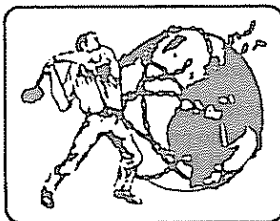


WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!
WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES AND OPPRESSED PEOPLES, UNITE!

GEGEN DIE STRÖMUNG



Organ for the Building of the Marxist-Leninist Party of West Germany

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Long Live the Revolution in Mexico!

The uprising in Chiapas in the south of Mexico early this year came like a ray of hope for revolutionaries all over the world, at a time when it appears as if international imperialism were on an unstoppable offensive on a broad front and as if the revolutionaries were beaten. The revolutionary struggles in Mexico give people courage and prove yet again that the contradictions of the imperialist system cannot be solved by itself, that the struggles of the peoples will breakout with renewed strength to resolve these contradictions in a revolutionary way, i.e. through the overthrow and destruction of the imperialist system.

And so we were glad that representatives of "Spartakus" (Organ for the Building of the Marxist-Leninist Party in Turkey) and of "Gegen die Strömung" had the opportunity to meet in Barcelona with comrade P., a representative of the "Movimiento Revolucionario de México" (an alliance of seven armed revolutionary organisations in Mexico) and to conduct with him a thoroughgoing discussion from which we here publish extracts.

The Uprising in Chiapas

Can you describe the beginning and course of the Chiapas uprising?

In the night of December 31st to January 1st five towns in Chiapas were occupied simultaneously in the early hours of the morning. The name of Subcomandante Marcos actually originates from this, since the initial letters of the five towns - Las Margaritas, Altamirano, Rancho Nuevo, Comitán, Ocosingo, San Cristóbal de las Casas - when put together make up Marcos. There were in fact six towns, but we failed to capture Comitán. Three of these towns have more than 100,000 inhabitants.

We have been asked again and again whether the uprising in Chiapas was also linked with the implementation of the NAFTA-treaty on the 1st of January. Answering this question in an interview Marcos explained that in such an action surprise is the most important factor, and so they chose December 31st to start the uprising, because most of the soldiers and police get drunk on New Year's Eve. And so it was; so that troops from Mexico City could not be sent so quickly and it was only on January 2nd that units of the army could be despatched.

We chose the federal state of Chiapas and those cities to unleash the insurrection, because one of our most important aims was to reveal to the whole world the conditions in which we, the people, have to live, and to do this we had to direct such a powerful blow at the state authorities that they would be unable to hush it up.

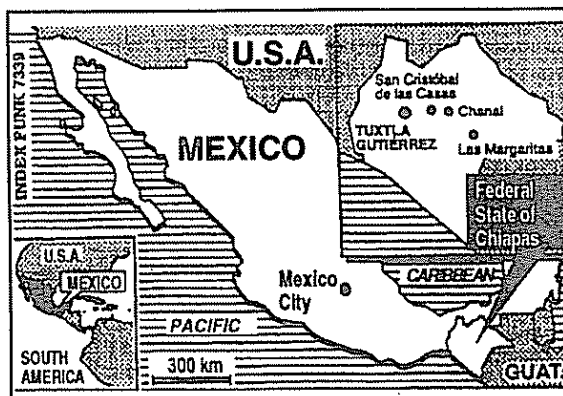
In addition, many Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) from Europe and the USA work in Chiapas. San Cristóbal is an important tourist attraction and hundreds of tourists were present in the town when it was taken. It was for this reason that the Mexican state was unable to conceal the news of the uprising. The long-term occupation of the cities, however, was never a part of the plan. The EZLN (Zapatista National Liberation Army) wanted to strike a blow at the Mexican state in a glare of publicity and then withdraw. An orderly retreat was undertaken and this also succeeded, except in Altamirano where we suffered some losses, because we had wrongly estimated the situ-

ation. Contrary to our expectations the army sent troops via the federal state of Tabasco and so these units reached Altamirano more quickly than we had expected. Some comrades stayed in the town to cover the withdrawal also of civilians, in particular snipers who prevented the army from entering the town. This, however, the army later succeeded in doing; our comrades were surrounded and all of them - they were 42 - were shot.

In the course of the first five days we succeeded in killing 300 soldiers and taking 280 prisoners. We also captured about 1,000 weapons, such as pistols, rifles and machine guns as well as 1,400 kilos of dynamite. We brought down 3 helicopters and 3 aeroplanes and succeeded in releasing all the prisoners from three jails. At the moment in the Lacandon jungle there is a liberated area of 30,000 square kilometres. The exact number of those who took part in the uprising is a military secret, but only a small part of our forces were involved. There are in fact other areas of Mexico, where work has been continuing on the build-up of the revolutionary movement since 1978 and in others since as early as 1964. On January 8th the other politico-military organisations carried out actions to express their solidarity with the uprising in Chiapas and also as a sign of condemnation of the massacre that the Mexican state had committed against the civilian population. In Hidalgo and Pueblo high tension pylons were blown up, in Acapulco a police barracks was attacked with grenades and the Military Camp No. 1 in Mexico City was attacked with ground-to-ground missiles. Also in Mexico City a car-bomb was laid in a shopping centre for the wealthy. In various towns in the country guerrilla commandos carried out armed propaganda actions and guerrilla units were active in the federal states of Oaxaca and Guerrero as a form of armed propaganda.

