

INTERNATIONAL REPORT  
News & Letters Convention  
September 1, 1974

# LATIN AMERICA & THE U.S.

By Eugene Walker

- PART I: Latin America and the United States -- An Imperialist Relationship P.1
- PART II: The Plunge toward Revolution -- From Cuba to Chile to Today P.3
- PART III: One Relationship Between Theory and Practice -- Organization as the Dual Rhythm of Proletariat and Philosophy P.6
- PART IV: Latin America and the United States -- A Revolutionary Relationship P.8

Post-Convention Bulletin #2

September, 1974

News & Letters

1900 E. Jefferson

Detroit, Michigan

48207

35¢

5110

"Each new stage of exteriorization (that is, of further determination) is also an interiorization, and greater extension is also higher intensity."  
--Hegel

PART I : LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES --AN IMPERIALIST RELATIONSHIP

If Vietnam showed American imperialism in all its nakedness, Latin America has, through the years, been victim of the full range of its capabilities--economic, military, political, social. From Chile to Guatemala, from the Dominican Republic to Mexico and everywhere in between, that history has been amply documented. The image of relations between the United States and Latin American countries has been reduced to caricature--be it Uncle Sam and the Banana Republics, or of Big Brother with the helpless peon. In truth, that is what relations between the United States and Latin America are--a living caricature of relations between "free nations." To paraphrase from Marx on commodities: Whence, then arises the enigmatical character of the relationship between nations, so soon as it assumes the form of imperialism? Clearly from the form itself. Under capitalism the "fantastic" form of imperialism is the only one that relations between nations can take.

Such relations with the United States has left the vast majority of Latin America in a poverty-stricken condition with one or more of the following characteristics: 1) "Modernization" without industrialization, 2) Industrialization without development, 3) Militarization, 4) Feudalistic relations in rural areas.

By the first of these conditions--modernization without industrialization--we mean to say that there is an urbanization in Latin America which in a number of countries is occurring at a much faster pace than industrialization. There has been a large influx of people from rural areas into the city and a tremendous increase of the urban population. Three-quarters of Argentina's and Chile's population are urbanized. More than half of Peru's, Brazil's and Colombia's populations live in cities. And yet save for Brazil, the industrialization of Latin America is not matching the urbanization. In addition, the manner in which industrialization takes place does not produce a large industrial proletariat. Where in Britain the production of the first million tons of steel required some 370,000 people, it is estimated that only seven or eight thousand workers are needed to produce each million tons of steel in Argentina, Brazil or Mexico. Peru has one of the most highly developed fishing industries, but the total labor force engaged in the fisheries and processing plants does not exceed 30,000 people.

Underdeveloped countries today do not take the old path of the industrial revolution. Modern industrial technology, with its domination of dead labor over living labor is a phenomenon not only of the industrially developed world, but the underdeveloped world as well. Urbanization without industrialization and capital intensive industrialization has meant hundreds of thousands in the city who either have no jobs, or have jobs marginal to the productive process.

The industrialization that does come to Latin America has little relation to development. The growth of the Brazilian economy is the latest "economic miracle." In point of fact that economic growth has done little to develop the country. There is production of fancy cars for export, but not of trucks needed in the interior. Production is for the international capitalist class, as Europe, the United States and Japan set up production plants. It is almost as precarious as a one-crop country since it is dependent so totally on the

international market. Everything is geared toward supplying the bourgeois product on an international scale. In this international economy the native bourgeoisie doesn't even fulfill its historical role of developing its own country. Capitalist development will mean precious little in the way of real development for the continent.

With or without industrialization, the one factor which is growing in Latin America is the militarization of the governments. The continuing crisis of underdevelopment and the continued presence of the United States makes it no accident that militarization of the continent is in full swing. The United States has, in the post-World War II period, been the trainer of the military and the supplier of arms for Latin America. The U.S. Army School of the Americas has trained thousands of Latin American army and police officers in areas of operation from urban counterinsurgency and jungle operations to command and general staff operations. The armaments have flowed to the military in a steadily rising stream. While economic aid to the Allende government was stopped dead, military aid to the armed forces of Chile continued unabated. No matter what the economic crisis of a country, its military via the U.S. is assured of a healthy condition.

