

The Cadres: Backbone of the Revolution

By Che Guevara

It is not necessary to dwell upon the characteristics of our revolution; upon its original form, with its dashes of spontaneity which marked the transition from a revolution of national liberation to a socialist revolution; one full of rapidly passing stages, led by the same people who participated in the initial epic of the attack on the Moncada Barracks; a revolution which proceeded through the landing from the Granma and culminated in the declaration of the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution. New sympathisers, cadres, organisations joined the feeble structure to such an extent that they imparted to our revolution its present mass character, which has now placed its stamp upon our revolution.

When it became clear that a new social class had definitely taken power in Cuba, the great limitations which the exercise of state power would encounter because of the existing conditions in the state became evident: the lack of cadres to cope with the enormous tasks which had to be carried out in the state apparatus, in political organisation, and on the entire economic front.

Immediately after the taking of power, administrative assignments were made "by rule of thumb"; there were no major problems - there were none because as yet the old structure had not been shattered. The apparatus functioned in its old, slow, lifeless, broken-down way, but it had an organisation and with it sufficient co-ordination to maintain itself through inertia, disdaining the political changes which came about as a prelude to the change in the economic structure.

The 26th of July Movement, deeply impaired by the internal struggles between its right and left wings, was unable to dedicate itself to constructive tasks; and the Partido Socialista Popular (Popular Socialist Party), because it had undergone fierce attacks, and because for years it was an illegal party, had not been able to develop intermediate cadres to cope with the newly arising responsibilities.

When the first state interventions took place in the economy, the task of finding cadres was not very complicated, and it was possible to select them from among many people who had the minimum basis for assuming positions of leadership. But with the acceleration of the process which took place after the nationalisation of the North American enterprises and later of the large Cuban enterprises, a veritable hunger for administrative technicians manifested itself. At the same time, an urgent need was felt for production technicians because of the exodus of many who were attracted by better positions offered by the imperialist

companies in other parts of the Americas or in the United States itself. The political apparatus had to make an intense effort, while engaged in the tasks of building, to pay ideological attention to the masses who joined the revolution eager to learn.

We all performed our roles as well as we could, but it was not without pain and anxieties. Many errors were committed by the administrative section of the Executive; enormous mistakes were made by the new administrators of enterprises who had overwhelming responsibilities on their hands, and we committed great and costly errors in the political apparatus also, an apparatus which little by little began to fall into the hands of a contented and carefree bureaucracy, totally separated from the masses, which became recognised as a springboard for promotions and for bureaucratic posts of major or minor importance.

The main cause of our errors was our lack of a feeling for reality at a given moment; but the tool that we lacked, that which blunted our ability to perceive and which was converting the party into a bureaucratic entity and was endangering administration and production, was the lack of developed cadres at the intermediate level. It became evident that the policy of finding cadres was synonymous with the policy of going to the masses, to establish contact anew with the masses, a contact which had been closely maintained by the revolution in the first stages of its existence. But it had to be established through some type of mechanism which would afford the most beneficial results, both in feeling the

pulse of the masses and in the transmission of political orientation, which in many cases was only being given through the personal intervention of Prime Minister Fidel Castro or other leaders of the revolution.

From this vantage point, we can ask ourselves what a cadre type is.

We should say that a cadre person is an individual who has achieved sufficient political development to be able to interpret the extensive directives emanating from the central power, make them his, and convey them as orientation to the masses, a person who at the same time also perceives the signs manifested by the masses of their own desires and their innermost motivations.

He is an individual of ideological and administrative discipline, who knows and practices democratic centralism and who knows how to evaluate the existing contradictions in this method and to utilise fully its many facets; who knows how to practice the principle of collective discussion and to make decisions on his own and take responsibility in production; whose loyalty is tested, and whose physical and moral courage has developed along with his ideological development in such a way that he is always willing to confront any conflict and to give his life for the good of the revolution. Also, he is an individual capable of self-analysis, which enables him to make the necessary decisions and to exercise creative initiative in such a manner that it won't conflict with discipline.

Therefore the cadre person is creative, a leader of high standing, a technician with a good political level, who by reasoning dialectically can advance his sector of production, or develop the masses from his position of political leadership.

This exemplary human being, apparently cloaked in difficult-to-achieve virtues, is nonetheless present among the people of Cuba, and we find him daily. The essential thing is to grasp all the opportunities that there are for developing him to the maximum, for educating him, for drawing from each personality the greatest usefulness and converting it into the greatest advantage for the nation.

The development of a cadre individual is achieved in performing everyday tasks; but the tasks must be undertaken in a systematic manner, in special schools where competent professors - examples in their turn to the student body - will encourage the most rapid ideological advancement.

