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Fidel Castro

SPECIAL ISSUE

Those Who Are Not Revolutionary Fighters



**Cannot
Be
Called
Communists**

50¢

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[The speech made by Fidel Castro at the University of Havana March 13 in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the attack on the Presidential Palace in the struggle against the Batista dictatorship, has had considerable repercussions internationally. The imperialist press and the Latin-American journals influenced by Washington have sought to sensationalize the speech as signifying a rift between the Cuban and Soviet governments, and as "intervention" in the internal affairs of other Latin-American countries.]

[In the international Communist movement, the speech became an immediate topic of debate. The sectors of the movement adhering to the line of class collaborationism and "peaceful coexistence" either openly denounced it or indicated their displeasure in indirect ways. Contrariwise among the guerrilla forces, the speech met with strong approval.]

[Whatever the intrinsic merits of Castro's stand on the various issues he discusses, the March 13 speech thus at once became an important document in the development of the revolutionary struggle in the Western Hemisphere.]

[But the speech is, in addition, of considerable interest in the way it registers the continued deepening of the Cuban Revolution. It fits in with the renewed attention being paid by the Cuban leaders to the evils and the dangers of bureaucratism. This comes out very clearly not only in the attack which Castro levels against the right-wing leaders of the Venezuelan Communist party but also in his comments on what constitutes a genuine Communist.]

[Besides all this, Castro presents a good deal of new information concerning the internal struggle that has been going on in the Venezuelan CP over orientation. This is admirably combined with a powerful defense of the Cuban government against a most invidious and slanderous attack.]

[In view of the significance of this speech, World Outlook decided to make the complete text available to its subscribers despite its length. The translation is the official one which appeared in the March 19 issue of the English edition of Granma, the organ of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Cuba.]

* * *

Comrades Professors and University Students:

All present here:

In these ceremonies commemorating

the glorious assault of March 13, 1957, just ten years ago today, it has become a tradition for us to take up some essential aspect of a theme that interests the Revolution and the people. These themes may be extremely varied, but on these occasions we have generally analyzed, when circumstances have demanded it, a subject of international character. And today circumstances again demand that we treat this type of theme. (Applause.) We refer to the problems in Venezuela, the problems of the Venezuelan revolutionary movement, the accusations the Venezuelan puppet government has made against our Revolution and the charges of the rightist official leadership of the Communist Party of Venezuela.

For several days a tremendous campaign against our country has been carried on by the government of that country and by the Yankee news services, following the death of an ex-functionary of the Venezuelan government. And for several months in the clandestine and semiclandestine press, even in the legal press of that country, and at different international events, the rightist leadership of the Communist Party of Venezuela has been making similar charges against our Party. The proimperialist oligarchy says that we interfere in the internal affairs of Venezuela, and the rightist Party leadership that we interfere in the internal affairs of the Party in Venezuela. This is not at all a strange coincidence between reactionaries and rightists!

We have had to bring along a good number of papers, including numerous dispatches from various news agencies. And, following chronological order as much as possible, we are going to read the most important items appearing in these dispatches, which give a better idea of the sequence of events.

This first dispatch is datelined "Caracas, March 1 (AFP): Dr. Julio Iribarren Borges, former Social Security Director and brother of Foreign Minister Ignacio Iribarren Borges, was kidnapped here this morning. The kidnapping was perpetrated by three extremist elements armed with pistols who forced him into a vehicle which then drove off at full speed."

"Police authorities," the dispatch says further on, "presume the extremists to be young members of the so-called Armed Forces of National Liberation. The authorities have reinforced security measures to draw a tighter ring around the kidnappers, who may be hidden somewhere in the city."

Naturally, I am not reading the complete text of these dispatches, but rather paragraphs containing the essen-

tial items; many of the cables merely repeat the news, more or less, in one way or another.

"Caracas, March 1 (AP): A well-known Venezuelan public figure, Julio Iribarren Borges, brother of the Minister of Foreign Relations, disappeared today in mysterious circumstances.

"Julio Iribarren Borges is one of the most controversial figures of Venezuela due to the fact that he recently increased the Social Security tax. Beginning January 1, workers and employees have been paying a considerably higher contribution, while the promised expansion of social services has not gone into effect.

"A television commentator said that if the extremists did this, it is easy to imagine why they kidnapped Iribarren Borges, perhaps the most hated man in Venezuela at this time. They would prefer to kidnap him rather than a more appealing public figure." This is what the AP dispatch says.

Now: "Caracas, March 3 (AP): Julio Iribarren Borges, who disappeared Wednesday morning, was found dead about 24 kilometers from Caracas, police sources reported tonight.

"The police sources said that the body of Iribarren Borges, found near the Venezuelan Scientific Institute, had three bullet wounds in the back. Many leaflets, signed by the so-called Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN), reading 'We have three other political leaders on the list,' were found near the body."

"Caracas, March 4 (UPI)." Referring to the burial of Iribarren Borges, this dispatch contains a statement of the former Minister of the Interior of the government of Venezuela, which reads as follows:

"This is Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro with his methods in Venezuela, former Interior Minister and present leader of the parliamentary fraction of the government party, Acción Democrática, Carlos Andrés Pérez, declared to United Press International. 'The time has come for Venezuela and all the countries of Latin America to decide to do something about Cuba,' he added."

They Are Trying to Involve Cuba

"Caracas, March 4 (AP): Forty-eight hours after reestablishing constitutional guarantees, the government decided today to suspend them again following the assassination of Julio Iribarren Borges, outstanding public figure and

brother of the Foreign Minister, who was found dead near Caracas last night.

"The decision, taken in a Cabinet meeting held after noon today, was announced this evening by Reinaldo Mora, Minister of the Interior. This measure will serve to restrain the excesses committed under the stimulus of foreign ideas promoted from abroad by the dictatorship that took power in Cuba."

"Caracas, March 4 (AFP): Héctor Mujica, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Venezuela, energetically condemned today the assassination of Dr. Julio Iribarren, who died sometime between last Wednesday and Friday.

"Mujica, a lawyer and professor at the Central University of Caracas, referred to the crime, affirming that his Party categorically and unequivocally condemns this method of struggle, since it has nothing to do with either the revolution or the defense of the popular cause. He added that he had wired condolences this morning in his own name and in that of his family to Foreign Minister Ignacio Iribarren Borges, brother of the victim."

"Caracas, March 5 (AFP): Communist Party leaders Pompeyo Márquez, Guillermo García Ponce, and Teodoro Petkoff, who made a rocambolesque escape through a tunnel from the fortress of San Carlos in this capital last February 6, condemned the assassination of Dr. Julio Iribarren Borges.

"In a document sent to the national press as an official declaration of the Communist Party of Venezuela, the fugitives declared that personal assaults and methods of struggle considered characteristic of anarchy and terrorism not only are unrevolutionary, but damage the cause, and therefore merit repudiation."

"On Monday, March 6, 1967, the daily *Granma* carried declarations by Major Elías Manuitt on the execution of Iribarren in Caracas. The headline read, and we quote: 'Declarations of Major Elías Manuitt on the execution of Iribarren in Caracas.'

"The text of the declaration reads as follows: The government of Raúl Leoni, in a new demonstration of its growing weakness and fear produced by the numerous blows received from the revolutionary forces, has just decreed a new suspension of constitutional guarantees, using as a pretext the recent execution of Julio Iribarren Borges.

"Recently, on the occasion of the disappearance and assassination of the revolutionary leaders Andrés Pasquier and

Leoni Attempts to Accuse Us

Felipe Malaver by the AD (Acción Democrática) Government, the National Command of the FLN-FALN of Venezuela issued a communiqué stating that, for every combatant of the revolutionary movement assassinated by the government, the patriotic forces would answer with the application of revolutionary justice to three government personages, accomplices of the repression and misery prevailing in our country, governed by traitors in the service of the Yankees.

"In the cases of various missing members of the revolutionary movement, later proven to have been assassinated by the government, nothing has come of appeals to the regular courts of justice of our country, or of requests for information on their whereabouts, or of declarations to the press made by the mothers and wives of the missing persons.

"For these reasons, as the broadsides circulating in Caracas proclaim, our movement decided to apply revolutionary justice to Julio Iribarren Borges, important government figure and accomplice in the deceit and excesses committed against the workers of Venezuela through the obligatory Social Security, which Iribarren directed until a few days ago and from where, moreover, he worked as a spy and an informer for DIGEPOL. Many innocent Social Security employees and functionaries have been imprisoned as a result of the espionage and informing carried on by Iribarren Borges in that body as one more DIGEPOL agent.

"With each application of revolutionary justice, the assassins of the tyrannical government find no lack of echo to their laments among their followers and even among those who pretend to be neutral or in the camp of the opposition. But the people support and hail each one of these actions.

"We will continue to fight a war to the death against the enemies of our people, whether they are directly or indirectly implicated in the situation existing in Venezuela.

"None of Leoni's repressive measures, the new suspension of constitutional guarantees, the arrests, the tortures, and the assassinations will be of any avail. The people of Venezuela are no longer helpless; they have an armed vanguard, firmly consequent and decisive, that will protect them at all times, avenge their dead and lead them to final victory, which is no other than their definitive and total independence.

"Fight until Victory or Death!"

"Major Elías Manuitt Camero, President of the National Command FLN-FALN of Venezuela, Havana, March 4, 1967."

"Caracas, March 6 (AP): Today the investigations seeking to throw light on the assassination of Julio Iribarren Borges are continuing, and it is stated that one student and a key figure in the case have been arrested. A version is also circulating to the effect that Iribarren was friendly with an individual connected with certain ringleaders of a right-wing coup plotted from the Ramos Verde garrison last October. According to that version, the friend informed Iribarren Borges of the plot, and the latter denounced it. A police source stated that it is reasonable to assume that groups of this sector wanted vengeance."

"Washington, March 7 (AP): Caracas news sources announced tonight that the government of President Raúl Leoni has arrived at the conclusion that the plans for the assassination and other acts of terrorism against the people of Venezuela, committed in the country with the full support of the Cuban government, constitute a flagrant violation of international morality and order."

"Caracas, March 7 (AP): The Minister of the Interior, Reinaldo Leandro Mora, directly accused Cuba today of the kidnapping and assassination of a Venezuelan public figure. He added that the government may begin diplomatic action within the Organization of American States.

"The criminal acts of political terrorism are prepared, directed and financed in the Cuba of Fidel Castro," said Leandro Mora.

"Yesterday, in Havana, the Venezuelan leader of the so-called Armed Forces of National Liberation, Elías Manuitt Camero, said in a public communiqué that the FALN assumed full responsibility for the kidnapping and assassination of Iribarren Borges.

"This reveals," declared Leandro Mora today, "that the participants are not only delinquents, but are protected as well by a delinquent government."

