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A MESSAGE TO READERS AND FRIENDS

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PEOPLE'S WAR SCORES SMASHING VICTORY AGAINST IMPERIALISM IN VIETNAM

"A nation, big or small, can defeat any enemy, however powerful, so long as it fully arouses its people, firmly relies on them and wages a People's War."

Mao Tse-tung

The South Vietnamese People's Armed Forces in a brilliant display of revolutionary tactics executed with swiftness and decisiveness scored a major victory for national liberation, peace and freedom against U.S. imperialism, its puppet and mercenary forces numbering more than a million men, in the recent Winter-Spring offensive in Vietnam.

In the first six days of the offensive alone, the military command of the liberation forces announced that more than 50,000 U.S. troops---the sons of the American Working Class pressed into service for monopoly-capitalist interests---were knocked out, and more than 200,000 of the puppet forces routed and disintegrated. Many of the American units and an even larger number of puppet units were completely annihilated. The offensive is continuing with resounding successes on all fronts. The SVPAF is clearly on the offensive. The people's forces have taken the initiative and the imperialist forces are reeling under the powerful blows of an aroused populace who dare to fight and dare to win.

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AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR A
MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY, USA
POST OFFICE BOX 1035
CHURCH STREET STATION
NEW YORK, N. Y. 10008
JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST IMPERIALISM

**AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR A
MARXIST-LENINIST PARTY, USA**
POST OFFICE BOX 1035
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60610

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JOIN THE FIGHTS AGAINST IMPERIALISM!

DESTROY MODERN REVISIONISM!

The smashing victory of the offensive gives undisputable testimony to the correctness of the strategy and tactics of people's war as a proper application of the ideology of the proletariat against the forces of oppression and exploitation.

Under the banner of the South Vietnamese Front for National Liberation, the concept of People's war has been put to practice against the most vicious enemy of modern civilization. The People of South Vietnam with the guidance of proletarian ideology have demonstrated to the world that people's war is invincible.

The world-shaking victory of the South Vietnamese people against the imperialist forces added a new chapter to the annals of revolutionary heroism. The troops as well as the people showed a total disregard to the dangers and hardships in the offensive. Their indomitable determination to press on to victory will serve as an example to freedom-loving people everywhere.

The offensive was carried out with a high sense of purpose, organization and discipline. It was executed with the precision of a fine instrument characterized by the closest coordination of the military and the civilians, with total unity of the countryside and the city. Attacks were carried out from both without and within which left the imperialist-led forces stunned and disorganized.

The Liberation Armed Forces enjoyed the fullest support of the local people who came to their defense by the overthrow of puppet administrations in a number of places, and by releasing thousands of prisoners held by the reactionary local regimes. In many instances Vietnamese patriots in the puppet forces turned their guns against the imperialist troops and joined the People's Liberation Forces.

This great victory of the Vietnamese people has served to uplift and inspire oppressed peoples all over the world. The Vietnamese people have clearly shown to the world the great truth of the thought of Mao Tse-tung, that victory belongs to a people who are united, who dare to fight and dare to win. It also served to underscore another revolutionary truth which is in the thought of Mao: "Imperialists and all reactionaries are paper tigers."

How was it possible for a small, underdeveloped country of South Asia to mount a large offensive and score a smashing victory against the so-called super-power of the capitalist world?

The answer lies in the correct application of the thought of Mao Tse-tung, Marxism-Leninism in this age of dying imperialism, to the concrete conditions prevailing in Vietnam.

The South Vietnam Front for National Liberation had a humble origin in 1959. It had no weapons, no organization, no discipline. But it was endowed with a proletarian ideology and an indomitable spirit to resist imperialist aggression.

From these modest beginnings, the Vietnamese people's Armed Forces utilizing the strategy and tactics of People's War have put the imperialists on the run.

