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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A New Kind of Vanguard: Cuban–North Korean Discourse on Revolutionary Strategy for the Global South in the 1960s

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Abstract

During the 1960s, the Cuban government attempted to play a leadership role within the Latin American Left. In the process Cuban leaders departed from Marxist–Leninist orthodoxy, garnering harsh criticism from their Soviet and Chinese allies. Yet Cuba found a steadfast supporter of its controversial positions in North Korea. This support can in large part be explained by the parallels between Cuban and North Korean ideas about revolution in the developing nations of the Global South. Most significantly, both parties embraced a radical reconceptualisation of the role of the Marxist–Leninist vanguard party. This new doctrine appealed primarily to younger Latin American militants frustrated with the established leftist parties and party politics in general. The Cuban/North Korean theory of the party had a tangible influence in Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Mexico, Bolivia and Nicaragua, as revolutionary groups in these societies took up arms in the 1960s and 1970s.

Keywords: Cuba; North Korea; *foco* theory; Marxism–Leninism; revolution; guerrilla

> They say I am a heretic in the field of Marxism–Leninism. Well! That is funny. There are so-called Marxist–Leninist organisations which fight like cats and dogs and argue over the revolutionary truth. They accuse us of wanting to implement the Cuban formula mechanically. They claim we do not know the role of the party […] We do not belong to any church. We are heretics. We are heretics. So, let them call us heretics. But why waste our time? I believe history will have the last word on this subject.[1]
>
> – Fidel Castro, 1966

[1]Fidel Castro, 'Speech to 12th CTC [Central de Trabajadores de Cuba/Cuban Workers' Federation] Congress', 30 Aug. 1966, available at the Castro Speech Data Base, Latin American Network Information Center, University of Texas at Austin: http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/castro/db/1966/19660830.html, last access 3 Sept. 2021.

During the 1960s the ruling parties of Cuba and North Korea became exceptionally close allies within the socialist world. This bond expressed itself in a display of strong consensus on a range of political questions, from development policy for non-industrialised countries, to what principles should govern relations between socialist states, to the Vietnam War. This article deals with one aspect of this ideological encounter: Cuban–North Korean discourse on revolutionary strategy for the Global South. In the 1960s, Cuba attempted to provide leadership to the Latin American Left, and to the region's numerous Cuban-inspired guerrilla movements in particular. In the process Cuban leaders departed from Marxist–Leninist orthodoxy, garnering harsh criticism from both their Soviet and Chinese allies and the historic Latin American communist parties. Yet Cuba found a steadfast ally in North Korea, as Premier Kim Il Sung and the Korean Workers' Party (KWP) consistently defended Cuba's controversial positions, and affirmed that the Latin American revolution would be led by Cuba alone. This can in large part be explained by the parallels between Cuban and North Korean ideas about revolution in societies of the Global South characterised by foreign domination and 'underdevelopment'. Most significantly, both parties embraced a radical reconceptualisation of the role of the Marxist–Leninist vanguard party. This 'heresy' rejected the conventional Marxist–Leninist view that the party played the pre-eminent role in organisation, education and leadership during the period of revolutionary struggle. By contrast, the Cuban and North Korean line maintained that the most conscious and capable cadre would be forged through the arduous experience of guerrilla warfare itself. Rather than the party leading the struggle, the struggle would give birth to a party, which would then guide the transition to socialism once state power was conquered. Therefore the immediate task of revolutionaries in the Global South was not to build the party, but to launch popular insurrections that transcended sectarian divisions. This new doctrine, which challenged both Soviet orthodoxy and Maoism, appealed primarily to younger Latin American militants frustrated with the old communist and social-democratic organisations. The impact of the Cuban/North Korean concept of the party went beyond polemics and theoretical debates. It had a tangible influence on strategies and tactics employed by revolutionary movements in Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Mexico, Bolivia and Nicaragua, as they took up arms in the 1960s and 1970s.

North Korea has been largely overlooked in the existing literature on the Cold War in Latin America. This article utilises a range of sources, including official Cuban publications, the testimonies of former guerrillas, and North Korean texts on revolutionary theory published in Chosŏnmal, Spanish and English to address this gap in the scholarship. Bringing Cuban–North Korean relations into view allows us to consider the alternative South–South linkages taking shape at the political and intellectual levels in the midst of the US–Soviet and Sino-Soviet conflicts. North Korea was an important source of political and diplomatic support for the Cuban leadership in the 1960s while influencing ongoing debates within the Latin American Left. As this article brings into focus, the Cuban and North Korean communist parties together made a novel and impactful contribution to the existing lineage of Marxist revolutionary strategy. This history challenges common scholarly narratives of the Latin American Left of the 1960s as chiefly defined by a tension between the Cuban model and Soviet orthodoxy, as well as the

assumption that the Soviet Union was Cuba's sole ally of importance within the socialist world. The findings of this article suggest the utility of a more rigorous and nuanced understanding of the intellectual currents animating the Latin American guerrilla projects of the era that is more attentive to South–South connections and ideological syncretism.

Cuba and North Korea in the 1960s

Raúl Castro, brother of the late Fidel Castro and until recently the first secretary of the Partido Comunista (Communist Party, PC) of Cuba, arrived in Pyongyang on 26 October 1966.[2] At the time Raúl Castro was second party secretary and minister of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias (Revolutionary Armed Forces, FAR), and was accompanied by Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticós (1919–83) and FAR Vice-Minister Sergio del Valle (1927–2007). The following day Raúl Castro addressed a massive crowd in Pyongyang's Moranbong Stadium,[3] over 100,000 strong, according to the Cuban press.[4] Explaining how the Cuban and Korean people were bonded by a common struggle against US imperialism, Raúl Castro emphasised just how aligned in perspective the leadership of both nations were. 'If someone wants to know the opinion of *compañero* Fidel Castro on the basic problems of our times, let him ask *compañero* Kim Il Sung', Raúl Castro remarked. '[…] *compañero* Fidel thinks exactly the same as *compañero* Kim Il Sung'.[5] The Soviet Embassy in Pyongyang reported that during the Cuban delegation's visit, 'both sides stressed in every way the complete consensus of opinion between the KWP and the Cuban CP [Communist Party] on the problems of the current situation in the world and the international Communist movement'.[6]

Raúl Castro's visit to Pyongyang in October 1966 reflects the particularly close relations that developed between Cuba and North Korea during that decade. The triumph of Fidel Castro's rebel army over the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista at the dawn of 1959 led to Pyongyang's first and most enduring bilateral relationship in the Western hemisphere. The proliferation of Cuban-inspired guerrilla movements in the 1960s convinced Pyongyang that Latin America was on the precipice of a continent-wide revolution.[7] This fitted with the North Korean leadership's analysis of international conditions at the time: capitalism had entered irreversible

[2]'Más de 200,000 personas recibieron en Pyongyang a la delegación cubana', *Granma* (Havana), 27 Oct. 1966.

[3]Today's Kim Il Sung Stadium.

[4]'Multitudinario homenaje en el estadio de Pyongyang a la delegación del Partido y el Gobierno de Cuba', *Granma* (Havana), 28 Oct. 1966.

[5]*Ibid.*

[6]'From a 2 June 1967 Memo of the Soviet Embassy in the DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] (1st Secretary V. Nemchinov) about Some New Factors in Korean–Cuban Relations', 2 June 1967, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive (hereafter HAPP), Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVPRF), *fond* 0102, *opis* 23, *papka* 112, *delo* 24, pp. 53–7. Obtained by Sergey Radchenko and translated by Gary Goldberg. Available at http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116706, last access 3 Sept. 2021.

[7]'Cuban Anniversary Celebration Material: Chong Il Yong Report', Pyongyang Domestic Service in Korean, 25 July 1962, Readex digital collection, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS) Daily Reports, 1941–1996*.

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crisis, US power was in steady decline, and the Global South was becoming the principal theatre of the world revolution.[8]

The North Korean and Cuban leaderships in the 1960s had much in common. Both were comprised of nationalist guerrillas turned statesmen from the Global South, stronger in their anti-imperialism and their patriotism than in their commitment to Marxist–Leninist orthodoxy. Both framed their respective revolutionary projects within a broader historical narrative of resistance to foreign domination. Both ruling parties were in different stages of attempting to build a modern, industrialised socialist society from a predominantly agrarian, highly dependent economic foundation, in countries of similar size and population. While Cuba faced constant aggression from the US government and terrorist groups based in Miami, including the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)'s now infamous schemes to assassinate Fidel Castro,[9] North Koreans lived with 50,000 US troops stationed in the southern half of the peninsula, and an arsenal of tactical nuclear weapons aimed at Pyongyang. The capacity of Washington to project hard power on a global scale was the primary obstacle to the central foreign-policy goals of both governments: for the Cubans, the spread of revolution in Latin America; for the North Koreans, the reunification of the peninsula under their leadership.