"The Minister made his declaration moments before entering a routine Cabinet meeting in the Presidential Palace of Miraflores.

"The Minister was asked if Venezuela is considering the possibility of making new charges against the Castro regime in Havana within the Organization of American States. 'It is possible that the current Cabinet will consider such a possibility,' replied Leandro Mora."

"Caracas, March 7 (AP): President Raúl Leoni and his Cabinet decided today

to begin diplomatic action against Cuba for aid to and instigation of acts of violence against Venezuela, and will perhaps take the matter to the United Nations.

"The decision, announced by Manuel Mantilla, Presidential Secretary, is related to the kidnapping and assassination of Julio Iribarren Borges, brother of the Minister of Foreign Relations.

"The matter must be taken before the United Nations, since Cuba does not belong to the Organization of American States," stated Prieto Figueroa. The charges are based on the fact that the official news organ of Cuba published a communiqué of the so-called Armed Forces of National Liberation, in which these assumed responsibility for the kidnapping and assassination of Iribarren Borges."

"Prior to the meeting, Reinaldo Leandro Mora, Minister of the Interior, had charged Cuba directly with the crime and expressed the possibility that Venezuela might decide to take diplomatic action against Cuba."

"Caracas, March 8 (ANSA): While the government wages an intense battle to wipe out terrorism in the country, both through security measures within the nation, and through action abroad before international organizations, according to announcements made yesterday by members of the government of Venezuela, terrorists have also stepped up their activities. As a sequel to the spectacular kidnapping and assassination of the Foreign Minister's brother last week, for which responsibility has been assumed by members of the extremist organization, Armed Forces of National Liberation, new episodes took place today."

And it goes on to relate several incidents. Referring to some of them, it says:

"According to police reports six men armed with machine guns appeared at the home of an Army guide who had been sentenced to die by the armed groups which operate in the mountains of Boconó. Detachments of police and antiguerrilla command forces of this region have been sent to the foothills of the Boconó mountains in search of the armed groups.

"Finally, there is the disappearance of an official of the Defense Ministry's Organization and Liaison Command, a fellow worker of Dr. Alfredo Seijas, the Police counselor who was assassinated three weeks ago by terrorists in Caracas."

"Caracas, March 8 (AP): Apparently Venezuela will launch a diplomatic offensive against the Government of Fidel Castro in the United Nations, on grounds of

aggression. Evidently, this diplomatic action will be taken up within the Organization of American States and then extended to individual countries.

"It is logical to assume that we will submit this matter to the United Nations, but it should be remembered that Venezuelan foreign policy is based on the proposition that regional organization should be strengthened," a high government official declared to the Associated Press today.

"The diplomatic offensive will be three-pronged: through the OAS, bilateral contacts, and last, but not least, Venezuela will submit the matter to the United Nations.

"Obviously, we do not expect much more from the OAS than an official condemnation. That would only have a moral value," said the high government official, "but remember that morality is a weapon invented by weak nations."

"The same official said that the OAS has already done everything that can be done in connection with the Cuban case. 'The case of Cuba is closed in the OAS,' a Foreign Ministry source said, 'Remember that Cuba no longer is a member of the Organization. Besides, Havana laughs at anything the OAS may do.'

"It was stated that, among these bilateral contacts, some are friendly nations and others are not.

"Venezuela will apply pressure mainly on the United Arab Republic to have this nation suspend all official contacts with the Tricontinental Conference, which will possibly be held next year at Cairo."

"According to a high-ranking government source, 'Venezuela will try to force the Egyptian Government to define its position: whether it wishes to maintain relations with Latin America in general, or with Cuba in particular.'

"The Tricontinental Organization consists of a General Secretariat and eight secretaries, one of them a United Arab Republic Government official. Venezuela holds this is an untenable position. The UAR will be asked to renounce its affiliation with the Tricontinental Organization which pledged in Cuba last year to continue helping the Venezuelan insurrectionists. The UAR will also be requested to withdraw its petition that the next conference be held in Cairo, according to a high-level Venezuelan spokesman. "On a bilateral basis, diplomatic measures will be taken with respect to Mexico, the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the other four nations that met in Bogotá last August, that is, Co-

lombia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru.

"Venezuela will request a demonstration of solidarity from Mexico. The Venezuelan government is dissatisfied with Mexico's refusal to break diplomatic relations with Havana even after the OAS had condemned Cuba and requested all its members to suspend relations with Fidel Castro's regime.

"Venezuela will probably ask Washington's help in bringing pressure on the countries the Venezuelan government wishes to persuade. For example, it could request the State Department to inform the Soviet Union as to Venezuela's position. In addition, it could ask Washington to bring pressure upon Great Britain, through credit guarantees, to persuade the British to cease helping Cuba with offers such as the construction of a petrochemical complex.

"The AP was informed that Venezuela expects to have a Soviet Embassy in Caracas in the hope that Moscow will place more value on a doorway to Latin America than on a blind alley in Havana. Contact could be established with the Soviet Union's representatives in the United Nations or in Washington."

Apparently, the only thing these gentlemen overlooked was to ask South Viet Nam and North Viet Nam to cease their fight against the Yankee imperialists. (Applause.)

"Caracas, March 9 (AFP): The Communist Party of Venezuela disclaims the statement of Elías Manuitt Camero who, in the name of the so-called National Liberation Forces, credits that organization with the murder of Dr. Julio Iribarren Borges.

"A document of condemnation, signed by Dr. Héctor Mujica, member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Venezuela, reads: 'Manuitt Camero's statements were as shocking as the abominable crime itself.' It adds that it is deplorable that Granma, the organ of a fraternal Party, should lend itself to the publication of such bombast."

"The document adds that anti-Cuban feelings never existed among the people of Venezuela and that now the enemies of the Cuban Revolution are taking advantage of the opportunity to introduce such feelings among them.

"The document emphasizes an unequivocal repudiation of the crime against the brother of the Venezuelan Minister and of the ranting declarations of an ex-militant who was publicly expelled from the ranks of the Communist Party for divisionist activities and slackening of his political position. The

same action was applied to Douglas Bravo (applause), Gregorio Lunar Márquez, Freddy Carqués, Francisco Prada and others using the name of the national movement of liberation.

The "Indispensable" Yankee Intervention

"The document ends exhorting the democratic movement not to fall into confusion or be swayed by the imperialist provocation against Cuba in this new offensive that divisionists and adventurers expelled from the Communist Party will take against Cuba."

"Miami, March 9 (AFP): 'At what point will the patience of the governments of America with the abuses of Castro run out?' writes the Diario de las Américas today about the death of the brother of Venezuela's Foreign Minister.

"This newspaper, the most important published in Spanish in the United States, devotes today's editorial to the death of Julio Iribarren Borges, under the title of 'A New and Greater Monstrosity Every Time.'

"The editorial affirms that as long as the crimes of the Castro-Communist dictatorship against the Cuban people and the citizens of other American countries do not meet their proper international punishment, it can be said that this chain of crimes will increase considerably in number and in intensity."

"Caracas, March 9 (UPI): Foreign Minister Ignacio Iribarren Borges consulted today with foreign diplomats on the formal complaint that the Venezuelan government plans to lodge against Communist Cuba before the Organization of American States and possibly before the United Nations.

"The Venezuelan government accused Cuba of surreptitiously promoting the resurgence of terrorism in that country.

"President Raúl Leoni and his Cabinet stated yesterday that they were studying the possibility of presenting the complaint before international bodies.

"Iribarren Borges had an interview yesterday with U.S. ambassador, Maurice M. Bernbaum, and stated that he would discuss the matter with other accredited diplomatic delegations.

"The decision to present formal accusations against Cuba arose from the kidnapping and assassination of Julio Iribarren Borges, ex-director of the Social Security Institute and brother of the Foreign Minister

"According to information from Ha-

vana early this week, the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN) boasted that they were the authors of the assassination.

"After the 30-minute interview with the Foreign Minister, Bernbaum confirmed that one of the subjects discussed was the case of Venezuela against Cuba.

"We are against aggression, no matter where it comes from, declared the U.S. ambassador."

"Bogotá, March 9 (UPI): Juan Oropesa, new Venezuelan ambassador, stated on his arrival last night that his country will formally bring charges in an international organization against Cuban complicity in the recent assassination of Julio Iribarren Borges, brother of the Venezuelan Foreign Minister."

"Caracas, March 10 (AFP): President Raúl Leoni today announced that he would denounce Cuba's participation in the assassination of Julio Iribarren Borges before international organizations.

"The announcement, included in a message to Congress, is in reply to declarations of Venezuelan guerrilla, Captain Elías Manuitt Camero, which were published in Granma, official news organ of the Cuban government.

"In avenging the death of the Venezuelan Foreign Minister's brother, the Chief of State added that he would not request concrete sanctions, very unlikely to be approved in the present international situation, but rather the moral satisfaction of adding one more charge to the record of despotism enthroned in the Land of Martí, as viewed by the public conscience of America.

"Waxing implacable as regards international communism, something he did not do in his former messages to Congress nor in his speeches before the nation, Leoni attributed the sharpening of violence in Venezuela which culminated last week in the kidnapping and assassination of Julio Iribarren Borges, former director of Social Security and brother of Foreign Minister Ignacio Iribarren Borges, to agents of Mao-Soviet-Castro communism.

"Despite his attacks against the communists of Red China, the Soviet Union and Castro's Cuba, during his speech to the National Congress, President Leoni proposed no concrete plan for bringing charges in international organizations, such as the Organization of American States, on a continental level, and the United Nations, on a world level, where approval would be sought for new sanctions against the government of Fidel Castro.

Cuba Is Held Responsible for Everything that Happens on this Continent

"However, he said that Venezuela, an orderly country, will appear before international organizations to denounce the unheard-of fact of participation by the government of Cuba in the murder of a citizen in Venezuela, referring to the death of Julio Iribarren, as was revealed in a statement published in the Cuban government's official newspaper, undoubtedly a reference to Granma.

"Venezuela will not request concrete sanctions, which are unlikely to be agreed upon given the present international state of affairs, but rather the moral satisfaction of adding a new and shocking charge to the record of despotism enthroned in the Land of Martí, as viewed by the public conscience of America."

The dispatch continues: "Political circles were deeply impressed by the direct reference made by the President of Venezuela to Red China and the Soviet Union as bearing the responsibility along with Communist Cuba for the worsening of terrorist activities in Venezuela that led to the suspension of constitutional guarantees on December 14, the raiding of the Central University, and the suspension of citizens' rights again on March 14."

It is curious to observe that on the 4th, long before any statement had appeared in Granma, they were already accusing us, ending up by directly accusing China and the Soviet Union.