The military in the past 25 years has often served as the second government of Latin American countries. But so intense have been the conflicts in Latin America that the national bourgeoisie has in many cases been unable to govern effectively. Rather than risk the possibility of that developing into a social revolution, the military, often with the direct approval and aid of the United States, has taken over rule from the bourgeoisie. Even when the military has taken an "anti-U.S. stand," as with Peru, the threat of a disruption of class relations by the masses has brought a sharp limitation by the military government.

No topic has occupied more of the liberal bourgeoisie's rhetoric in Latin America than agricultural reform and increased agricultural productivity. Agricultural technology combined with controlled agricultural reform is bandied about as the solution. But the myth of real economic development without requiring transformation in the social bases of agricultural relations is destroyed by looking at the progress of such reforms during the past few decades. Solon Barracough analyzing figures from the Inter-American Committee for Agricultural Development writes, "Agricultural production in Latin America as a whole has actually fallen by about ten percent per capita from estimated pre-World War II levels. It has just barely kept pace with population growth during the last two decades. . . Malnutrition is widespread among large sectors of the Latin American population, both rural and urban. On the average the availability of calories and proteins is from one-sixth to one-third less in these countries than in those of Europe or North America. While the physical volume of Latin American agricultural exports is estimated to have increased by about 16 percent since the pre-World War II period, the volume of agricultural imports, mostly foodstuffs, has gone up by over 80 percent. This has had serious repercussions on the balance of payments of most Latin American countries."

The feudalistic relations in rural areas remain so because capitalism has found it convenient to incorporate the old system as its own. Hugo Blanco describes the system in Peru: "The large landowner gives a parcel of land to the peasant to work for himself. As rental paying for this parcel, the peasant, the 'hacienda Indian,' is obliged to work the fields of the landowner, a specified number of days and in some cases pay a certain sum of money besides. The feudal-type relationship is complemented by other duties for the peasant: unpaid labor on construction, on roads (faena), on

transportation of produce (propio), domestic work in the landlord's house (pongo)."

Capitalism may have introduced a further division of labor, but the basic system remains. In addition capitalism is busy destroying what remains of the indigenous communal village (ayllu) and its communal lands.

No ruling sector of the Latin American state--national bourgeoisie, imperialist manipulator, military generals--have had any solution for the masses rural and urban in Latin America. The masses instead began to search for their own and took the plunge into revolution.

#### PART II: THE PLUNGE TOWARD REVOLUTION--FROM CUBA TO CHILE TO TODAY

No revolution in modern Latin American history has had the impact of the Cuban. That the act of revolution on an island of seven million could ignite the imagination and action of many fold more million on a Latin American continent stretching from Mexico on the north to Argentina and Chile on the south, speaks loudly about the idea of revolution. As the East German Revolt and Hungarian Revolution spoke to East Europe, and the Kenyan Mau Mau and Ghanaian Revolution spoke to Africa, so the Cuban Revolution spoke to Latin America. And yet fifteen years after that upheaval no Latin American country has been able to join successfully in that new birth of life. And we must ask why.

The first words of explanation would begin "The United States," and the last words would echo the same thought. And we will speak of that more in the fourth section of the International Report. But we also must speak of the internal movement of revolution. What is the relationship between the act of revolution and the idea of revolution, not only in general, but in Latin America in particular?