The threat Washington posed to both states made them critical of the Soviet policy of peaceful coexistence, which they regarded as a dangerous conciliation with imperialism. By late 1964 the North Korean and Cuban leaderships had become frustrated with China as well, which they felt prioritised its feud with Moscow at the expense of the more important anti-imperialist struggle. On the other hand, the two governments shared another dilemma: they relied on the economic and military support of the larger socialist countries, and that dependency carried with it a persistent threat to their political sovereignty. These intersecting dynamics were the impetus for an emerging partnership between Cuba, North Korea and North Vietnam coalescing by the mid-1960s, disrupting the binary of the Sino-Soviet split. This informal tripartite bloc was increasingly bold in its willingness to speak on behalf of what had become known as the 'Third World', and to criticise the two major socialist powers. K. S. Karol, a Paris-based journalist who reported from Havana in the 1960s, reflected on this alignment and its implications for the international communist movement:

> The history and political attitudes of each of these three countries were so different that it was difficult to lump them together under the label of the Third Communist Front. Their courageous stand had nonetheless earned them the

[8]For example, see Kim Il Sung, 'Chosŏn Minjujuŭi Inmin Konghwaguk ch'anggŏn 10 chunyŏn'ginyŏm kyŏngch'uktaehŭisesŏ han pogo [Report at Celebration Marking the Tenth Anniversary of the Founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea]', 8 Sept. 1958, *Chŏnjip*, vol. 22 (Pyongyang: KWP, 1998), pp. 309–10; 'Tang chojiksaŏpkwa sasangsaŏbŭl kaesŏn kanghwa halte taehayŏ [On Improving and Strengthening the Organisational and Ideological Work of the Party]', 8 March 1962, *Chŏnjip*, vol. 29 (Pyongyang: KWP, 2000), pp. 132–3; 'Hyŏn chŏngsewa uri tangŭi kwaŏp [The Present Situation and the Tasks of Our Party]', 5 Oct. 1966, *Chŏnjip*, vol. 37 (Pyongyang: KWP, 2001), pp. 239–40.

[9]Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, 'Alleged Assassination Plots Involving Foreign Leaders', US Senate, 94th Congress, 1st Session, Report No. 94–465, 20 Nov. 1975 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1975), pp. 4–5.

allegiance of a broad spectrum of the revolutionary Left that was unwilling to follow blindly in the footsteps of either Peking or Moscow.[10]

The bond Cuba and North Korea shared went beyond mere diplomacy and platitudes. The two governments engaged in extensive political, economic and cultural cooperation in the 1960s, and coordinated in the training, financing and arming of guerrilla movements across Latin America.

The Cuban Heresy

The revolutionary vision of Fidel Castro, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara and other Cuban leaders was never limited to a strictly national framework. They conceived of their victory against the Batista regime as the first phase of an unfolding continental revolution that would topple the oligarchies and liberate the region from its neocolonial subjugation to the United States. 'What is behind Yankee hatred of the Cuban Revolution?' Fidel Castro asked in the Second Declaration of Havana. It was the '[…] fear that the looted peoples of the Continent will snatch the arms of their oppressors and declare themselves, like Cuba, free peoples of America'.[11] Moreover, Cuban leaders believed that common conditions in Latin America meant that the revolutionary guerrilla war against Batista during 1956–9 provided a model applicable to the entire region. The Cuban leadership distilled this experience into a body of revolutionary praxis that became known as *foquismo*, or '*foco* theory', primarily defined in the writings and speeches of Che, Fidel Castro and Régis Debray between 1960 and 1967.[12]

Foquismo was deeply controversial; however, Karol dubbed it 'the Cuban heresy' for the manner in which it contradicted established conventions of Marxism–Leninism. Cuban leaders maintained that the objective conditions for revolution in most of Latin America were in abundance – it was the subjective conditions that were lacking: courage, leadership, 'the awareness of the possibility of victory by the path of violence against the imperial powers and their internal allies'.[13] This situation did not call for a patient process of organising among the masses, they argued, but rather immediate action by small vanguards of committed revolutionaries who were to launch guerrilla *focos* (focuses) in the remote, impoverished regions of the countryside.[14] The subjective conditions necessary for revolution would blossom in the course of armed struggle, as bold insurrectionary actions

[10]K. S. Karol, *Guerrillas in Power*, trans. Arnold Pomerans (New York: Hill and Wang, 1970), p. 294.

[11]Fidel Castro, *Second Declaration of Havana* (Detroit, MI: Radical Education Project, 1971), p. 4.

[12]Chief among these documents are Che's *Guerrilla Warfare* (1961) and its follow-up, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Method* (1963); Castro's *Second Declaration of Havana* (1962); and Debray's *Revolution in the Revolution?* (1967). Other notable texts include Castro's 1965 speech, 'The Duty of Marxist–Leninists and the Revolutionary Line'; two essays by Che, 'Cuba, Exceptional Case or Vanguard in the Struggle Against Colonialism?' (1961) and 'The Marxist–Leninist Party' (1963); and Debray's *Problems of Revolutionary Strategy in Latin America* (1965).

[13]Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, 'Cuba, ¿excepción histórica o vanguardia en la lucha contra el colonialismo?', April 1961, available at www.iade.org.ar/noticias/cuba-excepcion-historica-o-vanguardia-en-la-lucha-contra-el-colonialismo, last access 3 Sept. 2021.

[14]Fidel Castro, 'The Duty of Marxist–Leninists and the Revolutionary Line', 20 April 1965, in Luis E. Aguilar (ed.), *Marxism in Latin America* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), pp. 221–2.

by the guerrillas would reverberate throughout society, sparking a wide-scale uprising. This audacious faith in the ability of a small group of iron-willed revolutionaries to set in motion the wheels of historical change was summarised in the famous words of the Second Declaration of Havana: 'The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution.'[15] By building upon the Cuban precedent, *foquismo* dictated that rural guerrilla warfare waged from the mountains was the optimal revolutionary strategy in Latin America, as 'the Andes will be the Sierra Maestra of America'.[16] Moreover, the masses of poor peasants were the primary revolutionary force in society, and could be relied upon to swell the ranks of a rebel army capable of defeating the state's security forces and seizing power.

Foquismo appealed to the more radical, heterodox and generally younger elements of the Latin American Left, and had a powerful influence on the wave of guerrilla movements that emerged across the region in the 1960s.[17] However, the theory received fierce criticism from both Cuba's Soviet and Eastern Bloc allies and the established Latin American communist parties.[18] Following the breakdown of Sino-Cuban relations in the mid-1960s,[19] the Communist Party of China (CPC) joined the chorus of criticism, positing Mao Zedong's concept of 'people's war' as more relevant to Latin America.[20] Such critics chastised *foquismo* as an idealistic and adventurist doctrine that failed to recognise the unique set of circumstances that made the defeat of Batista in 1959 possible, and naively homogenised what were markedly diverse conditions across the region. In particular, they questioned the revolutionary potential of the Latin American peasant in many countries and pointed out the notable absence of the working class in the Cuban vision.[21] The courage and will of people in arms seemed to eclipse the importance of sound ideology and political leadership. The notion that 'the duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution' appeared to these critics as a reckless disregard for objective conditions and a delusional belief in the ability of individuals to force the movement of history. The Soviet statesmen Anastas Mikoyan reportedly told Fidel Castro

[15]Castro, *Second Declaration of Havana*, p. 17.

[16]Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare: A Method* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1964), p. 16.

[17]Jonathan C. Brown, *Cuba's Revolutionary World* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2017), pp. 200–4, 209–12; Jorge G. Castañeda, *Utopia Unarmed: The Latin American Left after the Cold War* (New York: Vintage, 1994), pp. 69–74.

[18]Castro, 'Speech to 12th CTC Congress'.

[19]Sino-Cuban relations began a dramatic deterioration in late 1964, as Mao came to see Cuba's pretensions to independence as masking a fealty towards the 'revisionist' Soviet leadership. See CIA, 'The Sino-Soviet Dispute within the Communist Movement in Latin America', CIA Intelligence Report, ESAU XXVIII, 15 June 1967, p. 23, fn.

[20]Although Cuban and Chinese revolutionary strategy both emphasised the role of the peasantry and rural guerrilla warfare, there were nonetheless important differences between the two. Chief among them was that Maoism outlined a more patient and social-political (rather than military) process in which the revolutionary vanguard builds a solid base among the peasant masses in the remote countryside. From this perspective, the Cuban concept of *focos* was adventurist and created an untenable separation between revolutionaries and the masses. Another major point of contention, as this article examines, is that Maoism also retained a pre-eminent leadership role for the Marxist–Leninist vanguard party in the period of revolutionary struggle. On Maoist critiques of *foquismo*, see Lenny Wolff, 'Guevara, Debray, and Armed Revisionism', *Revolution* (Winter/Spring 1985), pp. 85–106.

