive, it is true, at a final convergence.**

Every conception of the nation is inseparable from a class perspective. The homeland according to the bourgeois notion is the homeland for the bourgeois. The nation in the proletarian conception, is only the socialist nation and therefore the demand for national independence and its consecration through a process of armed struggle is identified with the struggle for socialism. Uruguay will be independent if it is socialist or it will not be independent. Capitalism and increasing dependency are inseparable terms. Political independence is incompatible with the validity of capitalism in our country, because it inexorably leads to a growing dependence, not already referred to Yankee imperialism, but rather specifically referred to the bourgeoisies of neighboring countries, also dependent, of course. The Uruguayan bourgeoisie will necessarily be dependent on dependent bourgeoisies. This process will be faster, the greater the development of the neighboring dependent bourgeoisies on the one hand, and the greater and sharper and irreversible the process of economic-social deterioration becomes, which the dependent bourgeois domination drags into the country. Real national independence therefore demands the overthrow of bourgeois power in the country. the overthrow of bourgeois power in the country. the overthrow of bourgeois power in the country.

**Guerrilla warfare based on social motivations effectively at a certain moment acquires national connotations. A socialist insurrection, or at least geared towards**



It is clear from what is stated here, that also within the framework of the strategic conception postulated by us, there is room for a “national moment,” so to speak, of the revolutionary process, which can establish an apparent similarity with the focus. As stated here, the moment of the struggle for national independence is also subsequent, in time, to the social moment, that is, to the initial social stage, to the stage of social motivation of the guerrilla struggle. It is clear that given the particular conditions of our country, it is practically inconceivable to establish a socialist-type regime, or even to carry out profound social transformations without counting on the intervention of neighboring bourgeoisies. On the other hand, our country is fully immersed in a process of regional integration, that it is nothing more than the concretion of the general integration process correlative to the stage of penetration of monopoly capitalism in Latin America. In other words, what happens is that Uruguay, by various means, is integrating itself more and more fully into the economic sphere of neighboring countries. It can and does constitute, of course, a zone of friction between the dependent bourgeoisies of neighboring countries.

Undoubtedly, everything seems to indicate that bourgeois Uruguay would not be viable in the long term. Bourgeois domination in our country, therefore, is largely associated with the prospect of dependent integration with respect to the bourgeoisies of neighboring countries. The destiny of Uruguay as an independent country under bourgeois domination does not seem feasible. Bourgeois domination and durability of real political independence emerge as contradictory terms. In the term, the country is going to lose more and more its real independence without prejudice to maintaining a formal independence whose invalidity in the plane of reality will be more and more evident for all. If, in the context of its deterioration and the growing monopoly regional integration, bourgeois Uruguay is predestined to integration with neighboring countries and the loss of its independence, the only viable way

the prior organization of an experienced armed apparatus in a position to direct the process and able to include in the process of mass actions specifically military operations that would have had a determining scope. Of course, we temporarily leave aside here the problem of the possibilities of stabilization of an insurrectional situation in Córdoba for example. We are raising the issue, trying to frame it within certain guidelines. It is more than problematic indeed that a regime established through an insurrectional process in the city of Córdoba could be sustained. But we are referring to a certain stage of a process of armed struggle, trying to confront other hypotheses with what has been the focus on the issue.

Perhaps it is useful, to clarify this approach definitively, to compare this conception with the one that constitutes the so-called «people’s war», that is to say the «Asian model» we are going to say like this, applied in China and now in Vietnam, theorized by Mao and later adapted by Giap to the Vietnamese environment. This conception focuses, like the initial focus, on the decisive importance of the rural guerrilla, and maintains the need to convert it, through reversible stages, into a regular army. The people’s war, the “Asian war,” as its theorists describe it, is nothing more nor less than the process through which the urban guerrilla, conceived in terms quite similar to how it was posed in Cuba, becomes a revolutionary army. How from guerrilla-type action to open campaign, classic war, the field war, through a flexible process, staggered in reversible stages. Given the conditions of the war in Indochina, Mao, and even more so on the part of Giap, strongly insists on the necessary preservation of the possibility of retroverting, of reconverting the regular army into local militias, and of reconverting even the militia echelon. In guerrillas, again, if the balance of forces is too unfavorable. On the other hand, this is what happened in Indochina, at the time when the massive intervention of North American troops led the Vietnamese commanders to return, for a relatively long period, to guerrilla warfare. In the

