The Revolution in Latin America

As elsewhere, the revolution in Latin America, a vast continent with a
great variety of conditions, is revealing very distinctive features and
diverse views on the way forward.

One view is that typified by Carlos Marighela, and we publish here a
part of his Minimanual of the Urban Guerrilla, and a Manifesto presented
during the occupation of the National Radio of Sao Paulo, Brazil, on
August 15, 1969.

Although conditions are very different indeed in Australia, ALR feels
that the line of reasoning of all revolutionaries deserves our study, whether
in Latin America, Asia, Africa, or in other developed capitalist countries.
The following biographical notes were supplied by Alastair Davidson, who
also translated the Manifesto.

CARLOS MARIGHELA was expelled from the Brazilian Communist
Party during its Sixth Congress in December 1967 for having defended
the theses of the Havana Congress of the Organisation of Latin American
Solidarity in July-August of that year. He was then political secretary of
the State Committee of Sao Paulo, and had succeeded in having the leading
members of that committee accept the thesis that armed struggle was
needed to fight the embourgeoisement of the Party as well. In February
1968, the communist group in Sao Paulo, under the leadership of
Marighela, published a Declaration presenting themselves as an “open
and dynamic group” independent of control “from within and without
Brazil” and proposing a strategic plan which through urban guerrilla
warfare and sabotage could lead to the creation of armed nuclei destined
to become eventually a revolutionary army.

The undertaking was not confined to paper: throughout 1968, numerous
bank robberies throughout the country and bombings of the offices of
the military dictatorship and United States property showed that an
armed struggle had effectively begun. An arms factory was attacked
by a group of 40 men and three times pay-trains were expropriated at Rio
and Sao Paulo. At the end of 1968 the government decided to prohibit
press reports of Marighela’s activity. In the meantime captain Lamarca
and his cell had joined straight from the ranks of the army.

In a Message to the Bolivian People at the beginning of 1969 Marighela
underlined that the struggle of his group was the continuation of the
action of Che Guevara and would have to become a vast movement of
resistance against the dictatorship. High officials in the government
admitted on February 12 that Brazil was in the course of “an advanced
phase of revolutionary war”. In August, after the letter we publish below,
the American ambassador was kidnapped, having the same effect on the
world as the first victories of Fidel Castro. On November 4, 1969 Marighela
was assassinated in Sao Paulo, being 58 when he died.

A DEFINITION OF THE URBAN GUERRILLA

THE CHRONIC STRUCTURAL CRISIS characteristic of Brazil
today and its resultant political instability, are what have brought
about the upsurge of revolutionary war in the country. The revo-
olutionary war manifests itself in the form of urban guerrilla warfare, psychological warfare, or rural guerrilla warfare. Urban guerrilla warfare or psychological warfare in the city depends on the urban guerrilla.

The urban guerrilla is a man who fights the military dictatorship with arms, using unconventional methods. A political revolutionary and an ardent patriot, he is a fighter for his country's liberation, a friend of the people and of freedom. The area in which the urban guerrilla acts is in the large Brazilian cities. There are also bandits, commonly known as outlaws, who work in the big cities. Many times assaults by outlaws are taken as actions by urban guerrillas. The urban guerrilla, however, differs radically from the outlaw. The outlaw benefits personally from the action and attacks indiscriminately without distinguishing between the exploited and the exploiters, which is why there are so many ordinary men and women among his victims. The urban guerrilla follows a political goal and only attacks the government, the big capitalists and the foreign imperialists, particularly North Americans. Another element just as prejudicial as the outlaw and also operating in the urban area is the right-wing counter-revolutionary who creates confusion, assaults banks, hurls bombs, kidnap's, assassinate's and commits the worst imaginable crimes against urban guerrillas, revolutionary priests, students and citizens who oppose fascism and seek liberty.

The urban guerrilla is an implacable enemy of the government and systematically inflicts damage on the authorities and on the men who dominate the country and exercise power. The principal task of the urban guerrilla is to distract, to wear out, to demoralise the militarists, the military dictatorship and its repressive forces and also to attack and destroy the wealth and property of the North Americans, the foreign managers and the Brazilian upper class.