It is even more curious if we take into account that on January 1, New Year's Day -- even though no diplomatic relations existed between the Soviet Union and Venezuela -- the news agencies announced that the Soviet ambassador had very cordially attended the New Year reception given by the embassy of Venezuela in Washington.

The dispatch ends by saying that "the government receives under benefit of inventory the reports on Communist Party dissidence from the hard tendencies within the Party and another Marxist organization. It is incumbent upon the Communist Party," Leoni pointed out, "to offer unequivocal and reiterated demonstrations of its sincerity in rectifying its mistaken behavior and in its desire to return to democratic legality."

See with what contemptuous coin Sr. Leoni repays the statements made in the name of the Communist Party!

And finally, one of the most recent dispatches: "Caracas, March 11 (AFP)," it says, "Ex-naval captain Pedro

Medina Silva, leader of the 1962 Puerto Cabello military uprising, for some time considered the commander of the National Liberation Armed Forces, announced in a clandestinely circulating document that the people's justice will be applied to the assassins of Dr. Iribarren Borges. The Medina Silva document, signed also by guerrilla leaders Germán Lairet, Tirso Pinto and Pedro Vega Castejón, stated that 'those who usurp the name of the combat organization led by us become provocateurs and accomplices of the enemies of the people.'

Of all the many happenings on this uneasy continent, there is not one that does not lead to the immediate and familiar accusation against Cuba.

A few weeks ago, at the time of the Nicaraguan electoral contest, Somoza's gangs carried out a massacre of the opposition party. At once, logically -- despite the fact that it was a question of a party bearing the name of "Partido Conservador" -- Cuba turned out to be guilty of promoting that clash, that bloodshed.

Any happening anywhere: in Colombia, blame Cuba right away; in Guatemala, Cuba is at fault. If there is a military uprising in Santo Domingo that leads to the intervention of Yankee troops, troops that even now remain stationed in that sister nation, the inevitable justification is Cuba. There is hardly anything that happens in this continent that is not blamed on Cuba. But Cuba is to be blamed for just one thing: for having made a Revolution and for being ready to carry it forward to its final, ultimate consequences! (Applause.)

And that is Cuba's responsibility. We assume that responsibility! (Applause.)

Reviewing the Struggle in Venezuela

But what does that mean? How can we explain the insinuations of the oligarchies, and those of the Venezuelan oligarchy in particular, blaming Cuba for revolutionary actions in their countries? And the insinuations made by the rightist leadership of the Communist Party of Venezuela? What preceded it and what gave rise to it? How can it be explained? It is necessary to make a brief résumé of the history of the revolutionary struggle in Venezuela.

First: a few months prior to the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, there was a formidable popular movement in Venezuela that overthrew the Pérez Jiménez regime. Participating in this movement were ample popular forces, among them the Communist Party of Venezuela. And a young newspaper man was especially outstanding:

Fabricio Ojeda (applause), who was President of the Patriotic Council that ousted Pérez Jiménez. However, that victory of the people of Venezuela was frustrated, because from that moment the Partido Acción Democrática which at one time had played a certain revolutionary role, a certain role in the anti-imperialist struggle, that had mass support, not in the capital -- because naturally the most advanced sectors had majority support in the capital -- this party had particularly broad support in extensive regions of the interior of the country, and began to act as a fundamental factor in hindering the maturing and development of the Venezuelan revolutionary movement.

Betancourt won some elections, coming up with a ridiculous minority in the capital and getting his majority in the interior of the country -- similar to what sometimes happened in our country. And from the moment it was sworn in, that government dedicated itself to developing a clear policy of conciliation, kowtowing to imperialism, and defending imperialist interests in Venezuela. Naturally, it became one of the instruments of U.S. policy.

There began to be repression of the revolutionary movement; repression of the workers, of the students, of the revolutionaries. Those repressions became more and more brutal, and the first massacres of students and the general population took place in Caracas. Betancourt felt a deep resentment toward the people of the capital; he could not pardon that lack of support, the affront he had been given by the population of Caracas.

We remember when, in the early days of the Revolution, we visited this sister nation. In the Plaza del Silencio there we spoke at a gigantic assembly of 300,000 people. When we mentioned the name of Betancourt -- as was our courtesy obligation to the president-elect -- a great hiss came up out of that great mass. Since we were visitors in the country, this put us in a rather embarrassing situation and I even felt compelled to protest, saying that I had not mentioned a man's name so that people would boo him, but that it was simply my duty to make official reference to him who was about to assume the presidency as a result of elections. In this way, the people of Caracas demonstrated themselves furiously anti-Betancourtist. And this feeling of scorn in the capital of Venezuela, which was the vanguard in the struggle for the overthrow of Pérez Jiménez was shown thus. This, naturally, contributed in no small way to the extraordinary hate Betancourt felt for the popular masses of the capital of Venezuela.

And soon, just as soon as the repression had become intolerably brutal,

supporters of the armed struggle arose. One of the first of these was the Movement of the Revolutionary Left, organized by a group of progressive leaders who had broken off from the official party, Acción Democrática, and organized this movement. They began to prepare for armed struggle. Similarly, the Communist Party began to prepare for armed struggle.

At first, it was thought that the extreme right-wing elements in the army would surely overthrow Betancourt; and at first these organizations set about their preparations with the idea that the struggle would have to be against a reactionary military government. But the sharpening of repression, which increasingly characterized Betancourt's policy, made these organizations cease to regard their efforts as directed against the Betancourt regime itself, which was becoming increasingly repressive and brutal in its dealings with the people.

Setbacks

Are the Revolutionaries' Greatest Teachers

And so the first moves began. The Third Congress of the Communist Party of Venezuela approved the road of armed struggle for the revolution in Venezuela. Other dissident forces from different parties also began preparations for armed struggle. Among these was a sector of the political party to which Fabricio Ojeda belonged. And Fabricio Ojeda, friend of Cuba, friend of our Revolution -- like so many other Venezuelans -- one day resigned his position as member of Parliament and went into the mountains to organize a guerrilla movement.

Several years passed. Undoubtedly the Venezuelan revolutionaries, as in all revolutions in every part of the world, made a number of errors in their conception of the struggle, a number of errors of a strategic and of a tactical nature. Different factors contributed to these errors. One of these was the fact that the revolutionary movement was very strong in the capital, and on the other hand -- as has or had happened in many other countries in Latin America -- and for this the Communist Parties are to blame -- the revolutionary movement was weak in the country. Why? Because the Marxist parties concentrated their attention mainly on the city, on the workers' movement, which is, of course, quite correct. But in many cases -- for naturally all these generalities have their exceptions -- they greatly underestimated the importance of the peasantry as a revolutionary force.

As the official party of Venezuela was strong in the countryside and the parties of the left were weak there, although strong in the capital, for a long

time the leadership of the Venezuelan revolutionary movement overestimated the importance of the capital and the struggle in the capital and underestimated the importance of the guerrilla movement.

But not only this. Venezuela was one of the countries -- or the country in recent times -- where the revolutionary movement had the greatest influence in the ranks of the professional army. Many young Venezuelan army officers openly showed their sympathy for the revolutionary movement, even in its most radical form, inspired in Marxist concepts. So the force of the revolutionary movement was strongly felt in the ranks of the army. And this led to another conceptual error: to a downgrading of the guerrilla movement in favor of great hopes in a military uprising.

They accuse us of promoting subversion; they accuse the Cubans of directing the armed revolutionary movement in Venezuela. And if we Cubans had had anything to do with the leadership of that revolutionary movement, we would never have fallen, and that revolutionary movement would never have fallen, into those two major conceptual errors. (Applause.) Why?

Because it is the revolutionaries, they and only they, who decide, who are able to determine their general strategy and their specific tactics. And the revolutionaries always do that, always! In Venezuela, in all other countries, their criteria -- and these criteria may often be mistaken -- are only rectified as a consequence of the process itself, of the experience of the process itself, of the blows received in the process. It is not we, the Cuban revolutionaries or leaders, who tell them what they must do; it is their own experience. And the best teachers of revolutionaries in every country of Latin America -- as it was in Cuba -- the best teachers, the great teachers, were the setbacks.

And naturally the Venezuelan revolutionary movement suffered many setbacks, as revolutionary movements in all parts of the world have always suffered setbacks, and Latin America's movement logically had to go through a long apprenticeship. Today it can be affirmed that that movement has learned a great deal, not from Cuba, but from its own experience, from the blows it has received. And therefore that more experienced revolutionary movement is growing and consolidating itself, and the rulers are showing themselves unable to crush it. They are impotent to crush it in Guatemala, unable to crush it in Venezuela.

But reverses always take a toll; they frequently take a toll in desertions from the revolutionary ranks by the weak-

est, the least tenacious, the least persevering, in a word, the least revolutionary.

Directing the Guerrillas from the City
An Absurdity

Apart from erroneous strategic conceptions in themselves, these erroneous errors of a practical nature: the guerrillas found themselves abandoned and deprived of the most elementary resources. The revolutionary leadership of the Party was trying to direct the guerrillas from the city, from the capital. What ought to have been done was not done -- what a daring and truly revolutionary leadership would have done, what the leadership of the great and historic contemporary movements that have triumphed have done -- that is, go up to the mountains with the guerrillas to lead the war from the battlefield, to lead the war from the mountains. (Applause.)

It is absurd and almost criminal -- we don't call it a hundred percent criminal because it is a question of ignorance more than of willful fraud -- to try to direct guerrillas from the city. The two experiences are so different, so utterly distinct, the two settings so completely dissimilar, that the greatest insanity -- a painfully bloody insanity -- that can be committed is to try to direct guerrillas from the city. And the guerrillas were not really seen as a force that could be developed to take revolutionary power in countries such as ours, but rather as an instrument of agitation, a tool for political maneuvering, for negotiation. Underestimation of the guerrillas led to the errors committed subsequently.

And in Venezuela the guerrillas were constantly being ordered to cease fire, and that is madness! A guerrilla contingent that agrees to a truce in fighting is one condemned to defeat. (Applause.)

A guerrilla contingent can agree to a truce of one or two days as we did on some sectors of our front to return prisoners to the Red Cross. As a matter of principle, a guerrilla contingent must never agree to a truce of any other kind. The men get used to the quietude of the camp, a weakening and demoralization of forces sets in. But the commanders of the city-led guerrillas constantly received orders to make truces, more and more truces. That was happening in Venezuela.

And naturally, as a result of an inept leadership, blows and setbacks followed in succession. Nevertheless, in spite of the conceptual errors, the government could not eliminate the guerril-

las. Yet what the repressive and pro-imperialist forces of Betancourt and Leoni could not achieve was very nearly achieved thanks to the ineptness of the revolutionary leadership.

The leaders of the Communist Party of Venezuela began to speak of a democratic peace.