previous stage, when they were fundamentally facing the puppet army of Saigon, they had already passed the classic war stage. In our days, development from rural guerrilla to rural war has been reproduced again. It is already being fought again in classical campaign warfare, because the correlation of forces, through the fighting process, has once again been favorable. The Vietnamese war brilliantly exemplifies the degree of flexibility, of ductility that is necessary in all kinds of protracted warfare. Ductility and flexibility that is only possible, naturally, on the basis of a deep level of politicization, not only of the personnel, but of the masses themselves. It would have been impossible for the soldiers and the Vietnamese people in general to “digest,” without serious demoralization, the need to restructure as guerrillas the regular army that was already operating in field warfare, in 63 when the massive American intervention began if there had not been a solid work of political preparation at all levels: at the level of the armed apparatus and at the level of the civilian population itself.

Any prolonged war in whatever form or methodology it takes, requires as an indispensable requirement the intensive politicization of the military cadres and effective political work at the mass level, so that the turns and changes that it necessarily implies are understood and assimilated correctly. Only from a narrowly short-term conception can the importance of political work at all levels be underestimated. Only from a short-term conception can the importance of the party as the only suitable instrument to carry out this political work be ultimately underestimated.

We thought it useful to make this statement about the basic criteria of the so-called «people’s war» to highlight its fundamental difference with the concept of war in urban settings that we are obliged to develop in our environment, and for which, of course These materials have no other aspiration than to be a first approach that enables discussion. The fundamental thing, therefore, in what has to do with the concept of peo-

this conception, the luck of the country only, but the luck of the revolution in the region.

Uruguay constitutes the point of greatest vulnerability in the regional imperialist chain, insofar as it is a country lacking viable bourgeois openings. The Uruguayan bourgeoisie has been unable to formulate a project, a development model that allows it to escape the process of increasing economic-social deterioration that it has suffered for decades. The trend of deterioration in all planes, far from attenuating, is constantly accentuated. The deterioration is gradually moving from the economic level, ultimately determining, to the political and ideological levels. The real capacity of the Uruguayan ruling classes to confront the revolution decreases as the deterioration deepens.

The ruling classes, we insist, have not been able and do not seem to have the means to formulate a project that means overcoming this situation. Their only response has been to intensify the repression, which although it has earned them military success, undoubtedly constitutes a politically invalid and risk-laden response for the future. The polarization of the struggles in Uruguay, due to this circumstance, that is, the lack of bourgeois exit, is practically inevitable as long as the process of deterioration continues. Nothing suggests, today, his arrest, not even his stagnation. On the contrary, by periods, it acquires a higher speed. It is this situation that fully legitimizes the validity of armed action from now on in our country.

The viability of an insurrectional outcome must consult, in addition to the internal situation, the global situation of the region. The most dangerous aspect of this is rooted in the bourgeois development of Brazil. **The inevitable internationalization of the Uruguayan revolution as an armed process, that is, the fact that it inevitably ends in foreign intervention, seems to suggest the relevance of a very long stage of struggle faced in guerilla terms, before reaching an insurrectional outcome whose situation it must be very precisely chosen.**

a pro-foco approach. The insurrection requires the prior existence of a party and the development of its own armed apparatus capable of operating for a long period as an urban guerrilla. The success of an insurrection cannot be trusted to the spontaneity of the masses, nor can it be trusted to the voluntarism of the armed apparatus, operating in isolation or more or less isolated from the masses. **The insurrectionary conception of the destruction of bourgeois power requires work at two levels: at the mass level to create the political conditions for the insurrection; at the armed level to create the armed apparatus that, prior to the insurrection, structures its tables and is the element of shock, of rupture of the insurrectional process.**

In the concrete conditions of our national social formation, it cannot be established that a victorious insurrection process is sufficient in itself to implant popular power in Uruguay alone. We must start from the basis that the destruction of bourgeois power in our country is only the opening of a new stage of struggle against foreign intervention. It would be absurd to conceive of “socialism in one country” in Uruguay.