How did the workers respond to the uprising in Chiapas?

They were the first to support the insurrection. On January 2nd there took place a demonstration in Mexico City, called by the "Movimiento Proletario Independiente", an umbrella organisation of various unions. A demonstration for concrete economic demands had long been planned, but after the uprising in Chiapas on January 1st it developed into one in support of the EZLN. The 20,000 workers who took part in the demonstration then beat up the police, who had erected street barricades to prevent the workers from reaching the city centre. However on that day only 300 to 400 police were present. As the workers moved forward, the police officer in command approached a worker with the intention



of negotiating, but the worker's answer was to thump him on the head saying: "Here you have your negotiation!". That's how it began.

Let's talk about the peace negotiations. What has been invented by the bourgeois press and what is the truth?

We believe that three factors induced the Mexican government to begin the so-called "negotiations" and to stop bombing the civilian population. First of all the Mexican government realised that contrary to their initial assumptions they were unable to crush the insurrection in a surprise coup. This was compounded by their fear on the 8th of January that the uprising might spread across the entire country. And finally there was the huge sympathy that the uprising had aroused among the population as a whole and that was expressed in demonstrations. For example on January 12th in Mexico City there took place a demonstration in support of the EZLN and against the measures taken by the Mexican state in which one million people took part.

And of course the EZLN won sympathy not only in Mexico, but all over the world. In the biggest cities in the southern part of the U.S.A. demonstrations took place in front of Mexican consulates and embassies as well as in front of consulates and embassies in Europe - in France, Italy, Spain and Germany. In Denmark the Mexican embassy was attacked with Molotov cocktails. In Bilbao a bomb was planted in front of the Mexican consulate, which unfortunately failed to explode. There were also demonstrations in Japan and Australia.

All these factors were decisive in changing the tactics of the Mexican government. They had to gain time in order to isolate the EZLN and to present the situation to the rest of the world as if the struggle of the EZLN were quite unjustifiable, so that they could polish up their own image in order to crush the insurrection afterwards. The most important thing about the uprising that began on January 1st was that the people lost their fear and that the workers', peasants' and students' organisations expanded across the whole country. To give an example, before the uprising in

Chiapas there were scarcely thirty peasant organisations there. By the end of January in San Cristobal 300 such organisations had been formed. And this is happening not only in Chiapas, but in all parts of the country.

As regards the "negotiations" I must say that in reality no proper negotiations ever took place. The EZLN put forward forty demands in the cathedral of San Cristobal and the Mexican government made forty replies in return. But this was in no way a negotiation. It is clear on both sides that the problems of Mexico cannot be solved at the negotiating table. The Mexican government wants some sort of "dialogue".

However this did give the EZLN the possibility of pushing ahead with their organisation in the whole country. The EZLN could not let this opportunity escape them. It is clear to us what the Mexican government were after with this so-called "dialogue" or "negotiations" and it is important that our own people as well as the peoples of the world understand that the EZLN were simply not in a position to reject dialogue, since this would have given an advantage to the Mexican government, allowing them to paint the EZLN as stubborn.

In February the "Coordinadora Nacional Cívica por la Liberación Nacional" was founded. This is an umbrella union of various workers', peasants' and students' organisations. In this union there is a legal commission appointed by the General Command of the EZLN, which is the legal advisor and representative of the EZLN. In practically all the big cities of the country meetings are being held, so-called "mesas de diálogo" at which the demands of the EZLN as well as the government's replies are discussed, while the people can also put forward their own demands. Clearly the governments' forty answers are nothing but a sham. Their answer roughly is to set up commissions, alter existing laws or make new ones. In April after Easter Saturday the "dialogue" was supposed to begin again. However, the Mexican air force bombed the road to Altamirano, killing two EZLN officers. The EZLN declared the suspension of the dialogue, since clearly they could not continue under these conditions. At the

moment the important thing for the government is to prepare for the presidential elections in August, so that they regain legitimacy in the international arena. We also believe they are planning a multi-party government, so they can then say: "Look, we've got democracy here! What more do you want?" and thus isolate the EZLN. The EZLN will not boycott the elections, so that the Mexican state will not find it so easy to describe the EZLN in the manner usually done for revolutionary organisations in Latin America. This was a decision taken by the EZLN; the other six organisations intend to boycott the elections.