"What is this about democratic peace?" many people asked. "What is this about democratic peace?" we, the leaders of the Cuban Revolution, asked ourselves. We did not understand. We did not understand but, nevertheless, we wanted to understand. "What does this mean?" we asked some Venezuelan leaders. As a reply we received the same old worn-out and elaborate theory of a tactic, a maneuver -- by no means an abandonment of the war. No! No! It was only a maneuver to broaden the base, to destroy the regime, to weaken and undermine it.

And, of course, we by no means considered this a correct point of view. Nevertheless, we had hope and confidence, in spite of the fact that a democratic peace seemed absurd, ridiculous. For only a revolutionary movement that is winning the war can speak of peace, because then it can begin to mobilize national opinion in favor of a peace that can only be won by winning the revolution. Then one can mobilize people's spirits, public opinion, the people and their desire for peace on the only possible foundation: the defeat of the tyranny and of exploitation. But to speak of peace when the war is being lost is precisely to concede peace by defeat.

In the history of revolutionary movements, the words democratic peace were mentioned for the first time after the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. The new Revolution launched a campaign for a democratic peace, that is, peace in the midst of World War, a peace without annexations or conquests of any type. And the new Soviet power launched this campaign and struggled for a peace without annexation or conquests: a victorious revolutionary power that did not want to continue participating in that imperialist slaughter.

In Silence, We Have Withstood A Campaign
of Defamation

So the slogan of democratic peace was launched. And we asked ourselves: "What similarity can there be between that historic situation, between that victorious proletariat in the first socialist revolution, and the situation of a revolutionary leadership that has been unable to lead the armed struggle to victory?"

However, in reality, behind their explanations, lay deceit. Deceit! They told us that their democratic peace was a maneuver, but that the struggle would be stepped up, guerrilla warfare would be stepped up. Nevertheless, they were lying. In reality the intention was to abandon the armed struggle and they were simply preparing the way.

How did we learn about these things, these truths? How did we confirm them? We would have preferred not to air this matter publicly; as a matter of fact during many weeks and months we have silently borne a defamatory campaign waged by the rightist leadership of the Communist Party of Venezuela, which voiced accusations against us in various Communist Party congresses, and sent letters to various Latin-American Communist Parties, accusing Cuba of interfering in their internal affairs and of supporting and fomenting factionalism.

We would have preferred not to discuss this matter; however, it has become unhappily impossible to avoid doing so. In order to answer the imputations of proimperialist oligarchies and of renegade communists, since both are intimately related, we find ourselves obliged to clarify and answer these charges, reserving the right to do this at the opportune moment and in a more detailed form, in a document which our Party will draw up when it deems convenient. Recent events in Venezuela have made this necessary.

A Letter from Fabricio Ojeda

I have mentioned Fabricio Ojeda's name, his clean record, his participation in the overthrow of Pérez Jiménez, the rarely-seen phenomenon of his resignation from office when he gave up his parliamentary privileges, to go into the mountains. A rare case in a politician in our America. Fabricio was ignominiously assassinated on June 21, 1966. Sixteen days earlier, on June 4, 1966, Fabricio wrote a letter, the letter was addressed to me and was probably one of the last things he ever wrote. And that letter, which I have kept without knowing that I would need to reveal its contents one day, goes as follows:

"My dear friend:

"Here, all of the time, as always, attempting to overcome the burden of temporary difficulties in order to wage the struggle on a more serious and precise basis; we have made some advances toward this end. The fundamental step has been that of going directly to the solution of the problems of leadership, the structuring of our national organizations, such as the FLN Executive Committee and the Executive Command of the FALN; starting

points for a general reorganization of the movement's entire structure. To this end we are working intensely. We intend to hold a national FLN-FALN conference as soon as possible which, as a constituent power, will devote itself to a study and analysis of the situation, to establishing strategy and tactics, political and military lines and to defining the effective constitution of our directing organism at all levels. In this way the liberation movement will break out of its present state of stagnation, overcome differences, and clarify its historic potential, in addition to consolidating the factor indispensable to further progress, revolutionary unity of the revolutionary forces.

"Our project of restructuring the struggle on new bases has forced us to define certain important questions. The first of these is the provisional restructuring of the present directing organism of the national FLN-FALN. In this regard, we have decided to increase the number of nuclei in the existing leadership, which has produced a critical situation within the Communist Party of Venezuela. This includes the sanctioning of Comrade Douglas Bravo by the majority of the Political Bureau of the Party, who have removed him from this organism, accusing him of an attitude of anti-Party factionalism.

"The second question of importance is the decision to confront any circumstance whatsoever in order to bring all revolutionary forces together with the purpose of incrementing the war of national liberation as the only means of advancing toward the conquest of power and the achievement of national independence, taking into account the objective conditions prevailing in the country and the peculiarities of the Venezuelan process.

"In both areas we have made advances. Steps are being taken to set up a unified FLN-FALN command. This will be led by myself as President in charge of the FLN, together with the First Commander of the FALN, Douglas Bravo. A leader from the MIR will join us this week as Secretary General.

"The General Command of the FALN now includes the commanding officers of the guerrilla fronts. This new form was arrived at after an analysis of the present situation of these organisms, since it was considered that a nucleus of three members of the FALN General Command who were still active was insufficient for general military leadership, since the other members of the Command have either been taken prisoner or are abroad. In relation to the unification of the revolutionary forces for the purpose of advancing the war of national liberation, a uni-

fied commission will be designated to study and draw up the theoretical material on strategy, tactics and the political and military line of the movement to be presented for discussion in the coming FLN-FALN national conference.

"The incorporation of the MIR into the directing organizations and the preparatory work for the conference are steps of great significance, since in this way a period of internal discussion on present differences will begin replacing polemic diatribe in our talks, and opening up truly democratic roads for the ideological and political unity of the revolutionary movement.

"Nonetheless, a new breach has been opened in our ranks by the disciplinary measures taken by the majority of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Venezuela.

"In respect to this new problem, I have been informed that the intermediate and basic sectors, including those in the Central Committee itself, have been reacting against the sanction imposed on Comrade Douglas.

A Change in Course and Tactics

"Already certain documents have been circulated which expressly state this reaction. In my opinion, the disciplinary measures taken by the majority of the Political Bureau correspond to problems of a truly ideological and political nature, to profound questions, which they have attempted to cover up by talking of methods or supposed errors on the part of Comrade Douglas and other comrades whose ideas on strategy and tactics of our revolutionary process coincide with his. The fact is that within the Communist Party of Venezuela two important currents are being debated.

"One of these is held by a minority in the base of the Party but is very prevalent among the members of the Political Bureau and the Central Committee. Its essence is as follows: Present developments permit the revolutionary movement to take the initiative on the political front. Nonetheless, the FALN must order the guerrillas and the UTC (Tactical Combat Units) to fall back. It does not mean simply another truce but rather something more profound; it means diverting the form of struggle. That is, a new tactical period begins, which in place of combining all forms of struggle, would suspend guerrilla and UTC operations. The guerrillas and the UTC should make an orderly retreat and the revolutionary movement introduce a change in tactics. Several conditions are indispensable, to maintain unity and internal cohesion, to maintain iron discipline, and to support and aid

the directing nucleus. To achieve these ends the Party and the Young Communists must act in the two ways. First, employ persuasion, using every kind of reasoning and political arguments in support of the new tactical changes, discussing matters calmly with all who must be convinced. Second, carry on an active campaign against adventurist tendencies and provocations. (This is a synthesis of two documents presented to this organization by prominent members of the Political Bureau.)

"The other, held by a majority of the Party, but with little support among members of the leadership of higher organizations, is headed up by Comrade Douglas Bravo, who not only opposes the alteration of plans and the changes in tactics, but who presents strong criticisms of the way that the revolutionary struggle has been carried out.

"It is quite obvious that the crux of these differences is the question of armed struggle, which a group of leaders within the Communist Party of Venezuela have opposed since the very beginning.

"There is no doubt that the sanctioning of Comrade Douglas is the beginning of these alterations, and that these are designed to eliminate, by means of disciplinary actions, any who oppose a new tactical period which, rather than combining all forms of struggle would choose to suspend all action by the guerrillas and the Tactical Units.

"In a situation like this, the decision to enlarge the integral organizations of leadership by incorporating the most responsible and firm cadres, is a step forward of great magnitude.

"The majority of the Political Bureau has opposed this measure and has proceeded to repudiate us publicly, denying the validity and legitimate nature of the groups already formed.

"We have, however, remained firm and we have been pleased to note that a great body of opinion has formed in support of our cause, in the guerrilla fronts and in the intermediate organizations, as well as at the base of the Communist Party of Venezuela. In addition, some members of the Central Committee, parties within the FLN and urban units of the FALN have lent their support.

"A period of clarification of ideology and definition of the revolutionary road has begun. There is one unfavorable transitory factor involved in this situation and which places us in a rather difficult spot. That is the problem of economic resources, since it has been the Political Bureau which has exercised control over this sector.

Economic Strangulation of Guerrilla Zones

"Until now all funds for the revolutionary movement have been centralized in that organization and used to further their policies -- that is, snuff out guerrilla centers by economic means."

The letter ends as follows:

"Our guerrilla fighters have maintained a high state of morale and there is gigantic resolution in our movement. We are conscious that the present picture is full of difficulties but we are sure that these will be overcome within a short time. Truth will be borne in on the skeptics and then a bright future will appear on our horizon. Not one step backward, not even to gain speed!

"The bearer can give more details and better explain some things.

"We go forward, toward victory. To fight until victory. A warm embrace from your friend, Fabricio Ojeda." (Applause.)

Sixteen days later Fabricio is arrested and vilely assassinated by the henchmen of the tyranny oppressing Venezuela, precisely when these steps for organization and restructuration which he speaks about in his letter were being taken.

One can say, well, this was the opinion of a respected, worthy, valiant comrade, but is it proof? Is this enough to guarantee his words? Of course, for us who knew Fabricio well, there is no doubt: the integrity with which this letter is written, its serenity, are guarantees of its author's honesty. But, in addition, some documents which came to our hands verified what Fabricio had said, one hundred percent; documents which were distributed among the militants of the Communist Party of Venezuela for discussion; documents which, without any doubt, indicate and at the same time explain the policy followed in recent times by the government of Venezuela.

One of the documents is written by Pompeyo Márquez, Teodoro Petkoff, and Freddy Muñoz, and in essence says the following in its main lines:

"First. Some changes have taken place which force the revolutionary movement to revise certain aspects of its tactics in a fundamental way regarding the armed struggle.

"In broad outline the situation is the following: The armed struggle has suffered several blows and has weakened. The revolutionary movement at present is not in a condition to continue the frontal and open attacks on its enemies. The armed apparatus of the Party has been se-



verely damaged; a bloody and brutal repression is affecting the ability of the revolutionary movement to organize, unify and mobilize the broad masses and give an adequate riposte to government policy.

