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HAVANA

CUBAS INDEPENDENT VOICE HEARD AT MOSCOW CONFERENCE

By

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The voice of Cuba, independent, fraternal and critical, boomed out some basic ^{tenets} ~~tenets~~ at the ~~Moscow~~ Conference of Worker's and Communist Partys Conference in Moscow, on June 11.

Cuba had originally turned down the invitation to attend. The reason, according to Cuba's spokesman at the Conference, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, was because his government felt it was necessary to "modify some situations in the present-day communist and anti-imperialist movements so that the meeting would be truly efficacious for the purposes of this anti-imperialist offensive." It was revealed that the criterion of the Cuban Party had not varied but that the exhortation from the Soviet and other Parties, plus the fact that Cuba's absence could be used by socialism's enemies decided the only socialist country in the Americas in favor of going to the Conference. The Cuban Party attended, not as a delegate but ~~rather~~ as an observer.

The speech, which represented the position of the Cuban Communist Party on both foreign policy as well as the tactics and strategy of the anti-imperialist struggle was unique at the Conference for its critical content. It is considered as one of the most lucid and comprehensive statements of the Cuban position to be heard in many years. The speech took the form of a commentary on the Draft Program presented ^{to} ~~at~~ the Moscow Conference.

Rodriguez said ^{that} his Party agreed with the Draft on the need to utilize all the new possibilities to launch "a broader offensive against imperialism and the forces of reaction and war." It agreed also with singling out ~~the~~ U.S. imperialism as the number one enemy of mankind and with the Draft's formulation that "the events of the last ~~xx~~ ten years have shown with greater crudity her face as exploiter and world gendarm^e - implacable enemy of the liberation movements."

The Cubans likewise supported the Draft's analysis of imperialism. It would, Rodriguez declared "eliminate any illusion ~~xxx~~ respecting the possibility of 'domesticating' the imperialists." He said:

"Although it is evident that ~~xxx~~ as the forces of socialism grow, imperialism is trying to achieve partial and temporary agreements with the most powerful socialist States, it does not renounce, ~~however~~ - as the Draft warns - the direct armed struggle against socialism."

The Cuban spokesman pointed out the varied strategy of imperialism which employs the "barbarity which has converted Vietnam into a vast sea of flames or a military intervention in Santa Domingo or financial and commercial manipulation and reformist maneuvers."

In regards to the working class of the ~~ix~~ advanced capitalist countries Rodriguez said that imperialism alternates between open violence and social demogogy - "the bourgeois reformism and opportunist ideology or policy denounced by

the Draft." He quoted the Draft to the effect that imperialism attempts to destroy the worker's movement from inside and "absorb it into the system of capitalist domination... One cannot deny that this last endeavor has had certain success not only in the United States but also in other highly developed countries and that the reality of the forecast ~~by~~ of Engels brilliantly expanded on by Lenin on the role of the worker aristocracy threatens to extend...".

Carlos Rafael said his government was in accord with characterizing the United States as the implacable enemy and that the mission of the working class and the anti-imperialist forces is to "stop the aggressors and free humanity from imperialism." But, he added, the Cuban C.P is of the opinion that to do this it is necessary to strengthen "the ~~conceptions~~ ^{competitions} of Marxism-Leninism" and to "systematically combat the deformation that have weakened it and which, in our opinion, are expressed in the first place by opportunist positions which we consider as the principle present-day enemy..."

In what can be interpreted as an overall criticism of the Draft, Rodriguez said that the Cuban party "would have preferred that the document accentuate more the self-critical aspects, the realistic evaluation of contemporary events and of the participation in them of the international communist movement." Expanding on this theme he called for an analysis of the weaknesses of the worker's movements in the developed ~~exix~~ capitalist countries and of the actions of the communist parties in different parts of the world. He said:

"It is true, as has been expressed that 'the events of this past period has confirmed again that the working class is the principle force of the anti-imperialist and revolutionary struggle in the capitalist countries'. But it is also certain that the events of Europe demonstrated how much the working class and its organizations still lack in order to play their role fully. At the same time these events highlighted the capacity for maneuver of the old European bourgeoisie to evade its moment of crisis as a result of the lack of cohesion of the proletarian forces, the students and ~~the~~ middle strata."