The urban guerrilla is not afraid of dismantling and destroying the present Brazilian economic, political and social system, for his aim is to help the rural guerrilla and to collaborate in the creation of a totally new and revolutionary social and political structure, with the armed people in power. The urban guerrilla must have a certain minimal political understanding. To gain that, he must read certain printed or mimeographed works such as: Guerrilla Warfare by Che Guevara; Memories of a Terrorist; Some Questions about the Brazilian; Guerrilla Operations and Tactics; On Strategic Problems and Principles; Certain Tactical Principles for Comrades Undertaking Guerrilla Operations; Organisational Questions; O Guerrilheiro.
The urban guerrilla is characterised by his bravery and decisive nature. He must be a good tactician and a good shot. The urban guerrilla must be a person of great astuteness to compensate for the fact that he is not sufficiently strong in arms, ammunition and equipment. The career militarists or the government police have modern arms and transport and can go about anywhere freely, using the force of their power. The urban guerrilla does not have such resources at his disposal and leads a clandestine existence. Sometimes he is a convicted person or is out on parole and is obliged to use false documents. Nevertheless, the urban guerrilla has a certain advantage over the conventional military or the police. It is that, while the military and the police act on behalf of the enemy, whom the people hate, the urban guerrilla defends a just cause, which is the people's cause.

The urban guerrilla's arms are inferior to the enemy's, but from a moral point of view, the urban guerrilla has an undeniable superiority. This moral superiority is what sustains the urban guerrilla. Thanks to it, the urban guerrilla can accomplish his principal duty, which is to attack and to survive. The urban guerrilla has to capture or divert arms from the enemy to be able to fight. Because his arms are not uniform, since what he has are expropriated or have fallen into his hands in different ways, the urban guerrilla faces the problem of a variety of arms and a shortage of ammunition. Moreover, he has no place to practise shooting and marksmanship. These difficulties have to be surmounted, forcing the urban guerrilla to be imaginative and creative, qualities without which it would be impossible for him to carry out his role as a revolutionary.

The urban guerrilla must possess initiative, mobility and flexibility, as well as versatility and a command of any situation. Initiative especially is an indispensable quality. It is not always possible to foresee everything, and the urban guerrilla cannot let himself become confused, or wait for orders. His duty is to act, to find adequate solutions for each problem he faces, and not to retreat. It is better to err acting than to do nothing for fear of erring. Without initiative there is no urban guerrilla warfare.

Other important qualities in the urban guerrilla are the following: To be a good walker. To be able to stand up against fatigue, hunger, rain, heat. To know how to hide and to be vigilant. To conquer the art of dissembling. Never to fear danger. To behave the same by day as by night. Not to act impetuously. To have unlimited patience. To remain calm and cool in the worst conditions and situations. Never to leave a track or trail. Not to get discouraged.
In the face of the almost insurmountable difficulties of urban warfare, sometimes comrades weaken, leave, give up the work. The urban guerrilla is not a businessman in a commercial firm nor is he a character in a play. Urban guerrilla warfare, like rural guerrilla warfare, is a pledge the guerrilla makes to himself. When he cannot face the difficulties, or knows that he lacks the patience to wait, then it is better to relinquish his role before he betrays his pledge, for he clearly lacks the basic qualities necessary to be a guerrilla.

How the urban guerrilla lives and subsists

The urban guerrilla must live by his work or professional activity. If he is known and sought by the police, if he is convicted or is on parole, he must go underground and sometimes must live hidden. Under such circumstances, the urban guerrilla cannot reveal his activity to anyone, since that is always and only the responsibility of the revolutionary organisation in which he is participating. The urban guerrilla must have a great capacity for observation, must be well informed about everything, principally about the enemy’s movements, and must be very searching and knowledgeable about the area in which he lives, operates, or through which he moves.

But the fundamental and decisive characteristic of the urban guerrilla is that he is a man who fights with arms; given this condition, there is very little likelihood that he will be able to follow his normal profession for long without being identified. The role of expropriation thus looms as clear as high noon. It is impossible for the urban guerrilla to exist and survive without fighting to expropriate. Thus, within the framework of the class struggle, as it inevitably and necessarily sharpens, the armed struggle of the urban guerrilla points towards two essential objectives:

(a) the physical liquidation of the chiefs and assistants of the armed forces and of the police,

(b) the expropriation of government resources and those belonging to the big capitalists, latifundists and imperialists, with small expropriations used for the maintenance of individual urban guerrillas and large ones for the sustenance of the revolution itself.