[21]For an overview of this criticism, see John D. Martz, 'Doctrine and Dilemmas of the Latin American "New Left"', *World Politics*, 22: 2 (1970), pp. 188–96.

in November 1962 that the Second Declaration of Havana[22] was 'suicidal politics', further explaining that: 'The anti-American ideological line advocated in this document is prejudicial to the left on the continent and in this respect various complaints have arrived to Moscow.'[23] The Soviet and Eastern Bloc parties saw *foquismo* as further proof of the unfortunate petit bourgeois tendencies and shallow Marxism of many Cuban leaders.[24] Che's death in Bolivia in October 1967 only intensified such criticism. The Argentine communist Rodolfo Ghioldi, for example, penned an article blaming Che's death squarely on the latter's faulty analysis and strategy.[25] *Pravda* reprinted the article to the outrage of Cuban leaders, who in return declined to attend the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution celebrations in Moscow.[26]

The Revolutionary Traditions of the Glorious Anti-Japanese Armed Struggle

While seemingly under attack from all sides, the Cuban leadership found a steadfast ally and supporter of its controversial positions in North Korea. For example, despite the beating the Second Declaration of Havana took from orthodox Marxists, it was formally celebrated at the House of Culture in Pyongyang as a 'valuable document lighting the way of the Cuban Revolution and the national liberation struggle in Latin America'. [27] *Kulloja* argued that '[…] the Cuban revolution illustrates how we ought to carry out the revolution', as it had '[…] set up a model of liberation struggle to the people of Latin America'.[28] Following the death of Che in Bolivia, Kim paid homage to the fallen revolutionary in an essay for the Cuban journal *Boletín Tricontinental*. In it, Kim defended Che's legacy and upheld it as a model for the Latin American revolutionary movement. Responding to the accusations of the adventurism inherent in the *foquista* strategy, Kim wrote: 'The revolution must unfold in accordance with concrete reality in which the objective situation of the revolution is produced in each country. Nevertheless, this in no way means that the revolution can develop and mature on its own. The revolution can advance and mature at a secure pace only through active and arduous struggle

[22]The Second Declaration of Havana was a public speech delivered by Fidel Castro on 4 Feb. 1962, where he argued that in Latin America the conditions for revolution were ripe, that peasants would constitute the primary revolutionary force, and that any attempts at peaceful change through electoral politics were futile.

[23]'Telegram from the Brazilian Embassy in Havana (Bastian Pinto), 3:15 p.m., Wednesday', 14 Nov. 1962, HAPP, '600.(24h) – SITUAÇÃO POLÍTICA – CUBA de novembro a dezembre de 1.962//6223', Ministry of External Relations Archives, Brasilia, Brazil. Translated from Portuguese by James G. Hershberg. Available at http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/115381, last access 4 Sept. 2021.

[24]'Hungarian Embassy in Havana (Beck), Report on "Relations between Cuba and the Socialist Countries since the [Cuban Missile] Crisis"', 28 Jan. 1963, HAPP, Hungarian National Archives (MOL), Budapest, Foreign Ministry, Top-Secret Files, XIX-J-I-j–Kuba, 3. d. Translated by Attila Kolontári and Zsófia Zelnik. Available at http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116845, last access 4 Sept. 2021.

[25]Karol, *Guerrillas in Power*, pp. 391–2.

[26]*Ibid.*

[27]'Meeting Marks 2nd Havana Declaration', Pyongyang Korean Central News Agency (KCNA), 4 Feb. 1963, reprinted in *Daily Report: Foreign Radio Broadcasts* (Washington), 5 Feb. 1963.

[28]Ko Sung Il, 'Revolutionary People of the World Must Support the Revolutionary Struggle of the Cuban People', *Kulloja*, no. 30 (April 1968), reprinted in Joint Publications Research Service, *Translations on North Korea*, no. 87 (July 1969), p. 109.

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by revolutionaries.'[29] Kim echoed Fidel Castro's contention that what was lacking in Latin America was not the objective conditions for revolution, but rather courage within the leadership of the communist movement, invoking Fidel Castro's famous axiom that 'the duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution'. Kim wrote:

> To turn one's back on the revolution on the pretext of avoiding sacrifice means, in fact, to force the people to be the eternal slaves of capital and to tolerate forever the most cruel exploitation and oppression, unbearable mistreatment and humiliation, and innumerable sufferings and sacrifices […] to hesitate to make the revolution because you cannot overcome difficulties or for fear of sacrifice is not the attitude of a revolutionary.[30]

North Korea's strident defence of the Cuban leadership can partly be explained by the large degree of consensus between *foquismo* and what the KWP called the 'revolutionary traditions of the glorious Anti-Japanese Armed Struggle', its own distinctly North Korean body of politico-military strategy. Just as *foquismo* was based on the experience of the Cuban guerrilla war against the Batista regime from 1956 to 1959, North Korean revolutionary theory was presented as based on the experience of the Korean partisans' struggle against Japanese colonial rule during 1932–45.[31] According to the KWP, this heritage lived on as an 'immortal and precious revolutionary treasure',[32] and demonstrated how, under circumstances of foreign domination, intense state repression and predominantly rural, 'semi-feudal' socio-economic conditions, communists could build a mass revolutionary movement capable of expelling foreign forces and seizing power. This body of revolutionary theory was presented to an international audience in a series of texts published in various foreign languages in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the most important of which was *The Anti-Japanese Armed Struggle of the Korean People Organised and Waged under the Personal Leadership of Comrade Kim Il Sung*.[33] It is no coincidence that this anonymously authored, 63-page text was first

[29]Kim Il Sung, 'La gran causa revolucionaria antiimperialista de los pueblos de Asia, África y América Latina es invencible', *Boletín Tricontinental*, 8 (Oct. 1968), reprinted in *El Movimiento de los No Alineados es una poderosa fuerza revolucionaria antiimperialista de nuestra época* (Pyongyang: Ediciones en Lenguas Extranjeras, 1976), p. 82.

[30]*Ibid.*, p. 83. It is worth noting the difference between the Korean, Spanish and English translations of this passage. The official English translation, as it appears in the 1985 edition of Kim's *Works*, vol. 23 (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages), gives a somewhat vaguer and politically neutral translation: 'To flinch before difficulties and hesitate in the revolution for fear of sacrifice is not the attitude befitting a revolutionary.' Yet the Spanish edition published in *Boletín Tricontinental*, and later in the Spanish edition of the important 1976 book, *The Non-Aligned Movement is a Powerful Revolutionary Force of Our Era*, is much closer to the language of Fidel Castro's famous axiom 'El deber de todo revolucionario es hacer la revolución [The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution]', in that it uses the wording 'hacer la revolución [to make the revolution]'. The Chosŏnmal version contained in the 2002 edition of Kim's *Chŏnjip*, vol. 42, actually uses the verb 'hyŏngmyŏnghada', which is most accurately translated as 'to participate in revolution'. Special thanks to Dr Donald Baker for his help with these translation issues.

[31]The Empire of Japan formally annexed Korea in 1910. Colonial rule endured until Japan's surrender to the Allied powers in 1945.

[32]Anonymous, *La lucha armada antijaponesa del pueblo coreano, organizada y librada bajo la dirección personal del camarada Kim Il Sung* (Pyongyang: Ediciones en Lenguas Extranjeras, 1968), p. 2.

[33]*Ibid.*

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presented at an international gathering of radical 'Third World' intellectuals in Havana in January 1968.

The foundation of the 'revolutionary traditions of the glorious Anti-Japanese Armed Struggle', according to North Korean texts, is that Kim had maintained the *Chuch'e* line.[34] That is to say Kim rebuked the 'servilists' within the Korean communist movement, who, depicted as beholden to foreign dogmas and ignoring Korea's unique conditions, called for immediate socialist revolution.[35] Kim maintained that in a colonial and predominantly agrarian society such as Korea, the immediate task was in fact an 'anti-imperialist, anti-feudalist, democratic revolution'.[36] The driving force behind this revolution was the peasantry,[37] and Kim rejected 'the left opportunists and factionalists servile to big powers' who 'underestimated the revolutionary spirit of the Korean peasantry'.[38] The 'anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic revolution' was made possible by a broad coalition of 'patriotic' forces – even anti-communist ones – uniting the working class, intellectuals, the youth, the middle classes, 'religious people' and the national bourgeoisie.[39] In short, Kim had maintained that the path to victory was a progressive, nationalist movement against Japanese rule and a minority of local comprador elements, in which 'ultra-left' and 'adventurist' calls for class struggle were premature and dangerously divisive.[40]

According to North Korean historiography, Kim founded his guerrilla movement, made up of 'mostly young communists' on 25 April 1932, ten days after his 20th birthday. In the first stage, the guerrillas established remote bases in the frontier zones of the north of the country and in eastern Manchuria. In the rural communities they settled amongst, the guerrillas launched local organs of democratic government and led a process of land reform, raising political consciousness and winning the support of the peasants.[41] During this period the guerrillas avoided major engagement with the enemy while they focused on obtaining

[34]The term '*Chuch'e*' has no exact equivalent in English or Spanish, but traditionally has been most often translated as 'self-reliance' and '*autoconfianza*'.

[35]Anonymous, *La lucha armada antijaponesa del pueblo coreano*, pp. 51–3; Kim Il Sung, 'Tareas de los comunistas coreanos', 10 Nov. 1937, in *Obras*, vol. 1 (Pyongyang: Ediciones en Lenguas Extranjeras, 1980), pp. 147–8.

[36]*Ibid.*

[37]In certain texts Kim clarifies that the working class was the 'leading class' in the anti-Japanese struggle, because it possessed 'the strongest revolutionary spirit and sense of organisation'. However, as peasants constituted over 80 per cent of the population, their participation was essential. Kim also argued Korean peasants had a high degree of revolutionary consciousness due to certain unique characteristics: the vast majority laboured as tenant farmers and agricultural labourers, constituting a kind of rural proletariat. It is worth noting that the Cuban leadership also adopted the thesis that the Latin American peasantry was largely 'proletarianised' and, therefore, revolutionary. See Kim, 'Tareas de los comunistas coreanos', pp. 150–1.