"Due to the continual reverses and blows suffered, to its own weakness which impede successful actions, the armed struggle, by not taking appropriate measures to safeguard its instruments, could lose the role it has played in the recent past, in which it offered a perspective of revolutionary transformation to the masses. In reality, it is not playing this role at present and its future depends on the measures we take today.

"The weak armed operations which do nothing but repeat similar former operations, without attaining progress of true significance, are:

"(a) making political action difficult and impeding the regrouping of forces against the Betancourt 'gorillas';

"(b) letting the Betancourt 'gorilla' clique maintain its alliances;

"(c) acting as a brake and preventing the rapid decomposition of its broad base;

"(d) wiping out convictions, faith in the correct general strategy of the revolutionary movement, whose basis was set down in the Third Congress of the CPV and was later strengthened in the successive plenaries of the CC.

"Second. Consequently, the Party must undertake a retrenchment on the military front and recommend the suspension of armed actions in favor of proceeding to a regrouping of its forces and their preparation for a new revolutionary stage which must be qualitatively superior to those existing up to now.

"Until recovery has been attained in a fundamental sense, and until some advance is achieved in the promotion of new forces and the regrouping of nationalist sectors, all operations of the FALN must cease.

"This military retrenchment must be accompanied by a political offensive which will permit us to cover the retrenchment, alleviate the pressures of repression and recover the political initiative.

"In short, it is not a new truce, but something deeper" -- textually what Fabricio explained -- "it is a temporary about-face in the forms of struggle, that is, suspending the actions of the guerrillas and the UTC and giving political initiative priority."

Another Document
from the Communist Party of Venezuela

This is, in essence, the position taken in this document by Pompeyo Márquez, Teodoro Petkoff, and Freddy Muñoz. At the same time, other leaders sent a similar document to the Party, this time signed by Guillermo García Ponce and other leaders. It is, in essence, the same with some slight variations. They themselves explain these differences in the introduction.

It reads: "Document enclosed. We present this to you, comrades, in order to arrive at opinions in a more collective way. However, you will receive not one, but two documents -- this one and another.

"As you will note, the resolutions and conclusions are the same: retrenchment of the guerrillas and of the UTC, as well as a change of tactics toward an emphasis on political acts. There are, therefore, no differences on fundamental decisions; there is full unity on the essence of the problems. The motivations, the reasons for the change in forms of struggle for a specific period are also the same. Nevertheless, there is one shade of difference: our document places prime importance on political motivations and secondary importance on setbacks conceived as a reason for change.

"For the other comrades this order is reversed. First: the blows received constitute a very important factor, but we should not change our tactics for this reason. Setbacks help us to become aware of the changes that we ought to introduce, but they form part of a concrete and principally political reality which has forced us to make a certain change in course. The truth of the matter is that we should have retrenched before receiving the blows."

In other words, and in essence, Pompeyo, Teodoro, and Freddy Muñoz speak of retrenchment because of receiving blows. And they say: Yes, yes, very well, we're in agreement. There is only one fundamental difference: We should have retrenched even before receiving the blows.

"Second, upon giving prime importance to political elements, we emphasize one of the peculiarities of the present situation; namely, while the guerrillas and the UTC are in retrenchment, the revolutionary movement can take the offensive on the political front, where all militants, organizations, etc., of the Party and the UTC can place the weight of their activity in a high combative spirit, free of all passivity and terrorist attempts."

Further on, the document reads:

"The need for a retrenchment of the FALN. The events transcurring permit the revolutionary movement to take the initiative on the political front; nevertheless, it will be necessary for the FALN to order a retrenchment of the guerrillas and the UTC. This will not be a new truce, but something deeper: an attempt to change the forms of struggle, that is, to open a new tactical period in which, instead of combining all forms of struggle, guerrilla and UTC actions will be suspended. Prime importance will be taken by political events; a grouping of the leftist organization; promotion of new forces of struggle against 'Betancourtism'; unity, organization and mobilization of the popular masses; alliance with nationalist sectors of the Armed Forces; action by the workers on behalf of their demands; struggle against repression, etc."

The only thing they didn't put in was the colloquy, the electoral struggle, which they obviously did not insert here because they intended to insert it later on.

"As long as no new political situation occurs and while material conditions improve, the guerrillas and the UTC should retrench." Retrenchment meant disappearance, dissolution, since they had kept them retrenched practically all the time.

The document continues: "In this sense, it should be recommended that the FALN publish a manifesto giving the political reasons for the retrenchment of the guerrillas and the UTC."

And finally, the worn out litany, the classic cliché, the glib phrase, the diatribe.

"In particular it is necessary to watch the uncontrollable groups -- the difficult, the bellicose, the rebels -- and also to defend actively the policy, tactics, and leadership of the Communist Youth and the Communist Party from the attacks of the anarcho-adventurist MIR group."

If only they had as much imagination for revolutionary action as they have for glibness and diatribe! (Applause.) "In order to prevent tactical changes from being presented in an adulterated form by U.S. and 'Betancourtist' policies, and to prevent the enemy from taking advantage of any insufficiently formulated proposal or excess of information, it will be necessary to pay special attention to propaganda and, in general, to all written matter."

The Communist Party was not the only one constituting the FALN; at least two or three other organizations were also members. One of them was the Move-

ment of the Revolutionary Left (MIR), which was one of the first organizations to initiate the struggle. The FALN also included the forces represented by Fabricio Ojeda which came from -- if I remember the name correctly -- the Partido Unión Republicana, as well as the Communist Party and several organizations of fighting men.

Notice how these allies are not mentioned in the two documents; rather they are mentioned, but only to accuse them of adventurism, anarcho-adventurism. Not one word is said about the sector represented by Fabricio Ojeda. No! They do not recognize the right of other organizations to participate in the formulation of policy; they launch the policy, and publish it as an order. Not only do they violate the agreements taken in a Party Congress, which should be inviolate, but they also refuse to recognize the forces that in all loyalty had been fighting side by side with the Party.

They not only disregard the agreements adopted by the Congress, they disregard their allies, the militants, the combatants, and the guerrilla fighters and begin talking of discipline and imposition of discipline.

And what happened? The principal guerrilla chief -- among them the most respected one, who from within the Communist Party from the very beginning, since 1959, was in charge of the military section, organizing cadres for armed struggle, who remained in the mountains for years and fought many victorious battles, not great ones but hard-fought ones, to the extent of his own forces and this while harassed by continuous orders of truce and more truce -- and along with him a large number of guerrilla commanders reacted against that line. We can see how Fabricio and his followers rejected that conception.

The MIR and with them the fighters of El Bachiller front, rejected that defeatist conception. And the Party's best men, the most courageous, the most experienced men, those who had carried the heaviest load in the struggle, refused to accept such a defeatist conception.

That was the state of affairs. Out of three organizations, two remained in the struggle. Some of the first leaders of the MIR deserted, but the majority, represented by Sáez Mérida, who upon being taken prisoner was replaced by Américo Martín -- who now heads the MIR fighters at El Bachiller -- maintained their position in favor of armed struggle and continued their ideological line until he died. And Douglas and the most respected guerrilla commanders maintained theirs.

On what basis can we be accused of fomenting divisionism within the Venezuelan Party? What can be used as a base to blame Cuba for problems resulting only and exclusively from an inefficient political leadership?

We Have the Right to Express
Our Solidarity with the Fighters

From the point of view of principles, revolutionary theory, revolutionary dignity, and our revolutionary experience could we ever accept the theses of the official leadership, the theses expounded in these documents? No! Never! Because, had we been men with little faith in the Revolution we would have given up the fight following our first setback at the Moncada garrison (applause), or when our little army landed from the Granma only to be dispersed three days later, and only seven of us were able to reunite. Thousands, or rather millions of reasons could have been used as a pretext to say that we were wrong and that those who said that it was impossible to fight that army, those great forces, were right.

However, three weeks later, on January 17; we who at the end of December had barely reunited our forces, carried out our first successful attack on an army post, killing its occupants. Five days later we were fighting again; this time against the parachutists.

These two first successful actions were followed by intense persecution and several cases of treason that came close to bringing about our destruction. Twenty men, practically isolated from the rest of the country, pursued by thousands of soldiers. Even under such conditions of hardship we maintained our faith in carrying our fight to victory. And -- as many of you may recall -- when during the April Strike our movement was dealt a disastrous blow we would have had plenty of reasons, similar to these, to give up our struggle.

Many letters were written. One of them, entitled "A Letter to a Patriot," urged us to give up the fight. However, that crisis in the revolutionary movement was overcome in less than four months when 10,000 soldiers armed with cannon were sent against 300 guerrilla fighters only to meet a disastrous defeat. They were defeated due to our experience because we had lived through a revolutionary struggle from its very inception. How could we docilely accept the defeatist pronouncements of those guilty of the faulty development in the revolutionary movement, of those who were incapable of leading that armed struggle?

The only correct thing to be done by those who had failed, by those who did not have the capacity to lead, was not to court-martial and expel those who had shown the capacity to defeat the enemy in the field of battle, but rather to resign. It was the only honest, correct thing to do: to take the responsibility for defeat and to turn the leadership of the Party over to those who had proved their capacity to carry on the war.

Why should we be forced to accept such a thesis? It is not incumbent upon us to decide the problems of strategy or tactics in the Venezuelan revolutionary movement. Nobody has ever asked us to make any decisions on such problems nor have we ever attempted to do so. But we do have an inalienable right, and that is the right to think, the right to have an opinion, the right to express our sympathy and solidarity with the fighters.

And it was not possible that we, revolutionaries -- having to choose between capitulators, between defeatists, and men determined to convert to reality the watchword of "make our country free or die for Venezuela" (applause), men who were not a group of theorizing charlatans, but a group of combatants -- it was impossible for us, as an elemental question of revolutionary principle and morality, to do other than express our solidarity with those combatants.

Our history, the history of our country, a history full of beautiful examples, tells us of an unforgettable episode from our wars of independence when, in 1878, after ten years of war, a great many -- even the majority -- of the leaders of the revolutionary movement decided to ask for a truce, and the Peace of Zanjón was signed after ten years of heroic struggle. Our most brilliant general refused to accept that peace and drew up the famous Protest of Baraguá (applause).

Douglas Bravo Has Voiced
a Sort of "Baraguá Protest"

How many things our history has taught us! Are there many things more admirable from the pages of Cuba's history than that rebellious and noble gesture, full of greatness and dignity with which Antonio Maceo asked for an interview with Martínez Campos and declared that he would not accept peace with the Spaniards? (Applause.) In a gesture which won him immortality in the eyes of past, present, and future generations, immortality before world opinion, after ten years of war!