It is clear that the armed struggle of the urban guerrilla also has other objectives. But here we are referring to the two basic objectives, above all expropriation. It is necessary for every urban guerrilla to keep in mind always that he can only maintain his existence if he is disposed to kill the police and those dedicated to repression and if he is determined—truly determined—to expropriate the wealth of the big capitalists, the latifundists and the imperialists.
One of the fundamental characteristics of the Brazilian revolution is that from the beginning it developed around the expropriation of the wealth of the major bourgeois, imperialists and latifundist interests, without excluding the richest and most powerful commercial elements engaged in the import-export business. And by expropriating the wealth of the principal enemies of the people, the Brazilian revolution was able to hit them at their vital centre, with preferential and systematic attacks on the banking network that is to say, the most telling blows were levelled against capitalism's nerve system. The bank robberies carried out by the Brazilian urban guerrillas hurts such big capitalists as Moreira Salles and others, the foreign firms which insure and reinsure the banking capital, the imperialist companies, the federal and state governments—all of them systematically expropriated as of now.

The fruit of these expropriations has been devoted to the work of learning and perfecting urban guerrilla techniques, the purchase, the production and the transportation of arms and ammunition for the rural areas, the security apparatus of the revolutionaries, the daily maintenance of the fighters, of those who have been liberated from prison by armed force and those who are wounded or persecuted by the police, or to any kind of problem concerning comrades liberated from jail, or assassinated by the police and the military dictatorship.

The tremendous costs of the revolutionary war must fall on the big capitalists, on imperialism and the latifundists and on the government too, both federal and state, since they are all exploiters and oppressors of the people. Men of the government, agents of the dictatorship and of North American imperialism principally, must pay with their lives for the crimes committed against the Brazilian people.

In Brazil, the number of violent actions carried out by urban guerrillas, including deaths, explosions, seizures of arms, ammunition, and explosives, assaults on banks and prisons, etc., is significant enough to leave no room for doubt as to the actual aims of the revolutionaries. The execution of the CIA spy Charles Chandler, a member of the US Army who came from the war in Vietnam to infiltrate the Brazilian student movement, the military henchmen killed in bloody encounters with urban guerrillas, all are witness to the fact that we are in full revolutionary war and that the war can be waged only by violent means. This is the reason why the urban guerrilla uses armed struggle and why he continues to concentrate his activity on the physical extermination of the agents of repression and to dedicate twenty-four hours a day to expropriation from the people's exploiters.
MANIFESTO to the Brazilian People

As supporters of revolutionary war, we are engaged in it, in Brazil, with all our strength. The police accuse us of being terrorists and thieves, but we are simply revolutionaries who conduct an armed fight against the present Brazilian military dictatorship and North American imperialism. Our objects are:

(1) To overthrow the military dictatorship, to annul all its decisions since 1964, and to form a popular revolutionary government.

(2) To expel North Americans from the country, to expropriate the companies, assets and property of these people and their collaborators.

(3) To expropriate the large landowners, liquidate large land holdings and to transform and improve the living conditions of peasants and workers and middle class, at the same time stopping the policy of increasing taxes, prices and rents.

(4) To abolish censorship and institute the liberty of the press, of criticism and of organisation.

(5) To take Brazil out of the position of a satellite of US foreign policy and make it, on the world arena, an independent nation, re-establishing diplomatic relations with socialist countries and with Cuba at the same time.

To fight the military dictatorship and attain the objects which we have listed above, we receive neither arms nor aid from abroad. Our arms are captured in Brazil from the police and the army barracks. Or they are consigned by revolutionary soldiers to the revolution when they desert from the armed forces of the dictatorship, as Captain Lamarca and the valiant sergeants, corporals and soldiers who accompanied him on the withdrawal from Quitauna garrison did. We hope that similar operations will continue, causing despair and demoralisation among the thugs and reinforcement of the revolution.