[38]*Ibid.*, p. 153.

[39]Anonymous, *La lucha armada antijaponesa del pueblo coreano*, pp. 51–3; Kim Il Sung, 'Tareas de los comunistas para el fortalecimiento y el desarrollo de la lucha antijaponesa de liberación nacional', 27 Feb. 1936, in Kim, *Obras*, vol. 1, pp. 116–17; Kim, 'Tareas de los comunistas coreanos', pp. 152–6.

[40]Kim Il Sung, *Let Us Repudiate the 'Left' Adventurist Line and Follow the Revolutionary Organizational Line* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages, 1973), pp. 3–10.

[41]Kim Il Sung, *On Organizing and Waging Armed Struggle against Japanese Imperialism* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages, 1973), pp. 9–14.

weapons, recruiting fighters, solidifying their base of support and forging links with other anti-Japanese forces. The KWP maintained that revolutionary movements could not rely on outside support – they must practise 'self-reliance', making this initial stage of patiently accumulating strength and solidifying community support essential.[42] The successes of the Korean partisans in these initial years allowed Kim to consolidate disparate rebel groups in different regions under his unified military command, giving birth to the People's Revolutionary Army in 1934. A second phase of the struggle was initiated in 1936, in which from a new base in Mount Baekdu the guerrillas switched to more offensive and large-scale tactics and extended the territorial scope of their operations. This strategy was carried out in combination with clandestine agitation throughout the country and the launch of a broad-based civilian movement, the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland. This organisation served to both incorporate the widest possible range of sectors into the anti-Japanese struggle, and also to funnel recruits and material aid to the guerrillas.[43]

Cuban and North Korean Revolutionary Theory: Differences and Similarities

North Korean revolutionary doctrine clearly contradicted Cuban *foquismo* on several points. The Cuban exaltation of courage and will, its insistence that revolutionaries take up arms *despite* an initial absence of support, contrasts markedly with the KWP's more humble image of the guerrilla as one who first and foremost understands and serves the people. Kim juxtaposed his emphasis on recognising and adapting to objective conditions, efficient military strategy and winning over the masses against 'adventurist' and 'ultra-leftist' positions[44] – precisely what many Marxists accused the Cuban leadership of. Although the Partido Socialista Popular (Popular Socialist Party, PSP), Cuba's historic communist party, had originally argued that the Cuban Revolution was, like its Chinese and North Korean forbearers, a 'patriotic and democratic national liberation and agrarian revolution', rather than a socialist revolution, this position was abandoned in the early 1960s by the Sierra leadership. As Cuba's business community and much of its professional strata rapidly exited the island, and the new government faced mounting hostility from neighbouring states, this conception no longer seemed to apply to the Latin American context. By 1963 Che argued that in Latin America, especially in the new conditions brought about by the Cuban Revolution, 'the weak national bourgeoisie chooses imperialism and betrays its own country'.[45] The Cuban leadership then shifted to a concept of the Latin American revolution as a socialist revolution against US imperialism and the domestic exploiter classes, in which the peasantry was the chief revolutionary force, but leadership came from the most advanced sectors of the proletariat – a narrative more in common with Lenin's classical formation of the worker-peasant alliance.

[42]*Ibid.*, pp. 6–7; Anonymous, *La lucha armada antijaponesa del pueblo coreano*, p. 38.

[43]Kim Il Sung, *The Korean Revolutionaries Must Know Korea Well* (Pyongyang: Foreign Languages, 1973), pp. 23–8.

[44]Kim, *Let Us Repudiate the 'Left' Adventurist Line*, pp. 10–13.

[45]Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, prologue to *El partido marxista-leninista* (Havana: Dirección Nacional del Partido Unido de la Revolución Socialista de Cuba, 1963).

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Nevertheless, there were also strong parallels between North Korean and Cuban revolutionary theory that ultimately outweighed their differences. In both models, revolutionaries establish guerrilla units in the most remote areas of the countryside, recruiting peasants who are won over to the revolution by the desire for land reform and hatred of foreign oppression. Both identify protracted, rural-based guerrilla warfare as the primary form of struggle in the Global South, and emphasise constant mobility and the advantages of effectively utilising mountainous topography. Both outline escalating stages of combat that are broadly similar: an initial period focused on consolidating local support, obtaining arms from the enemy and recruiting fighters, followed by a more aggressive phase of increasingly bold guerrilla offences and, finally, the formation of a rebel army capable of engaging the enemy in conventional warfare. Both strategies account for an urban underground and a broader united front in the cities that would play a role as well, although subsumed to the guerrilla leadership.

The other similarity between North Korean and Cuban revolutionary theory is that they were both buttressed, to varying degrees, by creative interpretations of recent history. There is a long tradition of criticism of the official Cuban historiography.[46] Among other points, Cuban leaders have been taken to task for exaggerating the singular role of Fidel Castro's rebel army in Batista's overthrow, and diminishing the contribution of the urban movement, a charge that is difficult to refute. By comparison, the official North Korean account of the anti-Japanese struggle is much harder to reconcile with the evidence available to historians. The North Korean historiography distorts, exaggerates and omits facts to create an impossibly simplistic narrative few historians outside of North Korea give much credence to. While Kim was indeed an important and famous guerrilla leader, he was one of many, and his guerrilla unit fought under the supreme command of the Northeast United Anti-Japanese Army, organised and led by the CPC.[47] Nor did Kim found or lead the Association for the Restoration of the Fatherland, an organisation which, in any event, played a far less important role than North Korean historiography maintains.[48] The People's Revolutionary Army Kim supposedly launched in 1936 is essentially a fiction, a way to endow an image of unity and a distinctly Korean character upon a resistance movement which was much more complex and in which Chinese and Comintern leadership was central. In the final years of 1941–45, Kim and his troops were in fact taking refuge in the Soviet East, having fled there to avoid being exterminated by Japan's

[46]For example, Steve Cushion, *A Hidden History of the Cuban Revolution: How the Working Class Shaped the Guerrillas' Victory* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2016); Karol, *Guerrillas in Power*; Andrés Suárez, 'The Cuban Revolution: The Road to Power', *Latin American Research Review*, 7: 3 (1972), pp. 5–29; Sam Dolgoff, *The Cuban Revolution: A Critical Perspective* (Montréal: Black Rose, 1977); Matt D. Childs, 'An Historical Critique of the Emergence and Evolution of Ernesto Che Guevara's Foco Theory', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 27: 3 (1995), pp. 593–624.

[47]Bruce Cumings, *The Korean War: A History* (New York: Modern Library, 2011), pp. 51–3; Suh Dae Sook, *Kim Il Sung: The North Korean Leader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pp. 30–1, 52–4.

[48]'Document No. 21: Letter from Li Sangjo to the Central Committee of the Korean Workers' Party', 5 Oct. 1956, in 'Inside China's Cold War', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, 16 (Autumn 2007/Winter 2008), pp. 492–511.

determined counter-insurgency efforts. While Kim's accomplishments as a revolutionary were numerous and impressive, and his courage and talents indisputable, they could not meet the ambitions of the grandiose personality cult constructed around him during the 1960s.

On the other hand, while the revolutionary strategy promoted by the KWP in the 1960s was wrapped in a creative reimagining of Korean history, this did not mean the strategy and tactics it advocated lacked an objective foundation. One way to interpret the prescriptions of KWP revolutionary strategy is to invert their alleged historical basis. In other words, these lessons can be read as reflecting not only the successes of the anti-Japanese partisans, but also their hardships and failures. For example, Kim's guerrillas, as might realistically be expected, contended with deserters, traitors and informants, and did not always receive support from local peasants.[49] Therefore the KWP's emphasis on the fundamental importance of a solid base among the masses likely stems not from the fact that Kim's guerrillas always enjoyed such support, but because they knew the disastrous consequences of failing to achieve it.

In the case of both North Korea and Cuba, such historical narratives were employed to reinforce the legitimacy of the revolutionary doctrine the ruling parties promoted. However, they also served other purposes: to entrench the political monopoly of the dominant leadership group vis-à-vis potential rivals, and to assist in the creation of a new national mythos, as required by all young nation-states born of revolution and war.

North Korea, Cuba and the Role of the Marxist–Leninist Vanguard Party

By far the most significant parallel between Cuban and North Korean revolutionary strategy was how both radically re-conceptualised the role of the party. The central place of the vanguard party in leading the revolution was a pillar of conventional Marxism–Leninism, in both its Soviet and Chinese variants. Communist political tradition since 1917 had endowed the party with a virtually sacred status, as captured so powerfully in the novels of Victor Serge.[50] By contrast, Cuban and North Korean doctrine actually removed the party from the period of revolutionary struggle altogether: rather than the party leading the revolution, the revolution would give birth to the party. Mao Zedong had famously stated that 'Our principle is that the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party.' But placing the gun in command is precisely what Cuban and North Korean revolutionary strategy demanded.

For the Cubans this doctrine was largely justified in pragmatic terms of military strategy: the concentration of authority, communications and resources in a rural, mobile military command was necessary to successfully wage the struggle, coordinate its many branches and withstand the state's counter-insurgency efforts. If victory was ultimately decided on the battlefield, decision-making power must be placed in the hands of military commanders rather than political leaders removed

[49]Suh, *Kim Il Sung*, pp. 38–9, 47.