The National Liberation Front, in the beginning, developed revolutionary base areas in the country-side where the enemy rule was weakest. From these base areas began the

protracted war against the invaders in the form of guerilla warfare which grew in both intensity and scope. Captured enemy weapons were put to use to capture more enemy weapons and supplies, and in the course of time, the whole country-side was transformed into a zone of People's War with the highest degree of cooperation between the armed force and the masses. There also exists a high degree of discipline and a sense of self sacrifice involving the whole mass of people.

The imperialists and their lackeys soon found themselves isolated in the major population areas, confined to small islands in a sea of People's War.

In less than a decade, which is indeed a very short time in the strategical sense, the People's Armed forces with the closest coordination with the masses of the people carried the war into its final stages by encircling and mounting surprise attacks on more than 50 populated areas including the large cities of Saigon, Hue, Da Nang and others, thus, bringing the war to the nerve-centers of the imperialist occupiers with smashing blows at the heart of his military and puppet political rule.

The great lesson to be learned from the success of the recent offensive is that it serves to illuminate the great truth that an aroused people fighting for liberation from external and internal oppression can, if a correct political and military line is pursued, attain victory over any adversary, regardless of what may seemingly be his strength. This is the great truth of Comrade Mao Tse-tung, this is the great truth of Marxism-Leninism in the age of dying imperialism and revolution.

The success of the offensive has thrown the imperialist camp into utter panic. Their public reaction was a vain attempt to convince the people of the United States and the world that the offensive was a great victory for the imperialist forces, but they clearly underestimated the growing crisis of confidence which exists between the American people and the imperialist leadership. Their feeble attempts to transform a resounding defeat into a propaganda "victory" has fallen on deaf ears.

Opposition to the war policies of the administration at home is growing by leaps and bounds as its "powerful" war machine is being consumed by the flame and fury of a People's War, which the imperialists, themselves, have provoked by their oppressive and aggressive actions.

Imperialism's global policies of war and exploitation, and its oppression at home, has poisoned the political atmosphere of the entire world. The defeat of the world monopoly system in Vietnam, the focal point of the world anti-imperialist struggle, has served to sharpen the inherent contradictions in the world capitalist system and add to the woes of the crisis-riddled Johnson Administration. The international monetary system led by the dollar and the pound is heading for total collapse, while the Afro-American people are bracing themselves to meet the violence which is being organized against them at all levels of government and which threatens to tear asunder the society which has denied to them admittance even a century after Emancipation.

There is a growing awareness among the Afro-American people that the enemy which commits savage aggressions against the people of Vietnam is the same U.S. imperialism which unleashes its violence against the Black students at Orangeburg and the

Black workers in Memphis, and in scores of other cities across the land. And it is the same violence which assassinated Martin Luther King. Black men who are drafted against their will are realizing that they are being used as tools of violence against their allies in Asia.

The war is also taking its toll among the White workers in American society. Their sons are also being drafted against their will and the resultant high taxes and inflationary pressures created by the vast sums of money being spent to halt national liberation in Vietnam hit hardest the workers and the poor, White and Black.

The crisis facing U.S. imperialism both abroad and at home have sent strong shock waves into the heart of the American bourgeois political system resulting in a stampede among capitalism's political lieutenants to make accommodations and adjustments with the new domestic and world realities.

The imperialist system, led by U.S. imperialism which is the source of war, oppression and chaos in the world must be defeated at home and abroad!!!!

Our experience has taught us as Marxist-Leninists that we must continue in our task to raise the political understanding and revolutionary consciousness of the emerging revolutionary elements and the masses of American society to resolutely support the complete and final defeat of the imperialist system.

The Ad Hoc Committee for a Marxist-Leninist Party, USA, calls on revolutionary and progressive peoples in the United States to join with us in giving full support in the cause of victory for the people of Vietnam.

* * * * *

REGIS DEBRAY AND SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

(Regis Debray, a French student of philosophy, was an associate of Che Guevara on the ill-fated Guevara expedition in Bolivia where Debray's "new conception" of revolution for Latin America was so tragically put to practice. Guevara was executed by Bolivian troops after being wounded in battle. Debray is serving a long sentence in a Bolivian prison. Debray's book, Revolution in the Revolution (Monthly Review, July-Aug., 1967) sets the ideological line for the "New Conception" for Latin American revolution which denies the validity of all previous revolutionary experience. The book is reviewed in the article below)

"The revolutionary war is a war of the masses; it can be waged only by mobilizing the masses and relying on them."