As we have already noted, the act of revolution in Cuba inspired both the idea and concrete moves toward revolution in many Latin American countries. In that sense it was as the Russian Revolution of 40 years earlier. But there has been additional intervention--an attempt to substitute the particular act of the Cuban Revolution, that of a rural guerrilla warfare of military foci, for the Marxian conception of revolution as the working class's own way of knowing, the self-conscious activity of masses. This is not to say that the particular strategy of the Cuban Revolution should not be at the disposal of the revolutionary movement in other countries, to learn from and use at their will. Indeed the conception of the guerrilla was not the invention of Guevara or Mao, but was a historic fact in the civil wars through which Latin America gained its independence from Spain. However what is at stake here is not strategy and tactics. Guevara's Guerrilla Warfare and Debray's Revolution in the Revolution? are not alone books on military questions; they are essentially political works. And what is most crucial in them is the conception of a revolutionary subject.

While their attack on the reformism and counterrevolutionary nature of the Communist Parties of Latin America may be correct, their substitute for

them--military foci with its maximum leader--is their expression of the backwardness of the masses, not so far removed from the Communist parties they wish to separate themselves from.

Carlos Reneo, a co-worker of both Guevara and Debray spells out clearly enough their conception of the revolutionary subject: Latin American workers employed by foreign-controlled companies are "the labor aristocracy." Urban workers below this so-called elite "belong to the privileged economic technical strata." To the argument that 50, 60 and 70 percent of the population of a number of Latin American countries is now urban, the answer given is that we are not talking in merely quantitative terms. True enough, but to dismiss the urban population as irrelevant to revolution is no mere quantitative question. Proletarian internationalism is dismissed--"The experience of the national liberation movements reveals the indifference of the working class in the rich capitalist countries to the fate of their proletarian and peasant 'brothers' of the Third World, except when they must serve as cannon fodder in the struggle." With the peasants, sharecroppers, peons and Indians is where the guerrilla must work. But as for the peasant's idea of revolution, "The peasant's limited intellectual horizon does not call for a thorough exposition of that possibility, but for a palpable and liveable demonstration."

None of this is to condemn the Cuban Revolution. But the act of revolution, the movement from practice, was transformed into a very different idea of revolution when it was taken to other Latin American countries. Its most extreme example was Guevara in Bolivia. For several years this idea of revolution was tried--in Brazil and Peru, Ecuador and Guatemala, Colombia and Bolivia. But the support found in Cuba was not necessarily present among the population. And the United States had learned from Cuba and had developed new military means to deal with rural guerrillas.

Some groups, notably the Tupamaros in Uruguay, others in Venezuela and Argentina, who were inspired by Cuba, based their operations in the cities. Dramatic incidents involving kidnapping of businessmen and CIA agents as well as attacks on police and army installations took place. But here too, the movement floundered. Infiltrators allowed for round-ups, as with the Tupamaros after military law was declared.

What we witnessed during the 1960's was guerrilla warfare, in both rural and urban forms, put forth not alone as a or the strategy of revolution, but as the absolute of revolution. In that sense the conception of a revolutionary subject became reduced to those willing to take up the gun.

The failure to understand the nature of the revolutionary subject was not alone among those advocating guerrilla warfare as the path. Another form of revolutionary activity in the late fifties and early 1960s was the Indian peasant struggle in Peru. Centering in the Department of Cuzco was a mass movement of peasant unions. One of its leaders was Hugo Blanco, a Peruvian Trotskyist. In his book, Land or Death, he counterposes the mass base of the peasant movement, their spontaneous activity and their willingness to engage in guerrilla activities when necessary, to the reformism of the Stalinists and to those who see the guerrilla as a strategy rather than a tactic. But the greater part of his time is spent not in describing this movement, which he no doubt is organic to, but instead on the necessity of coordinating all the activities through the vanguard party--the carrier of consciousness. "We were, in a word, the representatives of the party in this zone, the conscious factor in the workers' struggle." The party is the end all and be all. Revolution becomes reduced to organizing under the party line--mass organizing to be sure--but organizing none theless.