How can we consider Douglas Bravo a common divisionist, a common adventurer, a commonly ambitious person, if Douglas Bravo has made within the sector of

the revolutionary movement deriving from the Party, has declared a kind of Protest of Baraguá against the Peace of Zanjón which a defeatist leadership wanted to impose on the Party? (Applause.)

For this reason he has our support and solidarity. And we have the unalienable right to express with all honesty what we think and what we feel. He did not side with the capitulators; he sided with the combatants. Acceptance of the capitulationist theory would have meant that we, as well, would have had to deny our solidarity to Américo Martín and the combatants of the MIR who are fighting in the mountains of El Bachiller (applause); it would have meant denying our solidarity to Fabricio Ojeda and his comrades.

Proof that the capitulators were wrong and proof that their theory amounted to handing the revolutionary struggle of Venezuela to the proimperialist government of Leoni on a silver platter is that in spite of this virtual treason, the proimperialist government of Leoni, aided by Yankee officials, supported by and supplied with Yankee weapons, has not been able to crush the heroic and unvanquished guerrillas that fight in the western mountains of Venezuela and in the mountains of El Bachiller. (Prolonged applause.)

It was on November 7, 1965, that the defeatists signed the document that I read to you before; we are already in mid-March, 1967. If the defeatists had been right, the government of Venezuela would not have found itself obliged to take desperate suppressive steps in view of the upsurge of the guerrilla movement, and it would long since have wiped out the last fighter.

In this case, then, it will not be necessary to wait for time to prove the fighters right; time is already proving them right. Any one of those fronts, in the western mountains or in El Bachiller, has at least as many, or more, men and weapons as did our columns when they were considered invincible in the Sierra Maestra.

And the sellout, traitorous oligarchy that rules Venezuela will not be able to crush those fighters; that is why it is so frantically seeking guilty parties and advocating aggressions against Cuba, against the revolutionary example constituted by this country.

In the name of what revolutionary principles, reasons or fundamentals were we obliged to say that the defeatists were right, to say that the rightist, capitulationist current was right? In the name of Marxism-Leninism? No! We would never have been able to say they were right in the name of Marxism-Leninism. In

the name of the international communist movement? Were we perhaps obligated by the fact that it was a question of the leadership of a communist party? Is this the conception we are supposed to have of the international communist movement? To us the international communist movement is in the first place just that, a movement of communists, of revolutionary fighters. And those who are not revolutionary fighters cannot be called communists! (Applause.)

We conceive of Marxism as revolutionary thinking and action. Those who do not possess a truly revolutionary spirit cannot be called communists.

There Are Some Who Call
Themselves Revolutionaries Who
Are Not Revolutionaries at All

Anyone can give himself the name of "eagle" without having a single feather on his back. (Laughter.) In the same way, there are people who call themselves communists without having a communist hair on their head. The international communist movement, to our way of thinking, is not a church, it is not a religious sect or a Masonic lodge that obliges us to hallow any weakness, any deviation, that obliges us to follow the policy of a mutual admiration society with all kinds of reformists and pseudo-revolutionaries.

Our stand regarding communist parties will be based on strictly revolutionary principles. The parties that have a line without hesitations and capitulationism, the parties that in our opinion, have a consistent revolutionary line, will receive our support in all circumstances; but the parties that entrench themselves behind the name of communists or Marxists and believe themselves to have a monopoly on revolutionary sentiment -- what they really monopolize is reformism -- will not be treated by us as revolutionary parties.

And if in any country those who call themselves communists do not know how to fulfill their duty, we will support those who, without calling themselves communists, conduct themselves like real communists in action and in struggle. (Applause.) For every true revolutionary, who bears within him the revolutionary spirit, revolutionary vocation, will always come to Marxism! It is impossible for a man, traveling the road of revolution, not to arrive at Marxism! And every revolutionary on the continent who is deserving of the name will arrive at the Marxist conception of society! What is important are the revolutionaries, those who are capable of making revolutions and developing themselves in revolutionary theory.

Many times practice comes first and then theory. Our people too are an example of that. Many, the immense majority of those who today proudly call themselves Marxist-Leninists, arrived at Marxism-Leninism by way of the revolutionary struggle. To exclude, to deny, to reject a priori all those who from the beginning did not call themselves communists is an act of dogmatism and unqualified sectarianism. Whoever denies that it is the road of revolution which leads the people to Marxism is no Marxist although he may call himself a communist.

This will be our line of conduct. It is the line that has guided our conduct in relations with the revolutionary movements.

At the Tricontinental Conference in Havana representatives of revolutionary organizations of the three continents met. Some called themselves communists and others did not. What defines a communist is his attitude toward the oligarchies, his attitude toward exploitation, his attitude toward imperialism; and on this continent, his attitude toward the armed revolutionary movement. What will define the communists of this continent is their attitude toward the guerrilla movement, toward the guerrilla movement in Guatemala, in Colombia, and in Venezuela. No one who claims to call himself communist will support the rightist official leadership opposing Douglas Bravo. Communist Parties must differentiate between the guerrillas who are fighting in Venezuela and the defeatists who wish to renounce the struggle who in practice wish to give up the guerrilla movement.

And this will be a dividing line, for we are arriving at the time of definitions, not by anyone's whims, but by the force of the process itself, of historical events themselves.

Those who condemn the guerrillas for the simple reason of sect or dogma, in the spirit of freemasonry, cannot consider themselves revolutionaries.

One must ask the revolutionary guerrillas in Guatemala, Colombia or any other country, who in their opinion are the revolutionaries; who in their opinion are those who show them solidarity, who are their real supporters: the Venezuelan guerrillas or the defeatists? For those who fight in Venezuela, those who force the imperialists to use up part of their resources against them, who bear their share of imperialist bombs, aid those who are fighting in Guatemala or Colombia. Those who fight in the mountains of Venezuela are the only real and possible allies of those who are fighting in the mountains of Colombia and in the mountains of Guatemala.

Revolutionaries Do Well to Avoid Procedures that May Serve as an Instrument for the Enemy

What have those official representatives made out of the death of Iribarren Borges? And, first of all, what do we think of his death? How are we to analyze this event? This must be analyzed both in the light of the government's position and the light of the reactionary and rightist leadership.

First of all, we have no previous knowledge of Iribarren Borges. We have no information except that published by AP and other imperialist news agencies. We do not know who killed Iribarren Borges.

The FALN representation in Cuba issued a declaration. What can be deduced from that declaration -- when it says: "For these reasons, as broadsides that circulate in Caracas proclaim..." -- is that the FALN representation in Havana had no news of the events other than what appeared in dispatches saying that FALN leaflets were found beside Iribarren's body. In other words, on March 6, when the FALN representatives made this declaration, they had no means of knowing what had happened, other than the wire services.

What attitude must we revolutionaries assume before any revolutionary deed? We may disagree with a concrete method, with a concrete deed; it is possible to disagree with the method of liquidating this former government official. As I said, we know nothing about him -- whether he was hated, as the AP says, or not; whether or not he was responsible for measures taken against the revolutionaries.

Our opinion is that revolutionaries must avoid procedures which may give the enemy ammunition: killing a man who has been kidnapped. We never did this sort of thing no matter how great our outrage at the ferocity of the enemy. And in combat, we knew how to deal with prisoners with serenity.

Revolutionaries must avoid procedures which are similar to those of the repressive police. We do not know the circumstance of this death, we do not know who were responsible; we do not even know whether or not it was produced accidentally, whether or not it was really an act of revolutionaries. Our sincere opinion -- and to give one's sincere opinion is a right of any revolutionary -- is that, if it was the revolutionaries, we consider it to have been a mistake. It was a mistake to use this type of procedure that the enemy can use to full advantage before public opinion, that may remind the people of enemy procedures.

The entire world knows the behavior of the Revolution, knows that we have revolutionary laws, and severe ones. We have never mistreated a prisoner. We have made strict laws, and our revolutionary courts sentence serious offenders against the Revolution and our nation to capital punishment, but not once has a man been found dead on a highway, in a ditch, or in a park.

The Revolution acts within given revolutionary forms and respects those forms. Even in dealing with people who have committed heinous crimes, we have always insisted upon proper procedure. This is our criterion.

It is perfectly legitimate for a revolutionary to disagree with a deed, a method, a concrete aspect. What is immoral, what is unrevolutionary, is to make use of a given deed in order to join the hysterical chorus of the reactionaries and imperialists to condemn the revolutionaries. (Applause.) If revolutionaries are responsible for this deed, we may give our opinion, but we may never join the hysterical chorus of the hangmen who govern in Venezuela, in order to condemn the revolutionaries.

What has the official leadership of the Communist Party of Venezuela done in this instance? What have they said officially? Just what we read here:

"The Communist Party of Venezuela disowns Elias Manuitt, who, in the name of the so-called Armed Forces of National Liberation, claimed his organization had assassinated Dr. Julio Iribarren Borges. ...Elias Manuitt is an ex-militant who was publicly expelled from the ranks of the Communist Party for divisionist activities and slackening of his political position. The same action was applied to Douglas Bravo, Gregorio Lunar Márquez, Freddy Carqués and others using the name of the national movement of liberation."

The declaration concluded by practically accusing the guerrilla commanders of this act. It implicated Douglas Bravo, Gregorio Lunar Márquez, Freddy Carqués, Francisco Prada and other heroic guerrilla fighters who in the mountains of Venezuela are facing legions of soldiers who are trying to wipe them out and are defending the worst kinds of interests.

Anyone Might Think
that the Revolutionaries
Are the Murderers while Leoni's Regime
Personifies "the Prince of Peace"

And what does the official leadership do? It places charges against the guerrilla combatants, via the most repugnant opportunism, thus playing into the hands of Leoni's proimperialist puppet

government. They do little less than ask for the head of Douglas Bravo, besides implying that they hold him responsible for the death of Iribarren.

And this position, with respect to the men who are waging a heroic combat and upholding the banner of the Venezuelan Revolution, is tantamount to demanding their heads for what they have done; it is just one short step from this to asking Leoni for a rifle to exterminate Douglas Bravo.

Mention has been made here of another supposed declaration of Pedro Medina Silva. It has been a long time now since any revolutionary combatant recognized the leadership of Pedro Medina Silva. It is said that other guerrillas such as Germán Lairé signed the declaration. We know German Lairé, and we know that he has never even paid a visit to a guerrilla camp.

A torrent of declarations! What kind of attitude is this? A cowardly, opportunistic and repugnant attitude, an adherence to the chorus of counterrevolutionary and anti-Cuban hysteria.

What good are the words of this gentleman when he says, "There has never been any anti-Cuban sentiment among the Venezuelan people, and now the enemies of the Cuban Revolution are taking advantage of this opportunity to instill such sentiments."