Mao Tse-tung

Debray sets the tone for his book by decrying the lack of detailed history of the Cuban experience, the lack of which "constrains us to reduce our references to allusions, whereas what is really needed is systematic investigation." (p. 16)

Thus by skirting historical detail, he attempts to free the "present from the past" and his references are not historical but based on allusion (insinuation and innuendo) as he, himself, admits.

When reading Revolution in the Revolution one encounters gross inconsistencies, and conflicting views of the writer which crop up from chapter to chapter and sometimes from page to page. Another feature of the book is its disregard for historical accuracy, especially in those passages where the author attempts to distort revolutionary history in Russia, China, and Vietnam for nefarious reasons. These negative features are obvious and will not be spelled out here.

Because the thought of Comrade Mao Tse-tung is Marxism-Leninism in the era of world revolution and dying imperialism, it becomes the main object of the Debray attack. Debray proceeds to substitute a vaguely "military technique" for the concept of People's War which has been developed in practice by the Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung, and which is being enriched by the struggles of the heroic peoples of Vietnam who are daily delivering smashing blows to the world imperialist system, led by U.S. imperialism.

The essential ingredient of Debray's "new conception" of revolution is the physically healthy urban intellectual male, transplanted to the alien countryside with gun and knapsack, who is ignorant of all previous revolutionary experience, who is without bases of operation, who distrusts the peasant and the urban worker, who sees no role for the vast majority of the people in the revolutionary process, who remains independent of the people, and who succeeds in carrying out a successful "socialist" revolution by employing a vaguely defined "military technique."

His formula for proletarian revolution consists of a military vanguard of the intellectually elite, devoid of political ideology and alliances with the masses. In his order of priorities the gun is paramount, the people are unimportant, and politics, if it has a role at all, is only important after the military victory.

Mao Tse-tung who has skillfully applied the science of proletarian revolution to the conditions of the colonial and former colonial countries is very clear on the primacy of the political over the military.

In On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party he writes, "The purely military viewpoint is very highly developed among a number of comrades in the Red Army. It manifests itself as follows: These comrades regard military affairs and politics as opposed to each other and refuse to recognize that military affairs are only one means of accomplishing political tasks. Some even say if you are good militarily, naturally you are good politically; if you are not good militarily, you cannot be any good politically---this is to go a step further and give the military of leading position over politics."

And in Problems of War and Strategy he writes, "Our principle is that the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party."

Chairman Mao has placed great emphasis on the role of the people in the revolutionary process. Thus, he writes, "The people and the people alone are the motive force of history... weapons are an important factor in war, but not the decisive factor; it is people, not things that are decisive....the richest source of power to wage war lies in the masses of the people. And again, he writes, "We communists are like the seeds and the people are like the soil. Wherever we go we must unite with the people, take root and blossom among them....the Army must become one with the people so they see it as their own army. Such an army will be invincible."

The importance of the political tasks in the revolution are further emphasized by Chairman Mao: "This question of political mobilization of the army and the people is indeed of the greatest importance....there are of course many other conditions indispensable to victory, but political mobilization is the most fundamental."

But to Debray, politics are unimportant until military victory is achieved and the people are to be avoided by the guerilla force. Thus he writes "Considerations of common sense necessitates wariness of the civilian population (in the guerilla zone of operations) and the maintenance of a certain aloofness." (p. 42)

He further detaches his rebel band from the masses when he writes: "The guerilla force is independent of the civilian population in action as in military organization; consequently, it need not assume the direct defense of the peasant population....the objective requires that the guerilla band be independent of the families residing within the zone of operations." (p. 41-2) And, "women, children and old people cannot join the struggle directly."