After the destruction of bourgeois power in Uruguay, the struggle is internationalized outward and nationalized inward, in the sense that foreign intervention is practically inevitable, given the geopolitical situation. The political intervention of the bourgeoisies of neighboring countries or directly of imperialism necessarily converts the social revolution into a revolution in defense of national independence. At the same time, it transfers the effects of the Uruguayan revolution to neighboring countries. To the extent that the revolution triumphs in Uruguay, it will not, by itself, be able to establish itself here, but it will be able to initiate a stage of internationalization of the revolutionary political effects. Then begins the 2<sup>nd</sup> period of prolonged struggle against foreign intervention, period in which the fate or destiny of the region is involved and not only of our country. Uruguay would not gamble, according to

ple’s war, is that the military outcome, the victory within the framework of this conception, is located on the same plane as classical warfare. The military outcome of the people’s war is sought through the confrontation between regular armies, through campaigns, and field warfare.

The formation of guerrillas, of support bases with land occupation, of intermediate echelons of local militias, all points and presupposes the culmination of the formation of a regular army, capable of defeating the enemy, the enemy regular army in classic pitched battles. Ultimately, the Mao-Giap theory teaches how a regular revolutionary army can be formed, outside the bourgeois or colonial state apparatus, and how it can win the bourgeois or colonial army in a people’s war, a field war. Mao’s protracted war ends, as is known, in the 1948 campaign, the year in which the communist army “conquered” all of China, defeating the army of Chang Kai Shek in regular warfare. The war against the French in Indochina ended with the military defeat of the colonialists at Diem Bien Phu, defeat that turns decisively negative the balance of advantages and disadvantages that the French command was forced to carry out and that pushes France to negotiate. In the so-called “people’s war,” therefore, the rural guerrilla (as in the orthodox, Cuban-type foquista conception) begins to end in the people’s army, which is a campaign army.

Can this conception be transferred to the conditions in Uruguay where the objectives of armed action are primarily social? Can an army within cities be properly structured from the urban guerrilla? This seems to us at least extremely difficult. From a level of armed action in the city, with characteristics of urban guerrillas, it is possible to reach intense harassment by the enemy forces, but the decision is made through an urban popular insurrection.

The final stage of the protracted war conceived in terms of “people’s war,” or “Asian model” war, say, consists of a military campaign conceived within more or less classical patterns, that

is, a regular war between regular armies. The final phase of the war that we need to develop in our environment, starting with an urban guerrilla, ends in an insurrection, also, basically, urban.

We are referring, of course, to the terms in which this problem is posed within the framework of Uruguayan social formation. Of course, if we project this problem to the general Latin American dimension, the attitude of the people's war is not a priori discardable, although it would have to be subjected to a quite meticulous criticism based on the appreciations, which we believe to be fundamentally true, which it formulated regarding the "people's war" Régis Debray in "Revolution in the Revolution?" He stressed that even in rural Latin American environments, the situation is far from equivalent to that of Asian countries due to a series of specific circumstances that he stated there: low population, local settlement of a repressive apparatus, peculiar characteristics of social structuring of the peasantry, etc.