Who, if not they, are the accomplices in this plan? Who are the accomplices in this imperialist campaign, if not those who have been charging us with meddling in the internal affairs of the Venezuelan party? In what way do these charges differ from those made by the CIA, the State Department, the counterrevolutionaries? The only difference is that one bunch charges us with meddling in the internal affairs of Venezuela and the other with meddling in the internal affairs of the Party.

And why all of this? Because we have maintained a principled stand, and because we have not withheld our sympathies and solidarity from the revolutionary combatants. And in these declarations of cowards and opportunists, that can never be declarations of revolutionaries, for a revolutionary can criticize, he can disagree with something, but never fall into this shameful attitude. One would say that the assassins are the revolutionaries and the Leoni regime is the "prince of peace"; that the ferocious and bloody clique that has assassinated hundreds of combatants is a flock of docile lambs. It is cowardly not to accuse the real offender! It is cowardly not to take advantage of the circumstances in order to demand punishment for the thugs who

have assassinated so many Venezuelans.

It is all well and good to make any criticisms considered necessary. But those criticisms must be made with a revolutionary spirit; they must be made standing up to the enemy and not in his corner; against the enemy and not with him; and the enemy is the assassin of hundreds of combatants, scores of heroic militant communists. If any Latin-American government in recent times has murdered communists, it has been the Venezuelan government, first under Rómulo Betancourt and later under Leoni. And here there is not a single word condemning the killers, not a single word condemning the regime that has let loose the repression, that has let loose violence in Venezuela, that has forced the students and the revolutionaries in general to take up arms as the only way to free their people, to free their country from the clutches of the oligarchy and imperialism.

It was logical for them to join in the chorus, to accuse the Cuban Revolution; that does not matter to us. Our Revolution has had to keep itself unblemished in the midst of lies and calumny ever since it came into being, even before it came into being. When we attacked the Moncada garrison, the next day the newspapers reported that the revolutionaries had slaughtered the patients in the hospital. We are familiar with those tricks so dear to imperialism and reaction.

All the worst iniquities are attributed to the Revolution by the reactionaries and the imperialists.

They will not give up that system, that campaign. Therefore, the calumnies and imputations of the gorillas, of the imperialists and their lackeys, do not matter to us; such accusations will never move us to withhold our sympathy and solidarity from revolutionary fighters.

We Proclaim Our Sympathy
with the Guerrilla Fighters of
the Western Mountains and El Bachiller

And in the midst of the campaign of hysteria, in the midst of threats, denunciations and agreements; in the midst of that ferocious campaign, where betrayal of Country joins hands with betrayal of the Revolution, at the moment when the defeatists who call themselves communists and the proimperialist oligarchy let loose their campaign against the Venezuelan revolutionaries and against Cuba, we once again proclaim our sympathy and our unwavering solidarity with the guerrillas fighting in the western mountains, with the guerrillas fighting in the mountains of El Bachiller, with the combatants who, in the cities, defy the repression and the fury of the tyranny. (Applause.)

Our policy is clear. We recognize only revolutionaries as representatives of the peoples. We do not consider any of those oligarchic and traitorous governments that broke with Cuba, following orders from the Yankee embassy, as representatives of their peoples. Only one of those governments, which is not a socialist government, but whose international position deserves our respect -- only one of those governments deserves such respect -- and that is the Government of Mexico. (Applause.)

What is our diplomatic position with the other governments? We will not reestablish diplomatic relations with any of those governments that obeyed imperialist orders; we have no interest in doing so; we have no desire to do so. (Applause.) We will only establish diplomatic relations with revolutionary governments in those countries; and, therefore, with governments that show they are independent. Reestablish relations so that they can break them the day after tomorrow following a simple indication from the State Department? No. We do not like to waste our time on such foolishness. Economic relations with those oligarchies, when they were the ones that broke with us? We are not interested in reestablishing relations until there are revolutionary governments leading those countries.

We will not give financial aid to any oligarchy to put down the revolutionary movement with blood. (Applause.) And whoever, no matter who, aids those oligarchies where guerrillas are fighting will be helping to suppress the revolution, for repressive wars are carried on not only with weapons but also with the millions of dollars used for purchasing the weapons and for paying the mercenary armies.

An unmistakable proof of the lack of independence of those governments is to be found in the recent case of Colombia, where at 6 a.m. a few days ago, because of a guerrilla attack against a train, they arrested the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Colombia and all the leaders of that Party who were found in their customary places. They did not hesitate a bit because at that very moment a delegation of high Soviet officials were present for the signing of a commercial, cultural and financial agreement with the Lleras Restrepo government; that same day, it was said there was to be an interview between Lleras Restrepo and the high Soviet officials. And that same day not only did they arrest the Communist leadership but they also attacked, according to the wire service dispatches, the offices of the news agency TASS. What a friendly spirit those puppets have! There is reciprocity for you! That is a proof of the lack of independence, of the hypocrisy of the inter-

national policy of those puppet governments.

We Will Never Renew Relations
with the Regime that has Killed
More Communists Than Any Other Regime
in this Hemisphere

You see how the Venezuelan puppets talk, with their demands that the USSR withdraw from the Tricontinental Organization, that the USSR do no less than virtually break with Cuba, the "dead-end street," to enter through the wide, expansive and friendly door of the Venezuelan government, the government that has slaughtered more communists than any other on this continent!

As for us, we are Marxist-Leninist; let others do as they please. We will never reestablish relations with such a government!

They have broken relations with us, we have not broken relations with anyone. The German Federal Republic even broke with us because we recognized the German Democratic Republic. But we did not waver; as a matter of principle, even through it affected our economic interests, we recognized the German Democratic Republic.

All is not rose colored in the revolutionary world. Complaints and more complaints are repeated because of contradictory attitudes. While one country is being condemned for reopening relations with Federal Germany, there is a rush to seek relations with oligarchies of the sort of Leoni and company. A principled position in everything, a principled position in Asia (applause), but a principled position in Latin America, too.

Let us condemn the imperialist aggression against Viet Nam, let us condemn the crime that the Yankee imperialists are committing today against Viet Nam and let us condemn it with all our might and all our heart! But let us condemn starting right now the future Viet Nams in Latin America, let us condemn starting right now the future imperialist aggressions in Latin America! (Applause.)

What would the Vietnamese revolutionaries think if we were to send delegations to South Viet Nam to deal with the Saigon puppet government? What would those who are fighting in the mountains of America think were we to seek close relations with the puppets of imperialism on this side of the continent, with the puppets of the future Yankee aggressions and interventions in this continent?

The Leoni of today, the Lleras Restrepo of today, will be the Ngo Dinh Diem and the Cao Ky of tomorrow; they

will be on the string of governments that have passed through South Viet Nam just to justify the imperialist aggressions, just to legalize the interventions of the Yankee marines.

And all of them, imperialists and puppets, join in a conspiracy against our revolutionary, socialist nation, which is as it is not because we have imported revolution from any other country, but rather because we have generated it on our own soil and under our own skies.

There are some who speak of supposed cases of fatalism, but there is no fatalism that can hold back this Revolution, not the 90-mile fatalism, or any other kind of fatalism! This Revolution that sprang from nothing at all, this Revolution that sprang from a tiny group of men who for whole years lived in conditions of encirclement by the enemy, where nothing could get through, is a Revolution which has its own particular right to exist. It is a Revolution -- understand this well, all puppets, oligarchs, and shilly-shalliers and pseudo-revolutionaries of all stripes -- it is a Revolution which no one or nothing will be able to crush or halt! (Prolonged applause.)

And this Revolution will maintain its position of absolute independence, that kind of independence to which all people capable of fighting for it are entitled, that kind of independence all honorable people are entitled to have.

This Revolution Will Follow
Its Own Ideological Line and Will Never Be
Anybody's Puppet

We proclaim it to the world: This Revolution will hold true to its path, this Revolution will follow its own line, this Revolution will never be anybody's satellite or yes-man. It will never ask anybody's permission to maintain its own position either in matters of ideology, or on domestic or foreign affairs; proudly and courageously our people are ready to face the future, whatever that future may hold. (Applause.)

Today we work with feverish enthusiasm, with more enthusiasm than ever before; and we are advancing in our national development, in the development of our economy more impetuously than at any other time in the past eight years. Great ideological battles are being won on all fronts, in all respects; and we will confidently hold true to our ideological path, with the confidence of true revolutionaries, with confidence in our people and in our masses.

Perhaps, if it had not been necessary to deal with the subjects I have

been concerned with tonight, it would have been necessary to talk about this profound, incredible revolution that is taking place in the awareness of our people. We look to the future serenely and confidently, as we face any eventuality. We are aware that this struggle will not and cannot be easy, that we live on a continent in full revolutionary ferment, in the midst of a score of peoples who are waking up to reality, who are already fighting or are getting ready to do so. We realize that threats of all kinds will be hurled at us, and conspiracies will be organized against us, and possibly even aggressions by the dozens will be launched against us. Very well, from this very moment, we declare ourselves invincible. (Applause.)

An invasion of this country...and this is practically what Señor Leoni proposes or insinuates. He does not now call for sanctions because of the international situation, but he wishes to start building up his dossier; in short, it is perfectly clear that once they are through in Viet Nam it will be time for them to ask for sanctions and war against us. No wonder the first person he talked with was "His Highness" the Yankee ambassador in Caracas. Very well: now or at any other time, while they attack Viet Nam or after they are defeated in Viet Nam -- because they will be defeated, they are going to be defeated in their aggression against the heroic people of North Viet Nam and they are going to be defeated in their aggression against the heroic people of South Viet Nam, led by the National Front of Liberation, whose position and policy the Cuban Party supports without any vacillation (applause); there is no doubt whatsoever that they will defeat the imperialists -- if they think they will find a pushover here, let them know that they will find at least one Stalingrad here plus 3.6 Viet Nams (applause); and, besides, half a dozen more Viet Nams in the rest of the continent. Let them take note of that as of now! And as far as we are concerned, we base ourselves on mathematical calculations, on numbers of men, on the volume of fire, and on a fire that burns hotter than that of arms: the fire in the hearts and the fire of the valor of an entire people! (Applause.)

It Is Ridiculous to Try
to Make Cuba Responsible
for What Other Revolutionaries Do

Plots and threats do not worry us; we don't care about the sins and transgressions they try to pin on us. It does not matter to us! It is ridiculous to want to blame Cuba for what revolutionaries do, for their strategy, for their tactics. We know how revolutionaries and revolutionary organizations operate; how in all revolutionary processes there are

always different forces, and within each revolutionary movement there are different centers of authority. In our own Cuban experience, when we went to attack Moncada no other revolutionary organization knew it; when a group of patriots went to attack the Goicuría military garrison, other organizations did not know about it; when the comrades of the Directorio Revolucionario attacked the Presidential Palace on March 13, we in the mountains found out about it from the radio news bulletins. Within our own organization, the men of the plains never knew what we in the mountains were going to do and the men of the mountains did not know what those in the cities were going to do, because it cannot be supposed that the revolutionaries are connected by radio or telephone systems. No. In the revolution, within the revolution, there are different organizations; within each organization there are different spheres of decision; and the organizations that operate in the underground are considered autonomous in each town.