For Debray's concept of revolution in Latin America, "military technique" becomes a convenient substitute for the mass line so vital to revolutionary success, and his transposition of the military line for the arduous and difficult task of political work is justified on the grounds that fundamental differences exist in Latin America. Thus he writes: "Military technique assumes a special importance in Latin America. Unlike China and Asia in general, the initially great disproportion between the strength of the revolutionary forces and the repressive mechanism, and the demographic consequences of the poverty in the rural areas do not permit the immediate replacement of arms and technique by sheer mass numbers of combatants....To compensate for this, (military) technique must be wielded with expertise."

One can only conclude from the above that Mao and Ho in Asia embarked upon the road to revolution with a sizeable army already in tact in the midst of rural affluence!!!

Debray talks of the need for the rebel force to avoid the masses with a "wariness" and "aloofness", to remain independent of the people in the zone of operations. But in another section of his book he lets us in on his formula for winning the masses to the struggle. He writes: "The poor peasant believes first all in anyone who has a certain power....The physical force of the police and the army (in Latin America) is considered unassailable and unassailability cannot be challenged with words, but by showing that a soldier and a policeman are not more bullet-proof than anyone else."

Thus, Debray wins the masses to revolutionary struggle through the process of a show of arms along. He avoids the Marxist-Leninist principle of raising the class consciousness of the masses, to prepare them politically for struggle. This task he saves until military victory has been achieved, and for what purpose remains obscure.

Mao Tse-tung wrote: "The Red Army fights not merely for the sake of fighting but in order to conduct propaganda among the masses, organize them, and help them to establish revolutionary political power. Without these objectives, fighting loses its meaning and the Red Army loses the reason for its existence." (On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in The Party, Sel Wks., p. 106)

Debray shows his disdain for political work by boasting that Fidel "During two years of warfare....did not hold a single political rally in his zone of operations." (p.54)

Having freed the romantic rebels from the task of political work among the masses and from any responsibility for the defense of the masses, Debray proceeds to demolish the vital necessity of the political role in the revolutionary process proved in practice by the China and Vietnam experience, by deplored the dependence of the guerilla force to the "patriotic front or party....this expression copied from models elaborated elsewhere, principally in Asia." (p. 67) And further, "to subordinate the guerilla group strategicaly and tactically to a party that has not radically changed its normal peacetime organization, or to treat is as one more ramification of party activity brings in its wake a series of fatal military errors."

The science of Marxism-Leninism teaches that the masses must liberate themselves by defending their class interests, and the political role is paramount in arousing the class consciousness of the people and channeling their revolutionary energies into an all out struggle against the class interests and institutions of the bourgeoisie. The people must be rallied and united as one against the repression of the bourgeoisie.

Mao Tse-tung tells us "experience shows that if precedence is not given to the question of conquering the enemy in both political and military affairs and if regular hostilities are not conducted with tenacity, guerilla operations alone cannot produce final victory."

Debray removes the peasant from the revolutionary process, but this is not all. He also proceeds to exclude the majority of the population from the revolutionary struggles. This includes old people, women and children as we have already seen, and the urban workers are also excluded. He speaks of the ease by which the urban dweller of Latin America can be bribed and corrupted by the yankee dollar "which can be earned without too much difficulty." He attempts to leave the reader with the impression that urban workers in Latin American wallowing in an affluence created by U.S. imperialism, are incapable of participating in the revolutionary process, and must wait for the rebel bands in the mountain to liberate them. His contempt for the urban workers is further explained on pages 76-77 where he proclaims: "The mountains proletarianizes the bourgeois and peasant elements, and the city can bourgeoisify the proletarians."

Debray gives lip-service to the struggle against revisionism. For example, he raises the question of a revolution with or without a political party and says that the question is not raised "to revive useless and sterile animosities of which the chief benefactor is counter revolution everywhere." But in reading Revolution in the Revolution, it becomes apparent that his main attack is not on revisionism but Marxism-Leninism. Throughout the book he attempts to discredit the general line of the Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung which has developed and enriched in struggle the lessons of revolutionary armed struggle and which today stands in the forefront of the world revolutionary movement. Debray writes: "The storm centers and their revolutionary vanguards seem to move away from the forms of organization and agitation inspired by the Chinese comrades, whereas they gain grounds among the European militants and in politically becalmed regions." And further, "even if we assume by a violent exercise of the imagination that a 'pro-Chinese' group were to assemble fifty or so scatterbrains, or renegades in Guatemala or Venezuela, they would not last two weeks."