It is evident that the fundamentally urban character of the struggle in our environment, both in its initial stage of urban guerrilla warfare and in the phase of its insurrectional resolution, attaches a more serious importance, even more decisive if possible, than in the Asian "people's war," to the political dimension of military practice. Action in urban areas makes the connection with the masses decisive in the sense that from the beginning the operation of the armed apparatus must be guided by a criterion of action by and for the masses in their military practice. The urban characteristics of war condition it much more politically than to any other type of revolutionary military tactic because the development of the clandestine armed apparatus of the urban guerrilla does not constitute, militarily speaking, an end in itself, but a means of contributing to promoting a political development of the masses. The successful insurrectionary outcome carries with it the idea of this previous political work. The insurrection can only be victorious

Military victory somehow demands a strategic offensive. The impossibility that the guerrillas can go on the strategic offensive transfers the "effects" of the offensive to the political plane. The only decisive military offensive, in an urban setting that can destroy the repressive apparatus, is insurrection, which, in turn, is an irreversible eventuality. Either the final victory is obtained or it means a serious defeat on the military plane.

In short, the urban guerrilla, as such, seems to be necessarily locked in the strategic defense. The possible strategic offensive for the urban guerrilla consists of insurrection. **As the strategic offensive is an indispensable requirement for victory, and insurrection being its only urban form, only with insurrection can victory be achieved.**

The insurrection, as we mentioned before, involves three conditions: the availability of a previously organized and experienced clandestine armed apparatus; the support of the masses or of sectors of the masses important enough to gravitate in the insurrectional act, participating actively in it; and prior political work that allows the widest possible demoralization or disintegration of the repressive apparatus. Of course, an insurrectional action involves a careful evaluation of political factors, and it is absolutely impossible to deduce it from a voluntarist decision of the armed apparatus, important as it is. An insurrection isolated from the masses is totally inconceivable. An act of harassment, such as that proposed by the MLN from April, to the extent that it does not point to an insurrectional outcome, nor is it capable, by itself, of producing the liquidation of the bourgeois armed apparatus. The harassment, as intense as it may be, remains locked within the characteristic of strategic defense. **Only the insurrection supposes the overcoming of the strategic defense and the passage to the stage of the strategic offensive.**

The obvious political implications of an insurrectional process totally exclude the possibility that it may be faced from

of the houses. **It is there, in general terms, where the most vulnerable flank of any clandestine organization opens, and it is precisely that vulnerability that grows as the number of people framed in these organizations extends or increases.**

In another aspect, even though it is numerous, the urban guerrilla, always operating in enemy terrain, presents enormous difficulties in concentrating sufficiently to decide major confrontations. It is a law of its operation to avoid this type of confrontation. It is well known that for long periods, especially in the initial periods, it is normal in all guerrilla activity to avoid encounters with the enemy as much as possible. But it happens that without confrontation, without "battles," we are going to say, there is no possibility of military destruction of the enemy army. It is not by avoiding confrontations that an armed decision can be reached. The urban guerrilla can achieve great political effects on the enemy, but based on this characteristic that we are writing down, it is very difficult to achieve important military decisions. The difficulty to concentrate, derived from the fact of always operating in enemy territory, determines that in confrontations, the urban guerrilla is normally weaker than the opponent, which implies the need to avoid these confrontations and therefore the technical impossibility of achieving the destruction of the opposing army.

**In short, the urban guerrillas, until now insurrectional, have been locked in the strategic defense, no matter how circumstantially the tactical offensive may be. It can only strike the enemy sporadically, waging a war without a territorial dimension and therefore without fronts and without sustained actions.** Although the enemy does not have stable fronts either since they are created and disappear in every action, he nevertheless controls the terrain and has the strategic offensive permanently in his hands.

insofar as this prior political preparation action, within which the activity of the urban guerrilla is a fundamental element, has been fully developed. This is so because, ultimately, the insurrectional outcome will not depend centrally on the prior technical-military development of the armed apparatus, but on the efficiency with which it has managed to insert itself and gravitate at the level of those masses, together with which it can be obtained by insurrectional way a victory decision. The effectiveness with which the urban guerrilla has managed to insert itself will depend more on the fairness of its line and its political action than on its technical development. Without this implying, of course, at all, underestimating the need for specifically technical development of the armed apparatus, which as we stated above constitutes an indispensable factor for all insurrectional success insofar as it is he who is leading and leading the armed actions that determine the insurrection success. From the fairness of the work in the masses by the armed apparatus, which supposes, of course, the existence and action of a party that directs the whole process and whose political practice goes far beyond the limits of the sole and exclusive military practice, of the Justness of that mass action we say, the possibility of developing the conditions for the insurrection depends.