[50]In particular, *S'il est minuit dans le siècle* (1939), *L'Affaire Toulaév* (1948) and *Les années sans pardon* (1971).

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from the frontlines.[51] 'No political front which is basically a deliberative body can assume leadership of a people's war', Debray maintained, because 'only a technically capable executive group, centralised and united on the basis of identical class interests, can do so; in brief, only a revolutionary general staff'.[52] The traditional structure and organisational principles of the communist party were inadequate to wage war, which was an inherently undemocratic pursuit and required strict military discipline.[53] In theory the established Latin American communist parties could transform themselves into the military vanguard, but historical circumstances made this unlikely, and accounted for their consistent refusal to accept the necessity of armed struggle.

Just as the Cuban line privileged the military over the political, the most important qualities of a guerrilla were courage, will and practical battlefield experience – not their familiarity with Marxist–Leninist texts. In fact, Che argued, guerrilla struggle itself constituted a superior kind of Marxist–Leninist education, because 'life teaches more than the wisest books and the most profound thinkers'.[54] The historical communist parties were based in urban areas, in the factories, on the waterfront and in the universities. But the Cuban leadership developed a narrative in which the ascetic, dangerous world of the guerrilla was contrasted with the corruption and decadence of the cities. Debray followed Frantz Fanon's contention that, in the Global South, the urban proletariat was in fact a relatively privileged stratum and therefore lacking in revolutionary character. In this context, the harsh realities of guerrilla life and the sacrifice it demanded had a kind of purifying effect, producing the most robust human material of the revolution. 'As we know', wrote Debray, 'the mountain proletarianises the bourgeois and peasant elements, and the city can bourgeoisify the proletarians'.[55] It was through guerrilla struggle that the revolutionary movement's core was cleansed of weakness and ideological shortcomings, making it alone capable of analysing conditions clearly and acting accordingly. In essence, Cuban doctrine postulated that the revolutionary struggle be led not by the party, but rather a rebel army, open to all 'patriotic' citizens and independent of any political organisation. From the guerrilla war itself the future Marxist–Leninist vanguard party would emerge following the conquest of power, to fulfil the tasks of the new revolutionary state and guide the transition to socialism.

The KWP argued that the concept that the revolution is led by the Marxist–Leninist vanguard party was based on the European experience and thus unsuited to the colonial and 'semi-feudal' conditions of Korea in the 1930s and 1940s.[56] The Marxist–Leninist party was the political organisational form of an ideologically advanced industrial proletariat – what relevance did it have in predominantly

[51]Alfredo Fernández and Oscar Zanetti, 'Dilemma of Leadership: The Guerrilla' (1967), in Aguilar (ed.), *Marxism in Latin America*, pp. 224–6.

[52]Régis Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution? Armed Struggle and Political Struggle in Latin America*, trans. Bobbye Ortiz (New York: Grove Press, 1967), p. 86.

[53]*Ibid.*, p. 103.

[54]Che Guevara, 'Speech to the First Latin American Youth Congress', 28 July 1960, available at the Marxist Internet Archive, www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1960/07/28.htm, last access 3 Sept. 2021.

[55]Debray, *Revolution in the Revolution?*, pp. 76–7.

[56]Roque Dalton, 'Kim Il Sung: Una vida por la revolución', *Punto Final*, supplement to no. 154 (March 1972), pp. 5–6.

agrarian societies, where the bulk of the population were peasants? If Kim had established a Marxist–Leninist party at this stage it would have only been a 'castle built on air', a 'vain fantasy', North Korean historiography maintains.[57] As in the Cuban narrative, North Korean exegesis argued that it was the protracted guerrilla struggle itself that cultivated the human material necessary for the eventual establishment of the Marxist–Leninist party, once the colonial state had been overthrown.[58] An artificially imported Marxist–Leninist party is destined to remain an ideological sect, while a party born of mass struggle fuses the universal relevance of Marxism–Leninism with the experience and the aspirations of the people. Kim wrote:

> The anti-Japanese armed struggle, to overcome the principle weaknesses that took in the early years of the communist movement in Korea, prepared the organisational bases for the foundation of the Marxist–Leninist party: through the tests of the hard guerrilla struggle, growing the true communist revolutionaries and achieving firm unity in the ranks of the revolution. *In the breast of the anti-Japanese armed struggle, Marxism–Leninism has been able to link for the first time with the reality of our country*, and the communist movement with the revolutionary struggle of our people for national and social emancipation.[59]

The iconic role of the Sierra Maestra in the Cuban revolutionary narrative has a striking parallel in the exaltation of Mount Bakedu in KWP historiography, while both contrast visionary guerrillas with anachronistic communist parties. As Matt D. Childs has pointed out, in Cuban accounts this was expressed through a symbolic dichotomy between *la sierra* (the mountains) and *el llano* (the plains).[60] The guerrillas in the mountains led the struggle while the orthodox communists in the cities sat on the sidelines and criticised, joined the revolution late and played only a minor role. It was a narrative which reflected long-standing hostility towards the PSP within the Cuban Left, as a result of, among other things, the party's collaboration with Batista in the 1938–44 period.[61] Likewise, North Korean historiography distances Kim from the original Communist Party of Korea, whose leaders Kim dismissed as petit bourgeois intellectuals out of touch with the masses, careerists and 'show-off Marxists',[62] driven by personal political ambitions.[63] Both narratives contrast the idealised guerrilla – heroic, patriotic, in touch with the people – with bad communists: cowardly, self-serving, dogmatic.

[57]Kim Il Sung, quoted in Dalton, 'Kim Il Sung: Una vida por la revolución', p. 4.

[58]Kim, 'Tareas de los comunistas para el fortalecimiento', pp. 118–20; 'Tareas de los comunistas coreanos', pp. 174–80.

[59]Kim Il Sung, quoted in Dalton, 'Kim Il Sung: Una vida por la revolución', p. 4. Emphasis added.

[60]Childs, 'An Historical Critique', pp. 614–15.

[61]Samuel Farber, 'The Cuban Communists in the Early Stages of the Cuban Revolution: Revolutionaries or Reformists?', *Latin American Research Review*, 18: 1 (1983), pp. 59–83.

[62]Kim, 'Tareas de los comunistas coreanos', p. 174.

[63]*Ibid.*, p. 178.

What Influence Did the Cuban/North Korean Concept of the Party Have?

There were many avenues through which the Cuban and North Korean communist parties promoted their revolutionary strategy in Latin America and globally during the 1960s. There was the propaganda machinery of both parties, which disseminated newspapers, journals, pamphlets, books and radio broadcasts in various languages to an international audience. Havana was the site of a series of major international conferences during the 1960s which served to promote the Cuban leadership's revolutionary vision, and in which North Korean delegations routinely participated, networked and proselytised. Key among these were the Solidarity Conference of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America, better known as the Tricontinental Conference, in January 1966, and the first conference of the Organización Latinoamericana de Solidaridad (Latin American Solidarity Organisation, OLAS) in July–August 1967. The Tricontinental Conference gave birth to the Organisation of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAAL), with North Korea granted a seat on the executive secretariat. OSPAAAL published the monthly organ *Boletín Tricontinental*, an important platform for Cuban and North Korean perspectives on international affairs and revolutionary struggle. Cuban revolutionary strategy was imparted more directly on the scores of militants who received military training on the island during the 1960s.[64] Although North Korea's role in backing guerrilla movements in the region was much less significant, Latin American revolutionaries also travelled to Pyongyang to undergo military training, which included the study of the 'glorious traditions of the Anti-Japanese Armed Struggle'. In this process, the alternative communist praxis put forth by Cuba and North Korea resonated with a younger generation of militants who had given up on reformism and party politics. In both Latin America and Western countries in the 1960s, disillusionment with the Soviet Union and what was seen as the bureaucratism and outdated tactics of the old communist parties increased the appeal of alternative models of revolutionary socialism from the Global South.[65]

A key moment in Cuban–North Korean collaboration to promote a shared revolutionary vision was the Cultural Congress of Havana in January 1968. The nine-day event brought some 500 intellectuals and artists from 70 countries to discuss the role of intellectuals in the unfolding 'Third World' revolution. The full cultural development of any society, the congress proclaimed, was only possible when it was liberated from colonial and neo-colonial subjugation, and this end could only be achieved through armed struggle.[66]

[64]On Cuba's support for Latin American guerrilla movements in the 1960s, see Brown, *Cuba's Revolutionary World*; Castañeda, *Utopia Unarmed*.

[65]Nigel Westmaas, '1968 and the Social and Political Foundations and Impact of the "New Politics" on Guyana', *Caribbean Studies*, 37: 2 (2009), p. 107; John Gerassi, 'Havana: A New International is Born', *Monthly Review*, 19: 5 (1967), p. 34; Lucio Magri, 'The May Events and Revolution in the West' (1967), in Greg Albo, Leo Panitch and Alan Zuege (eds.), *Class, Party, Revolution* (Chicago, IL: Haymarket, 2018), pp. 47–8, 63–4.

[66]'General Declaration of the Cultural Congress of Havana', in Cultural Congress of Havana, *Cultural Congress of Havana: Meeting of Intellectuals from all the World on Problems of Asia, Africa and Latin America* (Havana: Instituto del Libro, 1968), unpaginated pamphlet.