In a regime that is beginning to build socialism, you could not imagine a cadre that does not have a high political development, but when we consider political development we must not only take into account apprenticeship to Marxist theory; we must also demand responsibility of the individual for his acts, a discipline which restrains any passing weaknesses, and which will not conflict with a big dose of initiative; and constant preoccupation with all the problems of the revolution. In order to develop him,

we must begin by establishing the principles of selectivity among the masses; it is there that we must find the budding personalities, tested by sacrifice or just beginning to demonstrate their stirrings, and assign them to special schools; or when these are not available, give them greater responsibility so that they are tested in practical work.

In this way, we have been finding a multitude of new cadres who have developed during these years; but their development has not been an even one, since the young companeros have had to face the reality of revolutionary creation without the adequate orientation of a party. Some have succeeded fully, but there were others who could not completely make it and were left midway, or were simply lost in the bureaucratic labyrinth, or in the temptations that power brings.

To assure the triumph and the total consolidation of the revolution, we have to develop different types of cadres: the political cadre who will be the base of our mass organisations, and who will orient them through the action of the Partido Unido de la Revolucion Socialista (United Party of the Socialist Revolution; PURS). We are already beginning to establish these bases with the national and provincial Schools of Revolutionary Instruction and with studies and study groups at all levels. We also need military cadres; to achieve that, we can utilise the selection the war made among our young combatants, since there are still many living, who are without great theoretical knowledge but were tested under

fire-tested under the most difficult conditions of the struggle, with a fully proven loyalty toward the revolutionary regime with whose birth and development they have been so intimately connected since the first guerrilla fights of the Sierra. We should also develop economic cadres who will dedicate themselves specifically to the difficult tasks of planning and the tasks of the organisation of the socialist state in these moments of creation.

It is necessary to work with the professionals, urging the youth to follow one of the more important technical careers in an effort to give science that tone of ideological enthusiasm which will guarantee accelerated development. And, it is imperative to create an administrative team, which will know how to take advantage of the specific technical knowledge of others and to co-ordinate and guide the enterprises and other organisations of the state to bring them into step with the powerful rhythm of the revolution.

The common denominator for all is political clarity. This does not consist of unthinking support to the postulates of the revolution, but a reasoned support; it requires a great capacity for sacrifice and a capacity for dialectical analysis which will enhance the making of continuous contributions on all levels to the rich theory and practice of the revolution. These companeros should be selected from the masses solely by application of the principle that the best will come to the fore and that the best should be given the greatest opportunities for development.

In all these situations, the function of the cadre, in spite of its

being on different fronts, is the same. The cadre is the major part of the ideological motor which is the United Party of the Revolution. It is something that we could call the dynamic screw of this motor; a screw that in regard to the functional part will assure its correct functioning; dynamic to the extent that the cadre is not simply an upward or downward transmitter of slogans or demands, but a creator which will aid in the development of the masses and in the information of the leaders, serving as a point of contact with them. The cadre has the important mission of seeing to it that the great spirit of the revolution is not dissipated, that it will not become dormant nor let up its rhythm. It is a sensitive position; it transmits what comes from the masses and infuses in the masses the orientation of the party.

Therefore, the development of cadres is now a task which cannot be postponed. The development of the cadres has been undertaken with great eagerness by the revolutionary government with its programs of scholarships based on selective principles; with its programs of study for workers, offering various opportunities for technological development; with the development of the special technical schools; with the development of the secondary schools and the universities, opening new careers; with the development finally of our slogans of study, work and revolutionary vigilance for our entire country, fundamentally based on the Union of Young Communists from which all types of cadres should emerge, even the leading cadres in the future of the revolution.

Intimately tied to the concept of cadre is the capacity for sacrifice, for demonstrating through personal example the truths and watchwords of the revolution. The cadres, as political leaders, should gain the respect of the workers by their actions. It is absolutely imperative that they count on the respect and affection of their companeros, whom they should guide along the vanguard paths.

Overall, there are no better cadres than those elected by the masses in the assemblies that select the exemplary workers, those that will be brought into the PURS along with the old members of the ORI (Organizacion Revolucionaria Integrada -Integrated Revolutionary Organisation) who pass the required selective tests. At the beginning they will constitute a small party, but with enormous influence among the workers; later it will grow when the advance of socialist consciousness begins converting the work and total devotion to the cause of the people into a necessity. With the intermediate leaders of this category, the difficult tasks that we have before us will be accomplished with fewer errors. After a period of confusion and poor methods, we have arrived at a just policy which will never be abandoned. With the ever-renewing drive of the working class, nourishing from its inexhaustible fountain the ranks of the future United Party of the Socialist Revolution, and with the leadership of our Party, we fully undertake the task of the forming of cadres which will guarantee the swift development of our revolution. We must be successful in the effort.