The Cuban Central Committee member took exception to the generalization that the Latin American communist and worker's parties, as stated in the Draft, "head the democratic forces and unfurl the banner of anti-imperialist struggle, selflessly and valiently combat for the demands of the masses and to achieve revolutionary changes." He said that without ignoring the heroic position of thousands of militant Latin American communists "we would not be loyal to this Conference if we did not state the opinion that this image does not correspond to the reality of certain communist parties of Latin America."

The Draft program stated that "the world socialist system is the decisive force of the anti-imperialist struggle." Rodriguez said that his Party was in accord with this but that internal divisions in the socialist camp,

erroneous conceptions concerning the development of socialism and evaluations that underestimate the danger of imperialism and consider its evolution^{vi m} toward conciliatory positions, "conceptions concerning which the general sense of the Draft represents an appreciable advance, have diminished the role that corresponds to the socialist system in the anti-imperialist liberation struggle."

Carlos Rafael said that more emphasis should have been put on the role that bourgeois reformism plays in the general strategy of imperialism. In its analysis of Latin America, he pointed out, the emphasis is on the more traditional ~~point of view~~^{phenomena} like military takeovers and reactionary dictatorships. But, he said, the "democratic" seduction that imperialism employs alternatively with force stimulates reformist currents inside the working class and anti-imperialist and communist movements and helps to create illusions about the gradual defeat of imperialism." He declared that the establishment and development of relation with socialist countries and the possible changes in the attitude towards Cuba ~~does~~ by Latin American countries, does not reflect necessarily "a serious policy of resistance to American imperialism and frequently they are only maneuvers to gain time when faced with difficulties and ^{to} deceive and confuse the masses... We are partisans, therefore, of a more ample denunciation of bourgeois reformism as an instrument of imperialism to maintain its domination of the Third World."

Rodriguez also spoke about the "consumer's society" that accelerated industrialization and the technological revolution

has brought about. He said that this has reached an unbearable point "which asphixiates, above all, young workers and students, causing the rebellious outbreaks that have become more frequent." Rodriguez said that the scant mention of this problem appears to have a connection to the ~~resistance~~ ^{reluctance} of some sectors of the communist movement to admit the fact, that after the Second World War the conditions of the workers improved in the advanced capitalist countries at the expense of the misery of the Third World and due to the militarization of the economy. "A more careful evaluation of these aspects, we believe, will permit us to better appreciate the importance of the youth rebellion within the framework of the general struggle for the definitive liquidation of capitalism."

The section of the speech dealing with peace and peaceful coexistence helped to clarify Cuba's theoretical ~~new~~ position on these vital themes. Rodriguez said that his government recognizes the importance of the struggle for peace. "The defense of peace", he said, "permits, in effect, to group together against the imperialists, the vastest forces, including those that do not yet project themselves against imperialism as a system of oppression and some who, because of their personal interests, might never coincide with us in an anticapitalist struggle." He continued:

"But our Party considers that to carry forward a victorious struggle against imperialism, to achieve the ~~objective~~ goal mentioned in the Draft, of freeing humanity from imperialism, it is necessary to

distiguish the methods and programs of the struggle for peace that can bring together the non anti-capitalist sectors or not even anti-imperialist, ^{by} differentiating them from the most profound objects and programs of the forces that today confront or are capable of confronting imperialism with the decision to wipe it out as a system from the face of the earth. And we think, therefore, that the presentation of this problem in a part of the third section can cause confusion as to strategy and tactics."

The Cuban position agreed with the Draft in singling out the need to "lend multilateral aid to the heroic Vietnamese people" as the "premordial object of the unity of action of all those ready to fight for peace, liberty and progress".
declared Rodriguez
However, the Cuban Party cannot support the formulation that "the essential orientation of the joint actions of the anti-imperialist forces continues being the struggle against the danger of ~~war~~ ^{war}, for peace in the entire world." Peace, he said, is the common desire of humanity. But, he went on:

"to achieve peace is only a part, as important as it might be, of the struggle against imperialism. History has shown us that during long periods, peace has prevailed together with the most ferocious ~~apprehensions~~ economic, political and social oppression against peoples who constitute the great majority of mankind."

The Cuban spokesman said that the defense of peace cannot constitute "the essential orientation of the joint actions of the anti-imperialist forces since this would reduce our historical goals." "The anti-imperialist forces have to propose as the essential orientation of their actions the defeat and elimination of imperialism."