I was really looking forward to reading his book, because even though he is described as a Trotskyist, I thought it would not really mean it in the sense we think of Trotskyism here, but rather as a revolutionary opposition to the Communists that others have named Trotskyist. But I was most disappointed. Instead of seeing the peasant movement, which arose in rural areas without the benefit of any party--Trotskyist, Communist, Fidelist--as a subject of revolution, Blanco analyzes that creative upsurge within the context of the Trotsky-Stalin debate: Yes, the peasants were great, but lacked truly revolutionary leadership. Peasant unions were the backbone of the movement, but there were not enough cells of the revolutionary party within them. The Stalinist version of the party within the peasant unions was contrasted to the Trotskyist version. The Stalinist program was contrasted to the Trotskyist program. All of this was not just for the peasantry of Guzman, but was transported to the fight between Stalinism and Trotskyism on a world scale. The magnificent Indian peasant movement was reduced to only one more outpost of this fight. Such an attempt to analyze that movement within the confines of the Trotsky-Stalin debate will surely end in trying to confine the actuality of that movement to the same plane rather than seeking a new way out based on the thought and action of the peasantry as a part of that revolutionary subject for Latin America.

The other major pole for revolutionary activity had been the Chilean experience. While it lasted, the election of a left-wing government was supposed to have shown another road to socialism. While in power it provided the example for Uruguay to also try to elect a left-wing government. The brutal overthrow by the military with U.S. aid, exposed the impossibility of having the government, but not the power. Here some of the left, especially the Communist Party, fostered illusions about the neutrality of such an institution as the military. The legality and legitimacy of the parliamentary system, the government, was raised on high, was substituted for the self-activity of masses. Again the revolutionary subject is something other than the Chilean people.

Institutions--from parliament to party, from guerrilla to elections, become a way of diverting from the question of the revolutionary subject.

Perhaps what is most disappointing, not because it is any worse by itself, but because of its timing, is a new statement from a portion of the Latin American left. Today, after the experience of the Cuban Revolution, but the failure of guerrilla warfare on the continent in the sixties, and after the Chilean parliamentary experience being crushed by the military junta--after both these experiences, a discussion of revolutionary strategy is quite insufficient. Instead, a rethinking of what is meant by social revolution is demanded. What have been the failures not only of reformism but of guerrilla warfare? Was there been a failure to complete revolutions not only because of the monstrosity of American imperialism, but also because the revolutionary movement has failed to grasp the meaning and power of a revolutionary subject? And if the revolutionary movement has failed in this regard, what has been the stumbling block?

Unfortunately the newest such document entitled "The Continental Revolution," a joint product of four groups from four countries, The National Liberation Movement (Tupamaros) of Uruguay, the National Liberation Army of Bolivia, the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) of Chile and the People's Revolutionary Army of Argentina, does not measure up to the challenge of the time.

-6-

The conception of a continental revolution, of coordination of movements, of combating the isolation of the bourgeois nation-state borders is certainly correct. But how is this to be brought about? The document announces their "decision to unite in a Junta for Revolutionary Coordination." This important step reflects a deep felt necessity to bring our people together organizationally to unite the revolutionary forces against the imperialist enemy in order to carry out more efficiently the political and ideological battle against reformism and bourgeois nationalism." They continue, "A prolonged revolutionary war (will be) necessary. . . in which all forms of struggle (armed and unarmed, peaceful and violent) develop around the axis of the armed struggles." "It is necessary to mobilize all the people under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat." But the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat is then transformed into quite a different thing. Such leadership is now "to be held by a Marxist-Leninist party of proletarian character, capable of centralizing, leading and uniting all aspects of the popular struggle in a single powerful unit, thus guaranteeing a just, strategic leadership."

And again we are organizing the party to lead as a unifier, a direction maker, "a single powerful unit." While not denying the need for organization, we must ask how far are we really from bourgeois nationalism and reformism if once again it is the single will of the self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist party which is the sole provider of "strategic leadership." Is that really the role of the party? Or is there a different test of leadership?