On the question of the vanguard, Debray sees the need for such but he then proceeds to emasculate ~~it~~ of its political content. He quotes Fidel: "There is no revolution without a vanguard (but) this vanguard is not necessarily the Marxist-Leninist party, and those who want to make the revolution have the right and the duty to constitute themselves a vanguard, independent of those parties." He continues, "There isno metaphysical equations in which vanguard equals Marxist-Leninist party." And again quoting Fidel, "Who will make the revolution in Latin America? Who? The people, the revolutionaries, with or without a party." (p. 89)

And on page 104-106, he puts forth these questions, "How is a vanguard party formed? Can the party under existing Latin American conditions, create the popular army, or is it up to the popular army to create the vanguard? Which is the nucleus of which?" Debray gives to us the answer: "The people devise their own vanguards making do with what is available....the most decisive political choice is membership in the guerilla force....gradually this small army creates rank and file unity as it grows and wins its first victories....the future people's army will begat its own party....essentially the party is the army....the guerilla force is the party in embryo....that is the staggering novelty introduced by the Cuban revolution....(which has) made a decisive contribution to international revolutionary experience and to Marxism-Leninism."

In his attempt to "free the present from the past" Debray frees the revolutionary process from the highest form of political organization, the proletarian vanguard, and he attempts to reverse all past revolutionary experience with the conclusion that the military is primary, and politics which is unified and combined with the military under the direction of the guerilla band, is a poor second.

What is so novel about the "new conception"? How has it made "decisive contributions to the international revolutionary experience and to Marxism-Leninism"?

There is nothing "new" in Debray's formula. Urban intellectuals in command of the guerilla force devoid of proletarian ideology adds up to a bourgeois-democratic movement which has as its objective not the building of socialism but a changing of the guards who head up the institutions of the bourgeoisie.

What Lessons Can We Learn From Debray?

The ideological fantasy peddled in Revolution in the Revolution and which was so tragically put to practice in Bolivia serves not to enrich international revolutionary experience, but on the contrary, serves to impose a dangerous concept for revolutionary actions in Latin America and elsewhere.

Here in the United States, Debray's "new conception" with its "revolutionary" incantations in reviving and sanctifying already disproven theories of spontaneity, adventurism and other "short-cuts" to proletarian revolution. And those who embrace these concepts or fail to understand that armed insurrection without the political objective of the dictatorship of the proletariat are pursuing a dangerous road which leads into the trap of the repressive state apparatus as was the fate and tragedy experienced by Che Guevara in Bolivia.

In essence, the "ideology" of Revolution in the Revolution which masquerades behind revolutionary phraseology, serves as a front for "left" counter-revolution. Its aim is to direct revolutionary movements in Latin America away from the Marxist-Leninist path to socialist revolution.

The left revisionism of Debray serves imperialist interests by attempting to fill the revolutionary vacuum temporarily created by Khrushchev revisionism. Its main strategical objective is to freeze the people's movements for national liberation in Latin America at the national-capitalist stage by imposing on the people a variant of state-capitalism under the command of the military.

Debray's thesis is not and cannot be a blueprint for socialist revolution in Latin America. Its essence is a bourgeois-democratic change within the framework of existing capitalism. Its result cannot be a fundamental change in class relationships; nor can it elevate the peasants and workers to a position of class dominance; it cannot bring socialism to Latin America, it can only serve to confuse and divide honest revolutionaries, thereby playing into the hands of reaction.

Revolution in the Revolution serves as a "revolutionary" signboard behind which is concealed bourgeois objectives. But in Latin America and elsewhere, Debray will be unmasksed by the developing revolutionary movements throughout the world which are based on the fundamental teachings of Marxism-Leninism enriched by the thought of Mao Tse-tung in the long, protracted experience of the Chinese revolution which has withstood the test of practice and history.