Rodriguez greeted the Draft's formulation that:

"The policy of peaceful coexistence does not limit the right of the oppressed peoples to employ in the struggle for their liberation all roads, including that of armed struggle, nor does it signify in any way a support for reactionary regimes. Also it is indisputable that every people has the inalienable right to use arms to defend itself from the attacks of the imperialist aggressors and to count on the aid of other peoples in their just cause - this forms part of the common anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples."

He also greeted the Draft's statement that the policy of coexistence "does not signify either the maintenance of the social and political status quo or the weakening of the ideological struggle" and that "mass actions against imperialism is one of the conditions for the success of the policy of peaceful coexistence."

The Drafts formulation of the problem of peaceful coexistence contrasts ~~sharply from~~ sharply from those of the Communist and Worker's Party Declarations of 1957 and 1960.

Clearly discernable in the new formulation, is a dynamic and comprehensive approach that allows room for active anti-imperialist struggle and for the revolutionary struggle of the peoples of the Third World - all within the broader meaning of peaceful coexistence. It is interesting to recall that President Dorticos of Cuba defined peaceful coexistence in much the same way some five years ago at the Conference of Non-Alligned Nations in Cairo. He chose to use the word "integral peaceful coexistence" to differentiate it from the narrower concept that was general~~y~~ prevalent at that time.

Carlos Rafael also commented on the Draft's formulation that the Communists must do all that possible:

"to achieve the maximum mutual understanding with the diverse tendencies and anti-imperialist movements, keeping in mind their individuality and respecting their autonomy."

To do this, Rodriguez said, and to win the confidence of other anti-imperialist forces, "it is indispensable that the communists know how to assume in practice the role of vanguard which does not belong to them by definition only but which must be conquered through struggle and by example." He warned also that in the struggle for anti-imperialist unity the communists, "as representatives of the most mature and conscious ideology must overcome the arrogance and sectarian narrowness and apply the most democratic methods ~~of~~ to prepare for and ^{achieve} ~~realize~~ unity."

The Cuban spokesman greeted the Draft's recognition that the defense of Cuba "is an obligation of the communists and other revolutionary and anti-imperialist forces of Latin America and the world."

As regards Latin America he pointed to the bankruptcy of American policy in that area of the world and singled out as recent evidence the failure of the Alliance for Progress, the events in Peru and the rejection ~~of~~ by the Latin American people of Rockefeller's visit. "The death of Che Guevara is ~~not the end of the process~~ therefore an end but rather the beginning of a new period in the revolutionary process of Latin America", he said.

Rodriguez devoted the final portion of his speech to ~~the expression of~~ Cuba's attitude toward the Soviet Union. He said that ⁱⁿ the development of collaboration and friendship with the Soviet Union "inevitable discrepancies had arisen which on some occasions became acute." ~~He went on:~~

"But the Communist Party of Cuba considers that in the process of the struggles of the peoples against imperialism, the Soviet Union is the principle bulwark and that ~~his~~ ^{the} historical role has expressed itself in our days in the support of the socialist revolution of Cuba, in the backing of the Arab peoples of the Middle East and in the aid given to the Vietnamese cause."

The speech ended with the following statement which is considered Cuba's clearest expression ^{to date} of her overall attitude

toward the Soviet Union:

"Therefore we declare from this rostrum that in any decisive confrontation, whether it deals with a Soviet action against the ~~dem~~ threat of a dissolution of the socialist system resulting from the maneuvers of imperialism or from a provocation or aggression against the Soviet people, come from where it may come, Cuba will be unwaiveringly on the side of the USSR."

This statement, as an analysis of the speech proves, in no way indicates that Cuba has abdicated its right to differ substantially over the whole host of tactical and strategic problems of the anti-imperialist struggle. The Cuban position, in this respect follows a consistent path of development. It was pointed out in our article (Guardian January 11, 1969) in which we spoke of "divergencies and underlying fraternal relations".

The speech is seen as an important contribution to the tactics and strategy of the anti-~~imperialist~~ ^{imperialist} and anti-capitalist struggle. ~~It~~ There is no doubt, however, that some of its fundamental thesis ^{will meet with} skepticism and disagreement on the part of ~~the very organizations which have~~ those who till now have manifested the ideological and practical weaknesses that Cuba was criticizing. ~~Nevertheless~~ Nevertheless it is inevitable that it will have ~~its~~ a strong influence among the rank and file in all countries.

Cuba, once again, has shown that it is following

Fidel Castro's dictum of "thinking with one's own head."