We must soberly face the fact that this newest attempt for revolutionary reorganization has not yet faced the job of working out the relationship between the theory of revolution and the practice of revolution. It is for this reason that we return to ourselves as News & Letters Committees and our working out the relationship between theory and practice.

### PART III: ONE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE -- ORGANIZATION AS THE DUAL RHYTHM OF PROLETARIAT AND PHILOSOPHY

We have organizationally worked out a new relationship between theory and practice, but need to become fully conscious of it. Only then will Hegel's expression of "the certainty of the Subject's actuality and the non-actuality of the world" be seen as a task to be done.

Where does our form of organization have its origins? In one sense we have never before seen explicitly the form of organization we are now practicing. And we should understand what great difficulties that means in presenting it to the outside as a necessary relationship of theory and practice. On the other hand, the form has been implicit since Marx. We have pointed out that Marx had no theory of the party separate from the mass movement. When he spoke of organization, it was the self-organization of the proletariat--1848, 1871. When a proletarian party was organized, the General German Workers' Association, but did not have the self-organization of the proletariat at its center, Marx felt compelled to speak of its leader Lassalle as

5116

a workers' dictator. From Marx we have the concept of the self-conscious activity of the proletariat--that was organization. But Marx had a second element. He writes of himself and Engels as "the party." Now he certainly didn't mean a party in terms of numbers of people, or that he and Engels would speak for the proletariat. He had something else in mind, and that was philosophy. Marx and Engels had the ideas of liberation in its historical-philosophic form, and that had to be in a party of the working class.

Those twin elements of organization--philosophy and proletariat--did not come to us today as whole cloth. We will not trace the veering and deviations they have gone through since the 1880s. Suffice it to say that not only the necessary, natural relationship between the two was lost, but the creative cutting edge of each in revolution was also lost. But we do want to look at how we as an organization recovered them.

The articles from Dixon and Frank in pre-convention discussion are of interest here. The move to the Workers' Party after formulating the theory of state-capitalism was not satisfactory. The Workers' Party lacked any proletarian base. Going back into the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) was in part because they were recruiting proletarians. But what became evident was that proletarians were not the basis of the SWP. There was not the conception of proletarians as leaders of a revolutionary organization, but only of the vanguard's influence over proletarians. So the move out of the SWP was anti-vanguardist, with the conception that workers should be leaders.

Now you really feel you have it--proletarians and supposedly anti-vanguardist. And yet there was another split and only after was News & Letters Committees born. Why was this necessary? What happened to the Johnsonites shows that proletarians did not remain at the center and anti-vanguardism became transformed into elitism. The element which comes alongside the proletariat and assures non-vanguardism becomes spelled out for us beginning in 1953. Two movements--one in practice and one in theory--end in philosophy as the other pole of organization which must be united with the proletariat. On the one hand we witnessed the East German Revolt and saw the movement from practice to theory and a new society within practice. What was revealed here has proven itself in the movement globally over the past two decades. On the other hand we had the letters on the Absolute Idea with their discovery that Hegel's Absolute Idea is the movement from practice to theory within philosophy which is spelled out in the relation between the Subject and the Notion. News & Letters Committees is the unity of these two currents, the dual rhythm of philosophy and proletariat.

This is our form, our ground. What we are concerned with in this Convention is the content, the practice of this form. This is what Philosophy and Revolution as Organization Builder means. We must have very specific answers here whether in the Women's Movement, Black Liberation, Labor or International Relations. Otherwise it will remain an abstraction. The concretization of this form of organization in our practice becomes our testing ground. Let us return to the International Question to see how we can work this out.

## PART IV: LATIN AMERICA AND THE UNITED STATES - A REVOLUTIONARY RELATIONSHIP

Hegel writes in the Absolute Idea of Science of Logic, "Each new stage of exteriorization, (that is, of further determination) is also an interiorization, and greater extension is also higher intensity." The Latin American masses have made it clear that they will not wait for anyone else's revolution to have their own. But the breadth of American capitalism's reach makes it imperative to have a relationship between revolutionaries in the United States and Latin America. No radical in the U.S. who does not see the movement in Latin America as integral to a revolution here, has grasped the concept of world revolution. At the same time there can be no successful revolution on the Latin American continent without a revolution at home.