Mao sounded the warning against Debray and his counter-revolutionary compatriots when he said: "One must beware of those waving Red Flags in order to attack the Red Flag."

The Progressive Worker, publication of the Progressive Workers Movement of Canada, in its February and March, 1968, issues made a detailed analysis of Revolution in the Revolution and an important contribution to Marxism-Leninism, concludes with the following passage:

"By all means let us seek out the cause of why the 'new conception' failed so ignominiously and so tragically (in Bolivia). We hope our contribution to the discussion will aid in making that discovery, and also hasten a decision to return to the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism and the contributions of Mao Tse-tung. Fundamentally, the struggle in Latin America is similar to the world-wide revolutionary struggle and Marxism-Leninism applies there as everywhere else. It needs only to be interpreted in terms of Latin American conditions."

* * * * *

STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN MAO-TSE-TUNG IN SUPPORT OF THE AFRO-AMERICAN LIBERATION STRUGGLE

(The following Statement of the Chairman of the Communist Party of China, Mao-Tse-tung, whose experience and teachings have served to advance the cause of revolutionary struggles across the face of the globe, and which today, represent the highest expressions of Marxism-Leninism, was made on April 16, 1968.)

Some days ago, Martin Luther King, the Afro-American clergyman, was suddenly assassinated by the U.S. imperialists. Martin Luther King was an exponent of non-violence. Nevertheless, the U.S. imperialists did not on that account show any tolerance towards him, but used counter-revolutionary violence and killed him in cold blood. This has taught the broad masses of the Black people in the United States a profound lesson. It has touched off a new storm in their struggle against violent repression sweeping well over a hundred cities in the United States, a storm such as has never taken place before in the history of that country. It shows that an extremely powerful revolutionary force is latent in the more than twenty million Black Americans.

The storm of Afro-American struggle taking place within the United States is a striking manifestation of the comprehensive political and economic crisis now gripping U.S. imperialism. It is dealing a telling blow to U.S. imperialism, which is beset with difficulties at home and abroad.

The Afro-American struggle is not only a struggle waged by the exploited and oppressed Black people for freedom and emancipation, it is also a new clarion call to all the exploited and oppressed people of the United States to fight against the barbarous rule of the monopoly capitalist class. It is a tremendous aid and inspiration to the struggle of the people throughout the world against U.S. imperialism and to the struggle of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialism. On behalf of the Chinese people, I hereby express resolute support for the just struggle of the Black people in the United States.

Racial discrimination in the United States is a product of the colonialist and imperialist system. The contradiction between the Black masses in the United States and the U.S. ruling circles is a class contradiction. Only by overthrowing the reactionary rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class and destroying the colonialist and imperialist system can the Black people in the United States win complete emancipation. The Black masses and the masses of white working people in the United States have common interests and common objectives to struggle for. Therefore, the Afro-American struggle is winning sympathy and support from increasing numbers of white working people and progressives in the United States. The struggle of the Black people in the United States

is bound to merge with the American workers' movement, and this will eventually end the criminal rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class.

In 1963, in the "Statement Supporting the Afro-Americans in their Just Struggle Against Racial Discrimination by U.S. Imperialism" I said that "the evil system of colonialism and imperialism arose and thrived with the enslavement of Negroes and the trade in Negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the complete emancipation of the Black people." I still maintain this view.

At present, the world revolution has entered a great new era. The struggle of the Black people in the United States for emancipation is a component part of the general struggle of all the people of the world against U.S. imperialism, a component part of the contemporary world revolution. I call on the workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals of all countries and all who are willing to fight against U.S. imperialism to take action and extend strong support to the struggle of the Black people in the United States: People of the whole world unite still more closely and launch a sustained and vigorous offensive against our common enemy, U.S. imperialism, and its accomplices! It can be said with certainty that the complete collapse of colonialism, imperialism and all systems of exploitation, and the complete emancipation of all the oppressed peoples and nations of the world are not far off.