It would be possible to make some applications aimed at addressing the hypothesis that it is, if not impossible, at least enormously difficult, to form an army with the characteristics of a regular army from the urban guerrilla. In other words, to abound in the hypothesis that the urban guerrilla as such, cannot obtain the military victory over an army in an open war, in an urban environment. In other words, what we are trying to substantiate is the affirmation that the urban guerrilla can only rise, as a superior form, to an insurrectional outcome and cannot, or at least is enormously difficult, raise it to a superior form. constitution of an army with the characteristics of a regular army capable of deciding in the urban environment, through regular warfare, military victory.

From the rural guerilla, it is necessary to go through an intermediate stage of constituting a regular army in conditions to develop a classic campaign war, as a precondition to the military outcome, while from the urban guerrilla, it is not possible to reach the constitution of a regular army and yes it must pass directly to the insurrection. Between the rural guerrilla and victory there is a regular war.

Between the urban guerrilla and victory there is only one insurrection. Hence the supreme delicacy of the insurrectional moment, since the insurrectional experience is largely irreversible. An insurrection ends in victory or serious defeat. On the other hand, the intermediate stage between the rural guerrillas and the victory, constituted by a period of regular war, does not have gravity as a political option that covers the choice of the insurrectional situation.

The urban guerrilla is condemned, let's say, to be just that, guerrilla, urban guerrilla, until now, necessarily very well chosen, of a generalized insurrection. It would be long and surely inopportune to state here all the technical reasons that, in our opinion, decidedly hinder the conversion of an urban guerrilla into an army capable of contesting victory against the enemy in open action, that is, in formal combat. Of course, when we refer to open action, to formal combat, we are not referring to the insurrection that we defined as the necessary culmination of the process of urban guerrilla struggle, but to a kind of previous stage that in the pro-conception of the MLN was intended define as "war." A kind of intermediate stage, inserted between the guerrilla activity itself and the armed outcome. The insurrectional hypothesis never formulated in precise terms by the MLN could be implicitly assumed as the crowning glory of the process that this movement defined as "war" or "campaign of harassment."

It would seem clear that between the guerrillas and the insurrection, the MLN envisioned the possibility of a period of frequent operations and of a relatively important dimension,

of the Flea" and "The War of Ireland" by Vicente Talón; to similar references by Menahem Beguin on the IRGUN of Palestine in "Rebellion in the Holy Land." In general terms, it could be said that practically all the urban guerrillas that have operated throughout history have had extremely small troops, measurable in numbers of not more than a few hundred fighters. And never again of that. We reiterate that one of the reasons that we think significantly increased the vulnerability of the MLN was to violate this kind of saturation law.

Another notable circumstance is that the urban guerrilla lacks a rear guard, does not dominate space, and therefore lacks a secure retreat on the ground. In the urban environment, the enemy is obviously the owner of the entire territory and the only withdrawal that remains for the urban guerrilla is the *infra* that it generates.

The quantitative development of the troops that we just mentioned necessarily puts pressure on the availability of *infra*, whose development, in turn, is tendentially much slower and more difficult than recruitment itself. The growth of combat personnel thus inevitably leads, at a certain height, to a "bottle-neck" in terms of *infra* and related services. This seems quite clear to us and is what the whole experience indicates. It is much more difficult, especially at a certain operational rate, to obtain houses and the setting up of the services corresponding to a clandestine organization, than to recruit fighters. The experience of the MLN also supports this statement since, although there was a powerful development of *infra*, the availability of troops far exceeded its possibilities. On the other hand, in repressive terms, what falls, and what falls hopelessly are the houses, which cannot move, let's say so. And heavy equipment prevents you from being able to move with agility. What most easily avoids repressive action is obviously what can move and in this world what can move the most are people.