The revolutionaries in Latin America are attempting to form ties between movements in various countries. We have commented on how we view internationalism in our August-September News & Letters: "Throughout Latin America there is an appreciation for internationalism as part of a search for a total solution to the class question within each country and in relation to the colonial domination of Latin America as a whole by the United States. The necessity to breakdown the isolation of both an actual revolutionary situation, such as Chile, and the revolutionary movements within each country becomes crucial. This internationalism in turn cannot be separated from a working out of revolution as the social act of masses of people, not the isolated act of groups or parties acting in the name of masses of people.

"The conception of a continent-wide struggle within any particular country must be worked out not alone in theory but in actual relationships. This is what has been demonstrated by the military takeover of an isolated Chile and the formation of alliances by the reactionary governments in Latin America. The forces of social revolution can no longer be isolated from each other either within or between countries. No people can substitute their social revolution for the revolution of others. But there can be a unifying cement of ideas of freedom which can act as a catalyst from one country to another."

It is here where Philosophy and Revolution and Marxism and Freedom in Spanish translation become a necessary contribution to internationalism. We have perhaps underestimated the tremendous impact of Marxism and Freedom in East Europe. Though no foreign language translation was possible, there is no doubt that in a number of East European countries, copies of Marxism and Freedom did reach serious revolutionary thinkers and coalesced with their opposition to the Stalinist bureaucracies from the left. Philosophy and Revolution has already begun to be discussed among the East Europeans.

The internationalization of Philosophy and Revolution can have its most concrete results in Latin America because our organizational presence is close at hand. The prospect of a tour by the author and chairwoman of News & Letters Committees when the books are published is of major importance. If we are to develop concrete relations with groups and individuals in Latin America this tour plus the continued assignment of News & Letters members to Mexico are a necessity.

But our internationalism must take its most comprehensive form at home. It is our work with the English edition of Philosophy and Revolution that will be the foundation for the internationalization of PER. Hegel's explanation of each new stage of exteriorization being also an interiorization is not a one-way movement. The reverse is also true. Interiorization--our creative

labor with Philosophy and Revolution within the United States--is also an exteriorization--the extension towards making the Latin American, indeed the world revolution, the order of the day. Internationalism leads us not away from home, but back home with a deeper, more intense relationship to the American Revolution.

The necessity of a U.S. revolution and the movement's responsibility for it should weigh heavily. Continuing with the Latin-American editorial: "For it is U.S. imperialism's role in Latin America which is the glue holding together the repressive governments who crush movements for revolutionary social change and it is U.S. imperialism which is providing the impetus for reactionary governments to unite.

"Our internationalism must begin with a thorough exposure of the U.S. role in Latin America for the U.S. people to see." Our reorganization of the paper in terms of the Latino Question is an important step in this direction. The paper report will go into more detail on this question. I will add only that two elements are present here--One, reports on Latin America written as much as possible by Latin Americans. Two, Latino contributors in the United States writing on the Brown Question here.

Our internationalism means that the building of our own movement at home is crucial because that is where our enemy is. Latino members in our committees is part of this process. The new Spanish pamphlet, Philosophy and Revolution and Marxism and Freedom in Spanish are materials which Latino revolutionaries whom we can win to our ideas can use in their work. In addition we have to decide whether to combine the new Spanish pamphlet within the covers of Black, Brown and Red pamphlet, which I would favor.

Our tasks, of exposing the U.S. role in Latin America, of building our own movement at home, of participating with Latin Americans in an interchange on the unfolding of a philosophy of liberation to unite with the activity of liberation--if all are approached comprehensively, then internationalism will not be only an historical question, but actual concrete practice towards a new human society.