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The ongoing tensions within the international communist movement were on clear display: China declined to participate, and the Cubans refused to defer to the leaders of the Latin American communist parties as to who would represent their respective countries. In his speech to the congress, Fidel Castro argued that Marxism 'needs to develop, break away from a certain rigidity, interpret today's reality from an objective, scientific viewpoint, conduct itself as a revolutionary force and not as a pseudo-revolutionary church'.[67] Karol reported: 'As if it were the most natural thing in the world, they [the Cubans] had also invited notorious heretics, ex-Communists, independent Marxists – all of them detested in Moscow.'[68] Delegates included many of the most influential radical thinkers and artists in the world at that moment, making a most remarkable assemblage of personalities, including C. L. R. James, George Padmore, Aimé Césaire, Roque Dalton, René Depestre, Jorge Enrique Adoum, Daniel Guérin, Ralph Miliband and Eric Hobsbawm.[69]

The North Korean contribution to the proceedings was the aforementioned paper, *The Anti-Japanese Armed Struggle of the Korean People Organised and Waged under the Personal Leadership of Comrade Kim Il Sung*, subsequently published in booklet form in numerous languages for international distribution. The significance of the North Korean presentation was that, coming at the height of Cuba's feud with the Soviet leadership and the Latin American communist parties, it simultaneously endorsed the Cuban position while also extolling North Korea as a model of revolution in the Global South. In the struggle against Japanese colonial rule, the North Koreans explained, Kim had triumphed over those who would have slavishly followed Soviet orthodoxy instead of developing original praxis suited to local conditions – exactly what Cuban leaders accused the Latin American communist parties of doing.[70]

While *foquismo* played a pre-eminent role in shaping the Latin American guerrilla movements of the 1960s, it often blended with a range of other influences: the orthodox Marxism–Leninism of the established communist parties, Trotskyism, anarchism, and disparate historical models of revolution provided by North Korea, China, Vietnam and Algeria.[71] While the Cuban model represented a ubiquitous reference point, specific issues such as the rural versus urban fronts, the role of different social classes, and how revolutionary guerrillas should relate to the

[67]Fidel Castro, 'Speech Given at the Closing Session of the Cultural Congress of Havana, Chaplin Theatre, 12 January 1968', in *ibid.*

[68]Karol, *Guerrillas in Power*, pp. 397–8.

[69]Irwin Silber (ed.), *Voices of National Liberation: The Revolutionary Ideology of the 'Third World' as Expressed by Intellectuals and Artists at the Cultural Congress of Havana, January 1968* (New York: Central, 1970); Cultural Congress of Havana, *Cultural Congress of Havana*.

[70]Anonymous, *La lucha armada antijaponesa del pueblo coreano*, pp. 38–9.

[71]For example, Cuban and Chinese revolutionary strategy blended within groups such as the Movimiento Popular Dominicano (Dominican Peoples' Movement, MPD) in the Dominican Republic, the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Left Movement, MIR) in Peru, and the Movimiento Unidad Revolucionario (Revolutionary United Movement, MUR) in Panama. In Brazil the Organização Revolucionária Marxista – Política Operária (Marxist Revolutionary Organisation – Workers' Politics, POLOP) was the source of different attempts to combine *foquismo* with urban-workerist strategies based on Trotskyist ideology. Trotskyism and *foquismo* also intersected within Guatemala's Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (Rebel Armed Forces, FAR).

existing political parties, were still the source of much debate. Factions of the radical Left in Colombia, Venezuela, Guatemala and Paraguay adopted the strategy of guerrilla *focos* launched from the remote countryside, but believed these must be subordinate to a Marxist–Leninist vanguard party of the classic type, which would provide leadership and coordination.[72]

Nevertheless, the Cuban/North Korean concept of the party did have a tangible impact on the revolutionary Left in several Latin American countries, and could be adopted in different contexts and nuanced interpretations. Many such groups specifically defined themselves as 'movements', rather than parties, and several titled themselves 'armies of national liberation'. Such was the case with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army, ELN), launched in Colombia's Santander province in 1964 by radical university students who had studied in Cuba.[73] The group's founders were dissatisfied with what they saw as the outdated tactics and reformism of the country's historic, pro-Soviet communist party,[74] as well as the sectarianism of the Maoists.[75] There had been earlier attempts at launching armed struggle in Colombia, but in the eyes of the ELN (Colombia)'s founders these groups had proven themselves unprepared politically, militarily and organisationally.[76] As a result, the ELN (Colombia) was conceived as a 'political-military organisation independent of all existing groups and parties'.[77] Faced with a large but much divided radical Left in Colombia, the ELN (Colombia) maintained that unity was essential.[78] However this did not mean they intended to 'wantonly impose a line, nor seek agreements through discussions as endless as they are sterile'.[79] Rather they would follow their own path, lead by example, while striving for amicable relations with all other revolutionary groups, confident that the correctness of their theory and practice would become evident in time.[80]

In Peru, the Cuban/North Korean concept of the party was embraced by both of the main organisations behind the 1965 insurgency: the ELN (Peru) led by Héctor Béjar, and Luis de la Puente Uceda's Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Left Movement, MIR). Both groups received training in Cuba

[72]For example, in Venezuela the Cuban-backed Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional (Armed Forces of National Liberation, FALN), launched in 1962, was a project of the PC (Venezuela). When the PC (Venezuela) later abandoned *foquista* tactics, a dissident faction led by Douglas Bravo founded the Partido de la Revolución Venezolana (Venezuelan Revolutionary Party, PRV) in 1966, replacing the PC (Venezuela) as the political nucleus of the FALN. In Colombia, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army, FARC–EP) embraced the Cuban strategy of rural *focos* but remained the armed wing of the PC (Colombia). Similarly, the Frente Unido de Liberación Nacional (United National Liberation Front, FULNA) in Paraguay, which launched a short-lived *foco* in Caazapá province in 1960, was under the strict control of the PC (Paraguay), whose civilian leaders directed its operations from Asunción and Buenos Aires.

[73]Jaime Arenas, *La guerrilla por dentro* (Bogotá: Ediciones Tercer Mundo, 1971), pp. 14–16.

[74]The PC (Colombia), founded in 1930.

[75]El Partido Comunista de Colombia – Marxista Leninista, created when the PC (Colombia) expelled its pro-Chinese dissidents in 1964.

[76]Arenas, *La guerrilla por dentro*, pp. 11–13, 16–17.

[77]*Ibid.*, p. 17.

[78]*Ibid.*, p. 18.

[79]*Ibid.*

[80]*Ibid.*

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during 1962–65, while MIR militants also trained in North Korea, China and North Vietnam.[81] Béjar described the ELN (Peru)'s founding members as mostly young radicals who had deserted the PC (Peru), united by 'a certain disdain for "politics" in the narrow sense, and suspicion of any type of party organization'.[82] Béjar's vision of the party resembled traditional anarchist critiques of Leninist vanguardism. The premature establishment of a vanguard party, he argued, fostered dependency on professional leaders, stymieing the process in which ordinary people become experienced in political organising.[83] Moreover, 'If the party is created *before* the war is begun, it soon becomes an organisation with its own group interests and gives rise to a leadership which also has its own interests', which are 'often in contradiction with the needs of the revolution'.[84] Political parties, by their very nature, strive for hegemony over the diverse elements that constitute any popular movement, and confuse making revolution with the acquisition of power.[85] This position presented a paradox, however. If the formation of the vanguard party awaited a future date, what could be done with the assortment of left-wing parties, many with long histories and considerable followings, who presumably saw a leadership role for themselves in any revolution? The MIR answered this question by calling on the parties of the Peruvian Left to 'transform their ideological positions into action, abandon the paths of deal-making, of postponement, of politicking and of subjectivism; to leave aside the egoism and base manoeuvres […] we call everyone to unity in action, to unity as process, to authentic revolutionary unity to build the grand party of the Peruvian revolution'.[86] In other words, the MIR called upon these established parties to accept that they had outlived their usefulness, dissolve themselves into the guerrilla fronts, and await the creation of a new and all-encompassing party in the future. 'It is not a question of calling on the masses to follow the party', Béjar maintained, 'but of building the party in the very heart of the masses'.[87]

In Brazil, the Cuban/North Korean concept of the party was embraced by Ação Libertadora Nacional (National Liberation Action, ALN), a guerrilla group established in 1967 and which received backing from both Cuba and North Korea.[88] ALN leader Carlos Marighella developed his ideas during the internal debates of the PC (Brazil) following the 1964 military coup, his position cemented at the

[81]Jan Lust, *Lucha revolucionaria: Perú, 1958–1967* (Barcelona: RBA, 2013), pp. 280–6; Luis Rodríguez Pastor, 'Entrevista a Ricardo Gadea: Es una obligación rendir nuestro homenaje a De la Puente y Lobatón para que la izquierda pueda recuperar su capacidad revolucionaria', *Resbalosa y Fuga*, 7 Jan. 2016; CIA, 'The Sino-Soviet Dispute', p. 134.

[82]Héctor Béjar, *Peru 1965: Notes on a Guerrilla Experience* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), p. 61.

[83]*Ibid.*, p. 64.

[84]*Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

[85]*Ibid.*, p. 65.