What is the role of the Catholic Church today in Mexico?

There is no unified position taken by the Catholic Church. The majority of the church hierarchy is very reactionary, the sole exception being the Bishop of San Cristóbal, Samuel Ruiz, one of the few in this state who has spoken out against violations of human rights. Lower down among ordinary priests there are many adherents of "liberation theology". These are numerous when compared with the few exceptions among the hierarchy, but few nevertheless when compared with the total number of all priests. Throughout Mexican history the Catholic Church has played a conservative, counter-revolutionary role. In the middle of the last century the Church lost its dominant economic and political position and during the revolution of 1910 to 1919 it played a counter-revolutionary role. In the twenties it even instigated a revolt against the bourgeois government.

Is there oppression of national minorities in Mexico?

Yes, there is discrimination, but not just against the poor indigenous population, but against the poor in general. To give an example: the Governor of Chiapas is of indigenous origin. His predecessor was white, but the one is as bad as the other. In Mexico there is discrimination against the poor, but the indigenous population make up the majority of the poor. The Mexican bourgeoisie use the term "indio" as an insult, but they have also other contemptuous expressions for the poor.

How are living conditions, education, life expectancy etc., to be compared in Mexico City and in Chiapas? Can you say that there is something like a gap?

Yes, such a gap exists, but not only in comparison with Chiapas. After the uprising the Mexican government wanted to present things as if Chiapas were an exception. But in Chiapas the conditions of the indigenous peasant population is simply a mirror-image of the country as a whole.

In the areas inhabited by the indigenous peasant population, whether in Chiapas or elsewhere in Mexico, the life expectancy is lower than in Mexico City, because in the countryside there is practically no health care, hospitals etc. Similarly with food supplies; in the countryside things are much worse than in the cities.



Fighters of "PROCUP"

Democratic or Socialist Revolution?

The platform of the EZLN is a call for a democratic revolution and not a socialist revolution. Why? Why did you not include socialism or communism in your Declaration from the Lacandon jungle? Was this on account of the peasants?

You are referring to the first communique of the Zapatista National Liberation Army, but there exists another one from the "Frente Urbano" of the EZLN in Mexico City, in which the following aims are paramount: we are fighting against hunger and against the election farce and we are also fighting for socialism.

Once you have smashed the present state power and established a new revolutionary state, will that be the dictatorship of the workers and peasants or the dictatorship of the proletariat?

...the dictatorship of the proletariat.

So you will not have two stages of the revolution in the classical sense, as in Russia before the proletarian revolution in 1917?

The problem in Mexico is that the people have already carried out three bourgeois democratic revolutions.

But the people haven't won yet!

No, that's true, but the bourgeois revolution did take place in Mexico, unlike Russia. In Russia there was Tsarism but no bourgeois democracy.

The bourgeois democratic revolution has already taken place in Mexico; it has already run its course, even though it did not take place under the leadership of the people and was not led by a revolutionary party. The bourgeoisie which had the leadership played a counter-revolutionary role and ordered the assassination of Zapata and Villa.

The first bourgeois democratic revolution in Mexico was the Independence War of 1810 to 1824, the result of which was the breaking of Spanish domination in its "New Spain" territories. This enabled the mestizos and creoles to gain access to political and economic power. Basically, however, feudal production methods were retained under the leadership of the Catholic Church.

This laid the foundations for the second bourgeois democratic revolution in Mexico, the so-called Reform War between conservatives and liberals. The liberals under the leadership of Benito Juárez emerged victorious and carried out the nationalisation of church land, the introduction of civil weddings and the separation of church and state. This robbed the church of its political and economic power. Benito Juárez was a representative of the Mexican national bourgeoisie, which at that time still played a revolutionary role. They put up resistance against the French who had invaded the country at the insistence of the conservatives when the defeat of the latter appeared inevitable. After a war which lasted for nine years the French were driven out of the country. This war could be characterised as a people's war, since broad masses of the people took part. Juárez became the second Mexican president of indigenous origin, the third being Porfirio Díaz.

The third revolution took place from 1910 to 1919. This was the completion of the bourgeois democratic revolution. It swept aside the remnants of the feudal production methods and laid the basis for the development of capitalism, since it destroyed the remnants of feudalism not only in the methods of production but also in social relationships.

What was the result of the revolution? Did it bring the bourgeoisie to power?

Yes, totally.

And yet they were obliged as Lenin describes in "Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution" to fulfil the historical tasks of this victorious revolution at least partially?

Indeed. They had to grant some democratic rights such as the right of assembly, freedom of speech, etc. as well as the eight-hour day.