So that the *piolita* is cut by the side of the *infra* and by the side of the deterioration of the services correlative to the fall

If this is really what was sought, it implies a serious lack of perspective, a very erroneous evaluation of the military situation, of one's own possibilities and that of the enemy, of the correlation of forces. Also, of course, an inadequate evaluation of the political situation, that is, of the possibilities of the system to "digest" very high degrees of violence, without being forced to decisively break the ideological veils that cover its dictatorial essence and allow it to maintain ascendancy and hegemony over broad sections of the masses.

This is not the fundamental aspect that we are interested in analyzing now, but rather we are more interested in insisting on the specifically military face of this policy that the MLN tried to undertake in April. We believe that the analysis of the characteristics of this change derives the confirmation of the enormous difficulties that an urban guerrilla faces in becoming superior operational levels, roughly equivalent to those of a regular war. In other words, how the urban guerrilla is to a certain extent condemned to be a guerrilla until the moment of the insurrection and cannot properly become an army. We will mention it in a necessarily schematic way, because otherwise we would go very far some of the reasons that determine this.

In the first place, the quantitative development of the troops appears quite clearly as inversely proportional, say, to the degree of security of an urban armed apparatus that, by definition, is always in the presence of the enemy and exposed in conditions of dispersion to repressive action. **We believe that one of the determining reasons for the rapid collapse suffered by the MLN lies precisely in having exceeded the limits compatible with security in terms of the quantitative development of its troops.** This reasoning supports the scant dimension that we systematically see attributed to urban guerrilla movements. For these purposes, we refer to the description of EOKA troops, for example, which is made in "The Flea War" and given by Grivas in his book "Guerrilla Warfare"; to the description of the IRA troops in the same "War

which would become the equivalent, in urban settings, of what is the period of regular warfare in the middle rural according to the concept of «Asian people's war». This hypothesis is corroborated by the clear attempt to extend military operations to the field. It could be considered that what the MLN tried to put into practice starting in April, was an operational modality approximately similar to that developed by Grivas and EOKA in Cyprus. In other words, an intense urban activity paralleled by the action of operating groups, quite numerically restricted, in the countryside. Of course, that operational stage was not sufficiently defined by the MLN leadership and the terms in which things happened do not allow us to get a clear idea of the modalities or objectives that the MLN leadership intended to achieve by postulating the intensification of operations under the title of "war."

It seems quite clear, from the published documents, and even from the facts, that the leadership of the MLN considered that in April a qualitative change in the levels carried out until then was being processed, a qualitative change meant by a noticeable leap in the dimension of operations being faced. The fact that these operations have not had the opportunity to be carried forward by the development of events as they occurred, does not prevent us from considering that they were indeed incorporating objectives of defense of "legality." Thus conceived, the MLN would become the vanguard of a broader popular movement that could eventually adopt the banner of democratic restoration.

Had military repression been overcome as police repression had previously been overcome, it would have created for the Uruguayan ruling classes and for their already openly dictatorial government, a situation very difficult to overcome that in MLN politics could have led to foreign intervention. If this were to occur, they would pass into the hands of the MLN, in addition to the flag for the defense of liberal "democracy," the flag for the defense of nationality, which would have ultimately

turned the social cause into a national cause, with the consequent expansion of the political possibilities of the Movement in the masses.

The guerilla initiated by social objectives would thus become, to the extent that it lasted, in the fight for democratic freedoms, and to the extent that it lasted, overcoming the repression of the army, in the fight for the defense of sovereignty, since the Army as before the police, the only recourse left to the ruling classes was to make way for foreign intervention.

## Part 2