[86]Lust, *Lucha Revolucionaria*, p. 268.

[87]Béjar, *Peru 1965*, p. 67.

[88]Carlos Eugênio Paz, *Nas trilhas da ALN* (Rio de Janeiro: Bertrand Brasil, 1997), p. 127; Marcelo Godoy, 'ALN ganhou dólares e deu rolex a Kim Il Sung', *Estadão* (São Paulo) online, 12 Sept. 2009, available at https://politica.estadao.com.br/noticias/geral,aln-ganhou-dolares-e-deu-rolex-a-kim-il-sung,433927, last access 3 Sept. 2021; Thomas E. Skidmore, *The Politics of Military Rule in Brazil, 1966–85* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 86.

1967 OLAS conference in Havana. Despite Fidel Castro's axiom that 'the city is the graveyard of revolutionaries',[89] the ALN was one of the earliest Latin American groups to embrace an urban guerrilla strategy.[90] The ALN did not completely reject the vision of protracted rural warfare in the Cuban and North Korean models, but rather projected it into a later, heightened phase of the revolution. The struggle would begin immediately in the cities: a clandestine network of small, autonomous cells would carry out armed expropriations and strike at symbols of the military dictatorship and US imperialism. Marighella's analysis – that a guerrilla army, rather than the party, must lead the revolution in Brazil – had been proven by the military coup of 1964. As an above-ground organisation the PC (Brazil) was exposed to state repression, and as a bureaucratic party with its own self-interests it resisted the need for armed struggle against all evidence to the contrary. The traditional Marxist–Leninist party model was by its nature exclusive, sectarian and ill-suited for organising in the countryside. By contrast the guerrilla army would be open to all those willing to fight, providing the mass-based and grassroots character essential for the revolution to triumph.[91] 'Our path is different: for us, the foundation is action and strategy first', explained a 1969 ALN text, 'Sobre a organização dos revolucionários [On the Organisation of the Revolutionaries]'. 'The organisation is a consequence of this and emerges simultaneously with revolutionary action. The organisation comes from the base and not from the top […] The vanguard emerges in the course of the revolution and when victory is won.'[92]

In Puerto Rico, the Comandos Armados de Liberación (Armed Commandos of Liberation, CAL), launched in 1967, also took the innovative step of applying the Cuban/North Korean concept of the party to an urban guerrilla project. Organised in cells throughout the capital of San Juan and surrounding areas, CAL focused on acts of sabotage against the US economic and military presence on the island.[93] The group stated: 'We are not the armed branch of any political organisation; we are the armed branch of the struggle for the independence of Puerto Rico.'[94] On this basis, CAL did not see itself as a rival to the various other socialist and pro-independence groups and parties on the island, but rather a 'liberation army'[95] whose soldiers might belong to existing political organisations, or none at all. In this way the armed struggle acted like a sieve, drawing forth the most conscious and committed elements among all political tendencies, separating

[89]The source of this popular quotation is actually Régis Debray, who quotes Fidel Castro in *Revolution in the Revolution?* (1967), p. 69.

[90]Richard Gillespie, 'A Critique of the Urban Guerrilla: Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil', *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 1: 2 (1980), pp. 43–4.

[91]Jean Rodrigues Sales, 'A Ação Libertadora Nacional, a revolução cubana e a luta armada no Brasil', *Tempo*, 14: 27 (2009), pp. 206–10.

[92]'Sobre a organização dos revolucionários', 1 Aug. 1969, available from the Centro de Documentación de los Movimientos Armados (Armed Movements Documentation Centre, CeDeMA): www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=321, last access 3 Sept. 2021.

[93]'CAL: Our Combat is Anonymous and Armed', Sept. 1972, pp. 55–7, available from CeDeMA: www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=2633, last access 3 Sept. 2021.

[94]Gaspar Cúneo Elizondo, 'We Are Not the Armed Branch of Any Political Organisation', *Boletín Tricontinental*, supplement to no. 29 (Aug. 1968), p. 6.

[95]'CAL: Our Combat is Anonymous and Armed', p. 56.

the authentic revolutionaries from those who offered nothing more than 'pseudo-revolutionary idle talk'.[96]

While Cuba was certainly the dominant influence on Latin American guerrilla movements in the 1960s, in some cases North Korea played a more direct role. One example is the Salvadorean poet Roque Dalton's writings on North Korean revolutionary strategy, which subsequently influenced El Salvador's Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (Revolutionary People's Army, ERP) to which he belonged. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, years in which he visited North Korea, Dalton's writings reveal a search for a new kind of revolutionary organisation.[97] According to Dalton, the communist movement produced parties that were highly organised, disciplined, strong, but also hierarchal, bureaucratic, and dependent on Moscow, financially and intellectually. It was in this dilemma – the relationship between party, mass and revolution – that Dalton saw great relevance in the North Korean experience. He developed these ideas in his 1972 essay 'Kim Il Sung: Una vida por la revolución [A Life for the Revolution]', published in the Chilean journal *Punto Final*.[98] Interestingly, Dalton believed the lessons offered by Kim's partisans in Manchuria compensated for the weaknesses inherent in both traditional Leninist vanguardism and Cuban *foquismo*. Dalton identified in the 'revolutionary traditions of the glorious Anti-Japanese Armed Struggle' a strategy in which the guerrilla is thoroughly embedded in the masses, patiently cultivating their support and, eventually, their active engagement. Guerrillas should not be invisible figures secluded in the mountains, waiting for the masses to answer their call, but rather diffused throughout the popular movement, in student organisations, in the trade unions, in the churches and neighbourhood organisations. The guerrillas must take on the demands of these popular movements as their own, simultaneously acting to radicalise them and draw new recruits into the armed ranks. It is through this process that the future Marxist–Leninist vanguard party would be born, constituted by the most advanced revolutionaries to emerge out of the struggle.

Another group directly influenced by North Korea was Mexico's Movimiento de Acción Revolucionaria (Revolutionary Action Movement, MAR). After being denied support from the Cuban government,[99] between early 1969 and mid-1970 53 MAR members travelled to North Korea for periods of 6–12 months to undergo military training.[100] Most of these recruits were young people radicalised by the Tlatelolco massacre of October 1968, in which security forces opened fire on students in Mexico City, killing hundreds. Like other young Latin American militants

[96]Elizondo, 'We Are Not the Armed Branch of Any Political Organisation', pp. 5–7.

[97]Luis Alvarenga, *Roque Dalton: La radicalización de las vanguardias* (San Salvador: Editorial Universidad Don Bosco, 2011), p. 271.

[98]Dalton, 'Kim Il Sung: Una vida por la revolución'.

[99]Verónica Oikión Solano, 'In the Vanguard of the Revolution: The Revolutionary Action Movement and the Armed Struggle', in Fernando Calderón and Adela Cedillo (eds.), *Challenging Authoritarianism in Mexico: Revolutionary Struggles and the Dirty War, 1964–1982* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 62–3.

[100]Fernando Pineda Ochoa, *En las profundidades del MAR: El oro no llegó de Moscú* (Mexico City: Plaza y Valdés, 2003), pp. 45–9; Oikión, 'In the Vanguard of the Revolution', pp. 62–3, 76; Alejandro Peñaloza Torres, 'Recordar tras la derrota. Memoria de ex militantes armados en las décadas de 1960 y 1970 en México', *Historia, Voces y Memoria*, 9 (Oct. 2016), pp. 62, 65, fn. 20.

of the 1960s, MAR members were frustrated with what they saw as the outdated tactics of Mexico's existing left-wing parties and groups. Interviewed from prison in August 1972, one MAR member explained: 'The crisis produced by the 1968 movement of the masses gave birth to us. None of the parties, factions, or splinter groups of the Mexican left were capable of assuming proper leadership of the movement […] They all suffer from incurable bureaucratism, dogmatism, sectarianism, and opportunism.'[101] MAR formulated a dual strategy of armed struggle in the countryside and the cities. Urban guerrillas would support and encourage workers' struggles, in the process revealing and recruiting the most consciousness elements into its ranks,[102] as the prelude to launching an 'insurgent army'.[103]

As might be expected, the Cuban/North Korean concept of the party guided the strategy of the guerrilla project led by Che in southeast Bolivia in 1967. The ELN (Bolivia) called on the Bolivian Left to 'close ranks, and weld together the strongest unity without distinction of political colours'.[104] The ELN (Bolivia) did not appeal to Bolivians in the language of Marxism–Leninism, rather it sought 'patriots' with the physical and mental aptitude for guerrilla struggle.[105] Che's force of some 50 fighters, while achieving some early victories, was gradually worn down in a fierce counter-insurgency operation jointly administered by the Bolivian military and the CIA. The guerrillas suffered a crucial defeat in October 1967, at which point Che himself was wounded and captured. He was executed the following day. If any aspect of the Cuban/North Korean revolutionary schemata appeared to have been validated by Che's tragic end, it was that the guerrillas in the mountains – the true revolutionaries – cannot trust the 'sectarians' and 'factionalists' of the cities. One factor that contributed to the failure of the insurgency was that the leadership of the PC (Bolivia) withdrew its initial commitment of support. PC (Bolivia) General-Secretary Mario Monje Molina (1929–2019) explicitly rejected the notion that Che and his military command could lead a revolution in Bolivia, and demanded the guerrillas subordinate themselves to a political leadership elected by a united front led by the PC (Bolivia).[106] The ELN (Bolivia), and Fidel Castro, accused Monje of 'treason' and 'sabotage'.[107] Che's biographer John Lee Anderson notes that Che's widow, Aleida March, continues to consider Monje liable for Che's death.[108]

While the Latin American guerrilla movements of the 1960s did not see victory, the Cuban/North Korean concept of the party was, arguably, successfully put into practice in the Nicaraguan insurgency of 1978–9, led by the Frente Sandinista de

[101]'Guerrilla Commander Interviewed on Aborted Raid', interview with Pablo Martínez Pérez by Ysaias Rojas Delgado which appeared in the newspaper *¿Por Qué?* (Mexico City), 24 Aug. 1972, contained in the Readex digital collection, *Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS) Reports, 1957–1995*.