One cannot put the responsibility on revolutionary organizations -- not all of them or even one -- for any individual act that might occur; and it is even more absurd, ridiculous, idiotic to attempt to make such a charge against the Revolutionary Government of Cuba.

But who are those who have let loose this campaign? What government? One of the most repressive, sanguinary governments this continent has ever seen, characterized by deeds written in blood and brutal repression, is the sole agent of the bloody deeds in Venezuela. It is the Leoni clique who bear the principal responsibility for the death of Iribarren Borges, for they are the ones who unleashed repression and violence.

They, who at the service of their Yankee masters are turning over the wealth of Venezuela for the few crumbs that are left them; they, who have assassinated so many of their compatriots while serving their imperialist master, bear the chief responsibility.

The list of Venezuelan combatants who have fallen victim to the repression of the Betancourt and Leoni regimes is long indeed. In collusion with Batista henchmen, for example, they assassinated young Livia Gouverneur. In the very heart of Caracas; in El Silencio, a police bullet killed Alberto Rudas Mezones, whose only crime was that of having shouted "Viva Cuba!" The following day his body was secretly taken from his home by the Betancourt police in order to avoid the demonstration of public mourning and protest that would have marked his funeral.

From August, 1959, to March, 1963, hundreds of Venezuelan patriots were mur-

dered by Betancourt and Leoni henchmen. That terror began when a demonstration of the unemployed was machine-gunned, causing the death of Juan Francisco Villegas, Rafael Simón Montero and Rafael Baltazar González.

Betancourt later had the effrontery to state in one of his speeches, referring to these deeds, that the streets were not for the people but for the police.

After Ricardo Navarro defeated Betancourt-sponsored union leaders in an election, this oil workers' leader was assassinated by government armed bands at a union meeting where seven workers were wounded.

In Barquisimeto, Julián Torres was arrested, tortured and later murdered when a bullet was fired into his abdomen. The Venezuelan police resorted to the old saw that the "prisoner had tried to escape."

José Gregorio Rodríguez was barbarously tortured by DIGEPOL agents and later thrown from a four-story building to give the appearance of suicide. This crime was confirmed by a commission of the Chamber of Deputies whose report was never made public.

When Leoni became president, no change whatsoever occurred in the repressive policy of the Venezuelan government. The young high school student, Rafael Urdaneta, was tortured, horribly kicked and knifed and then riddled with bullets by DIGEPOL agents in Jaroa.

The National Guard officer, Peña Peña, arrested and tortured a number of peasants in the State of Miranda. Three of the prisoners, including the peasant leader, Trino Barrios, and the youth leader, Víctor Ramón Soto Rojas, and Jesús María Hernández, were thrown from a helicopter over the mountains of Miranda in the presence of ten of their arrested comrades who were then shot for refusing to talk.

A student at the Maracaibo Technological School, just 14 years of age, was assassinated when the police fired on a demonstration which was organized precisely to demand an end to police repression.

Pedro Rojas, after having been arrested by DIGEPOL, was hanged in a concentration camp at Cachipo.

Alberto Lovera was arrested by the DIGEPOL and savagely tortured until the moment he died. His body was found with a heavy chain around his neck, and an autopsy revealed that his vertebrae had been crushed.

The DIGEPOL Is Leoni's Instrument for Murder and Torture

World public opinion was stirred by the assassination in prison of the revolutionary leader Fabricio Ojeda, President of the FLN-FALN General Command.

Ramón Pasquier was arrested on the Yaracuy highway, tortured and mutilated, and his body was never found.

Making off with the victims' bodies is the systematic practice of the repressive agents of Betancourt and Leoni. They did this recently with FLN-FALN urban commandos Andrés Pasquier and Felipe Malaver, Donato Carmona, Angel Guerra, Domingo Sánchez and many other Venezuelan patriots.

On three different occasions, Congress has been obliged to carry out investigations of the DIGEPOL, and in every instance, it has been proved that this agency has committed assassinations and torture.

The list of victims of Betancourt's repressive police is very long. A wide river of blood runs between the Venezuelan people and the imperialist lackeys in power.

To mention just a few of the names: Samuel Sánchez Alvarez, Andrés Coba Casas, Luisa María Cazola, Isabel Acosta, Alexis Rivero, José del Carmen Chávez, Natalia Ghinaglia, Santos Chaurón, Rosario Mujica, Antonio Mogollón, Pedro Anián, José Montesinos, Luis Adrián González, Francisco Losada, Edgard González, Francisco Velázquez, Alejandro Montiel, Isidro Espinosa, Livia Gutiérrez, Víctor Cesari, Amadeo Sifoni, José Rodríguez, Alirio Méndez, Juan Gómez, Héctor Trujillo, Leónidas Rojas, Alfredo Tirado, Pedro Ramos, Juan Osirio Magallanes, Migurl Arviaca, Ernesto Alvarez, Concepción Orta, Alfredo Carmona, Isaac Velázquez, Ana Lourdes Pacheco, Anibal Giménez, Justo Camacho, Carlota de Ochoa, Simón Cagualga, Esther Flores, Olga de Hernández, Ramón Guevara, Rodolfo García, Rafael Hurtado, Pilar Ponce, Santiago Figueras, Emilio Dos Santos, Armando Sánchez, Elías la Rosa, Martín Palacios, Ernesto Alvio, Antonio Díaz, José Zurita, Alberto Manzanares, Luis SAVEDRA, Francisco Rosales, Valentín Araujo, Daniel Matute, Aquiles Bellorin, Alvaro Ruiz, Manuel Infante, Rafael Guerra, Enrique Pérez, Eduvigis Colorado, Eulalia Fuenmayor, Angel Linares, Julio Manzano, José Vázquez, Esteban Padilla, Carlos Novoa, Enrique Leal, Rafael Villegas, Manuel Cachutt Sahoudala, Alfonso Rodríguez, Jesús Osuna, Omar Ramones Prieto, Jesús Manuel Rojas Figueroa, Luis Martínez Añez, Vivian Hernández, Elvina de Morales, Rafael Clemente Acosta, J. Pfeifer, Ignacio Díaz Niño, Carlos Martínez, Alejo Celis, Alejandro Sandoval, Eduardo Mirabal

Machado, Iván Alfredo Cordero, Jesús Alberto Trujillo Ramón Jiménez, Humberto Méndez Figueredo, Antero Mendoza Angarita, Francisco Barreto, Manuel Antonio Mujica, Efraín Cordero, Carmelo Mandoza, Luis Vicente García, Héctor Beltrán Díaz, Nancy Alvarado Palma, Luis Rafael Tineo Camboa, Rafael Antonio Briceño, Iván Daza, Alijo C. Paredes, murdered in the presence of his mother, and an endless list of patriots, of combatants, all basely assassinated.

I do not by any means refer to those who have died fighting like heroes against the hangmen or soldiers of the tyranny. These names are the names of so many other Venezuelans, the victims of shootings, torture, and murder.

This is the history of Venezuela during the last few years! This is the history of Betancourt's crimes! This is the history of Leoni's crimes, of the crimes for which Leoni and Betancourt will have to account for before History! These are the crimes they are trying to conceal! This is the reason for the smoke screen leading to pure fabrication and to crude maneuvers which are an attempt to place the responsibility for Iribarren's death on Cuba.

And they will have to answer for these crimes somewhere, everywhere in fact. And if they wish to take it to the United Nations, that's even better! If they wish to take it to the United Nations, that's fine! But let them be prepared to discuss their crimes, their outrages, their acts of treason to Venezuela, and answer for the thousands of millions of pesos which they hand over to Yankee imperialism and for the rivers of blood they are responsible for. (Applause.)

Venezuela Too Will Some Way Assemble
and Recall Its Heroes and Martyrs

They are the ones who will be placed on the dock. The above charges do not include the brutal repression, the exploitation to which the people of Venezuela are subjected, the suspensions of constitutional guarantees and the violations of university autonomy. If that vile filth is what they call democracy, I ask them: Why is it that they cannot hold a meeting with the university students? We meet here today precisely to commemorate that glorious date, that heroic date when, as in Venezuela, some fought heroically and others -- entrusted with other missions -- were killed, in some cases fighting a patrol car, like José Antonio Echevarría, while in other cases, they were wounded, imprisoned and then murdered.

We meet tonight after having lived through experiences similar to those the Venezuelan people are living through to-

day. We gather here to recall our glorious combatants in the same way that some day in the future Venezuelans too will meet to recall their heroes and martyrs.

Moreover, there will be a day in Venezuela when many places in the country and many factories and plants will bear the names of these heroes who were murdered by the henchmen of the tyranny. (Applause.)

However, we challenge "democrat" Leoni, traitor to his people, betrayer of his country, imperialist henchman, and repressive agent of Yankee imperialism, to try to go into the University of Venezuela. It is traditional and accepted throughout the world that the purest sentiments are found among the youth; that the most pure, the most idealistic, the best of any people is found among its youth. And the best of Venezuela -- its youth -- is found among the students, the same as in many other countries.

And how does Leoni treat that rebel, heroic, worthy, combative part of Venezuela's people? At the point of a gun! Who enters the university? Tanks, henchmen and policemen!

Traitors, henchmen and murderers will never be able to intermix with Venezuela's youth. We challenge Señor Leoni to go into the university, meet with the people, explain his policy. Because only where there is no contradiction between people and government, only in the midst of a revolutionary process in which the unity of all the people is forged from the working masses, from the peasant masses, from the masses of young people, from the masses of intellectuals. No longer in the midst of the sirens of that heroic March 13, nor in the midst of shots, but in the future, of revolutionary awareness, of patriotism, we, the leaders of this people, can meet here with the students as we do in the mountains with the peasants and with the workers in the factories.

Because the Revolution is that. We, too, lived through a past laden with abuses, with shootings, expulsions, massacres, murders; our university also knew what heroic demonstrations meant; face to face with the fire trucks, the clubs, the shots, but there was perseverance, struggle -- and victory was won. Our university won the right to build its future, it achieved the right to occupy a worthy place in the world, to be truly free, to be truly independent.

And so we are sure that Venezuela also will have these things, and that their heroic watchword, "Make our country free or die for Venezuela!" will be fulfilled, and that watchword is like our own of PATRIA O MUERTE! VENCEREMOS! (Ovation.)