As for money, it is public and notorious that the revolutionaries rob banks and expropriate those who enrich themselves through brutally exploiting the Brazilian populace. The legend of Moscow, Peking and Havana “gold” is finished. The bankers can’t complain since in the last year alone they have accumulated earnings of 400 billion old cruzeiros. While matters proceed like that for them, bank employees earn a very low salary or have to work twenty five years to reach a salary which is double that of poverty. The government, for its part, cannot say anything, given that a minister as corrupt as Andreaza owns flats worth a billion old cruzeiros and receives bribes from foreign companies.
The dictatorship accuses us of attacks on people and murders, but does not admit having murdered Marco Antonio Braz de Calvalho, “Escoteiro” Nelson, Jose de Almeida, Sergeant Lucas and many other patriots. And it does not wish to admit that prisoners are tortured by pau de arara, electric shock and other methods which would make Nazis redden with envy. The methods which the Brazilian military dictatorship uses to fight and repress the people are unworthy and barbarous methods, destined to defend the particular interests of the military people in power and those of big capitalists, big landowners and US imperialism. On the other hand, the methods the revolutionaries adopt to fight the military dictatorship are legitimate and inspired by patriotic sentiments. No honest man can accept the dishonour and monstrous nature of the regime instituted by the armed forces of Brazil.

The struggle has begun: in a year of armed activity we have succeeded in inflicting severe punishment on the enemy, and it already has to count its dead and recognize, albeit through gritted teeth, that revolutionary war exists. From the beginning of operations to today, armed groups have continued to expropriate banks, national and foreign and bank capital’s insurance companies, making a wide breach in the Brazilian bank network. And in the future they will proceed to expropriate great businessmen, imperialist enterprises and federal and state governments. Among the actions already carried out by the armed groups and comprising the heroic guerrilla operation which freed Sergeant Antonio Prestes and other comrades from Lemos de Brito jail in the middle of Rio de Janeiro; the execution of the North American Captain Chandler, a Vietnam war criminal who was sent to Brazil as a CIA spy (another proof that revolutionary armed groups defend our sovereignty and protect national interests); and demonstrations against Rockefeller especially in Rio, Sao Paulo and Brasilia, in which students played a particular part which shows that the Americans are repudiated in Brazil and can count on the support of the dictatorship only. But this is a dictatorship whose policy of national betrayal has become too open to be hidden or masked by the gorillas.

The revolutionary war which we are making is a prolonged war, which demands the participation of everybody. It is a ferocious war against North American imperialism and against the Brazilian military dictatorship which acts as an agent of the United States in our country. It is the continuation of the heroic struggle of Che Guevara to free the whole of Latin America which he started in Bolivia. It is a deep struggle, which proposes the complete trans-
formation of Brazilian society. All the armed revolutionary groups which are fighting must continue the urban guerrilla, as we have done systematically to date.

We must attack from all sides with many different armed groups, in small numbers, separated from each other and even without mutual contact with the aim of dispersing the government forces which are hunting us. We must gradually increase our actions in the urban guerrilla, with a series of unexpected actions, so that the troops of the dictatorship cannot leave the urban perimeter without leaving the city unprotected. Such a situation, disastrous for the military dictatorship, would allow us then to let loose the country guerrilla contemporaneously with the already uncontrollable city rebellion. In order that the masses participate in the struggle against the military dictatorship and for the liberation of the country from the United States yoke our next step must be the struggle in the country.

This will be the year of rural guerrilla. This is the hour and the moment of the peasantry whose instinct in knowing the terrain, cunning in facing the enemy, and capacity to communicate with the exploited, oppressed and humiliated of the whole country, constitute together a terrible revolutionary weapon. To arouse the countryside, engage in the struggle for land, to liquidate the large landholders, to burn their plantations, to butcher their animals to kill the hunger of the hungry, to squat on land, to execute the grileiros (strongarm men) and the North Americans allied to the grileiros in the sale of land and dirty business which harms national interest, to carry onto the large landholdings of the country the same worry and terror in which the military, the imperialists and the dominant classes of the city already find themselves, these are the objectives to reach in the second phase of revolutionary war.

Without abandoning the urban guerrilla, the revolutionary armed groups must help the development of the rural struggle through their heroic activity.

Our efforts must converge on the building and reinforcement of the armed alliance of the workers, peasants and their alliance with the students, the intellectuals, the priests and the women. This alliance is the pedestal of the rural struggle and from the rural guerrilla will emerge the Peoples Liberation Army of Brazil.

For the unity of the Brazilian People.
Down with the military Dictatorship.
Out with the Americans.