[102]Pineda, *En las profundidades del MAR,* pp. 131–2.

[103]*Ibid.*, p. 132.

[104]'El Ejército de Liberación Nacional al pueblo boliviano', 1 April 1967, available at CeDeMA: www.cedema.org/ver.php?id=2950, last access 3 Sept. 2021.

[105]*Ibid.*

[106]Paco Ignacio Taibo II, *Ernesto Guevara: También conocido como el Che* (Havana: Fondo Editorial Casa de las Américas, 2016), p. 771.

[107]ELN, 'Volveremos a las montañas', *Cristianismo y Revolución*, 9 (July 1968), pp. 20–1.

[108]Jon Lee Anderson, *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* (New York: Grove Press, 2010), pp. 672–3.

Liberación Nacional (Sandinista National Liberation Front, FSLN), whose fighters had previously received training in Cuba and North Korea.[109] Matilde Zimmermann points out the irony that in the early 1970s, FSLN leaders 'were something of an embarrassment to their Cuban hosts, many of whom agreed with their Soviet advisers that the guerrilla road had been superseded historically by events in the Southern Cone, if indeed it had ever had any validity'.[110] Sandinista leader Carlos Fonseca defended the need for a disciplined vanguard party and cautioned against an excessive 'militarism' within the FSLN.[111] While his political thought drew heavily from the ideas of Che and Debray, these influences shaped rather than supplanted his orthodox Marxism–Leninism, and he and other Sandinista leaders made a conscious effort to learn from the failures of the *foquista* projects of the 1960s.[112] Fonseca highlighted the indispensable work that remained best suited to a party of the classic Bolshevik type: research and analysis, recruitment and propaganda, organisation and logistics, political education, etc.[113] However, following Fonseca's death in combat in November 1976, what emerged as the dominant tendencies within the FSLN followed the Cuban/North Korean line that Nicaraguan conditions required not a party but a 'political-military organisation' that could harness a broad coalition of class forces opposed to the Somoza dictatorship.[114] The revolution would be a primarily military struggle, with the formation of a vanguard party to be postponed to the final stages or even after the seizure of power.[115] The Sandinista victory of 1979, therefore, granted some legitimacy to the Cuban/North Korean concept of the party which the guerrilla projects of the 1960s had failed to do.

Conclusion

By the end of the 1960s the majority of Latin American guerrilla movements that had emerged over the course of the decade had been defeated or fatally debilitated. Che himself was killed attempting to translate the revolutionary doctrine he co-authored into action in Bolivia. This greatly undermined the political position that the Cuban and North Korean leaderships had hitherto championed: that the conditions for revolution in Latin America were ripe, that armed struggle was the only way forward, and that the Cuban model could be replicated throughout the region. Moreover, many of the common factors that contributed to the defeat of the varied guerrilla projects – namely the failure of rural *focos* to trigger mass uprisings, and the overwhelming power of US-backed counter-insurgency efforts – appeared to confirm what the

[109]Matilde Zimmermann, *Sandinista: Carlos Fonseca and the Nicaraguan Revolution* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2000), p. 143; Dan La Botz, *What Went Wrong? The Nicaraguan Revolution: A Marxist Analysis* (Leiden and Boston, MA: Brill, 2016), p. 146.

[110]Zimmermann, *Sandinista*, p. 164.

[111]*Ibid.*, pp. 171–7.

[112]Brian Meeks, *Caribbean Revolutions and Revolutionary Theory: An Assessment of Cuba, Nicaragua and Grenada* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2001), p. 99; La Botz, *What Went Wrong?*, pp. 124–6.

[113]Carlos Fonseca, 'Notas sobre la montaña y algunos otros temas' (1976), in *Obras, Tomo 1: Bajo la bandera del sandinismo* (Managua: Editorial Nueva Nicaragua, 1982), pp. 140–1.

[114]Zimmermann, *Sandinista*, p. 177; La Botz, *What Went Wrong?*, pp. 125–6.

[115]*Ibid.*

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Marxist critics of Cuban 'adventurism' had argued all along. The failures of the varied Cuban-inspired guerrilla projects of the 1960s, therefore, were also an ideological blow and a political loss for the Cuban–North Korean partnership. These defeats were a key factor in the shift in both Cuban and North Korean foreign policy, and by extension, the relationship between the two governments, in the early 1970s. As Havana shifted towards a more pragmatic and pro-Soviet direction, and Pyongyang became a closer ally of Beijing while continuing to emphasise its opposition to big-power hegemony, relations between the two governments cooled considerably.

During the 1960s, the most radical and idealistic period of the Cuban Revolution, Cuban–North Korean consensus on revolutionary strategy for the Global South served an important function. Kim and the KWP lent support and legitimacy to Cuba's heterodox positions when they were under fire, thereby aiding Cuba's leadership aspirations in Latin America and the Global South more broadly. Likewise, North Korea's prestige and influence within the international Left was enhanced significantly by its association with Cuba, and its participation in the transnational political and intellectual networks which intersected in Havana. Cuba and North Korea played a leading role in carving out a new political space for those elements of the international Left that were, in the words of Karol, 'unwilling to follow blindly in the footsteps of either Peking or Moscow'. Most significantly, the Cuban/ North Korean concept of the party had a far-reaching and tangible influence on Latin American revolutionary movements. The heretical concept of the revolution creating the party, rather than the party leading the revolution, was actually put into practice in several countries, albeit to varying degrees and in nuanced interpretations. The novelty and the allure of the doctrine lay in how it privileged violent struggle over political organising traditionally understood, and posited action as the basis of consciousness, rather than consciousness as the basis of action. By rejecting the authority of the established communist parties and offering a path of immediate revolutionary struggle, the doctrine appealed to a younger generation of militants dissatisfied with party politics and the old formulas of Marxist–Leninist orthodoxy. As a result, the Cuban/North Korean concept of the party had a real impact on the wave of revolutionary initiatives that swept Latin America in the 1960s, and earned a place within the canon of twentieth-century Marxist revolutionary strategy.

Spanish abstract

Durante los años 1960, el gobierno cubano intentó jugar un papel de liderazgo al interior de la izquierda latinoamericana. En el proceso, los dirigentes cubanos se separaron de la ortodoxia marxista–leninista, cosechando fuertes críticas de sus aliados soviéticos y chinos. Ahora bien, Cuba encontró un soporte decidido de sus posiciones controversiales en Corea del Norte. Este apoyo puede ser grandemente explicado por los paralelismos entre las ideas cubanas y norcoreanas acerca de la revolución en las naciones en desarrollo del Sur Global. Aún más significativo es el hecho de que ambos partidos adoptaron una reconceptualización radical del papel del partido marxista–leninista de vanguardia. Esta nueva doctrina fue bien recibida primeramente por militantes latinoamericanos más jóvenes, frustrados con los partidos establecidos de izquierda y la política partidaria en general. La teoría cubana/norcoreana del partido tuvo una influencia tangible en Colombia, Perú, Brasil, Puerto Rico, El Salvador, México, Bolivia y Nicaragua, cuando grupos revolucionarios en estas sociedades tomaron las armas en los 1960 y 1970.

Spanish keywords: Cuba; Corea del Norte; teoría foquista; marxismo–leninismo; revolución; guerrilla

Portuguese abstract
Durante a década de 1960, o governo cubano tentou desempenhar um papel de liderança na esquerda latino-americana. No processo, os líderes cubanos se afastaram da ortodoxia marxista–leninista, recebendo duras críticas de seus aliados soviéticos e chineses. Mesmo assim, Cuba encontrou na Coréia do Norte um defensor constante de suas posições controversas. Esse apoio pode ser explicado em grande parte pelos paralelos entre as ideias cubanas e norte-coreanas sobre a revolução nas nações em desenvolvimento do Sul Global. Mais significativamente, ambos os partidos abraçaram uma reconceitualização radical do papel do partido de vanguarda marxista–leninista. Essa nova doutrina atraiu principalmente os militantes latino-americanos mais jovens, frustrados com os partidos de esquerda estabelecidos e a política partidária em geral. A teoria cubana/norte-coreana do partido teve uma influência tangível na Colômbia, Peru, Brasil, Porto Rico, El Salvador, México, Bolívia e Nicarágua, pois os grupos revolucionários dessas sociedades pegaram em armas nas décadas de 1960 e 1970.

Portuguese keywords: Cuba; Coréia do Norte; teoria do foco; marxismo–leninismo; revolução; guerrilha

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