If for you the proletarian revolution is on the agenda, how is it that the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional bears the name of Zapata, who did not put forward a socialist programme?

It is true that Zapata who was a peasant did not fight for socialist aims, but he was an unflinching revolutionary who never laid down his weapons nor surrendered and who was killed. He did not fight for the aims of socialism, but he represented the interests of the people.

In your opinion how will the transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat take place? What are the necessary conditions for such a transition? Didn't the land question, the peasant question also trigger the uprising in Chiapas?

The peasant question in Mexico has already been solved, but in the interests of the bourgeoisie, not in the interests of the proletariat. The land is in the hands of the big landowners, but it is not being tilled in a feudal way but in an agro-capitalist way. In the countryside therefore, although feudal production relationships have been swept away, capitalist production relationships have been introduced. For the indigenous peasants who began an armed uprising on January 1st the land question was a factor - not the most important - but a factor alongside others.

How has the land question been solved? Do the former big landowners now exploit the peasants on a capitalist basis or was the big landowning class liquidated in the course of the bourgeois-democratic revolution?

I have a third possibility. In Mexico there are fourteen big landowning families. In 1910 they owned all of the land in the country. Some of them are still landowners today on an agro-capitalist basis, but a new rural bourgeoisie has also developed.

What are the aims of the peasants?

The main aim of the peasants is to forge an alliance with the workers. This is essential - to unite with the workers.

Do the peasants and agricultural workers demand their own land?

Normally the peasants fight for their own land, but the political organisations are of course trying to educate the peasants and explain to them that

Some Facts About Mexico

Area:

With an area of almost 2 million square kilometres Mexico is the third biggest country in Latin America. More than half of its territory - the present U.S. federal states of California, Utah, New Mexico, Nevada, Arizona and Colorado - was taken from Mexico by the U.S.A. during the Texan Wars of 1846 - 1848.

Population:

Mexico has a population of 86 million. Mexico City with 24 million inhabitants is one of the biggest cities in the world. There are three million people in both Guadalajara and Monterrey. More than 70% of the population live in the cities. Approximately 30 million Mexicans live in the USA; in Los Angeles alone there are 4 million!

Apart from a minority of whites who make up 10 to 15% of the population, 55 to 75% of the inhabitants of Mexico are estimated to belong to the so-called mestizos, with the indigenous population making up roughly 9 to 29%.

The official language is Spanish. However, 2 million Mexicans speak only Nahuatl and several hundred thousand also speak a Mayan tongue or Zapoteka, Mixteha, Tzotzil etc.

Economy:

In 1990 the foreign debts of Mexico amounted to 95.9 thousand million US dollars. Thus it is one of the most heavily indebted countries in the world.

Although 80% of consumer goods are produced in the country, Mexico is dependent on the import of basic foodstuffs (wheat, beans, milk, sugar). Products exported are cotton, coffee, tomatoes, sugar-cane and sisal, but also minerals and petroleum on a large scale.

In 1988 direct investment by West/German imperialists amounted to 1,583 thousand million US dollars (compare: total investment 24,984.1 thousand million US dollars) especially in the car and chemical industries but also traditionally in the cultivation and marketing of coffee.

Although the average life expectancy in Mexico is 70 (1990) in various parts of the country it is only 40. Seventy per cent of the population are undernourished. Seventeen million (1990) live in absolute poverty, 2.6 million children (1990) do not go to school and have to work.

21% of employed people work in agriculture (1990), a further 21% in industry and 58% in other sectors. The rate of unemployment is 20% (1990) The legally fixed minimum wage barely covers 30% of what a family requires to live on in a month.



(Sources: "Fischer Weltatmanach 1994"; "Handbuch der 3. Welt" by D. Nohlen/F. Nuscheler, Vol. 3; "Manifiesto de los presos políticos del PROCUP-PDLP", June 1990)

collective property is a more meaningful form of property.

But there are many peasants who have worked collectively all their lives and have no interest in possessing their own land; they want the land for the collective. The big landowners have robbed them of their land and they want it back for the collective.

You must appreciate that a good half of the peasants in Mexico have no land at all; they are suffering exploitation by a big landowner, in the worst cases as day labourers. The other half of the peasants possess land of one or one and a half hectares, but they have neither fertiliser nor machinery to get anything out of their land.

Should collective farms be formed immediately or should the peasants get their own land?

The point is that we are not putting it off until the revolution but it is already being done.

You mean that there is already a collective form of agriculture?

Yes, in Mexico there is a tradition of collective ownership of land for peasants in the mountain regions, called communal property or commune. Besides, there has been in existence since the revolution at the beginning of this century another form of common property, that's what we call the "ejido"; the peasants are not fighting for individual ownership of the land.

Then the peasants must be highly conscious. Can one say that the peasants have a highly developed collective consciousness?

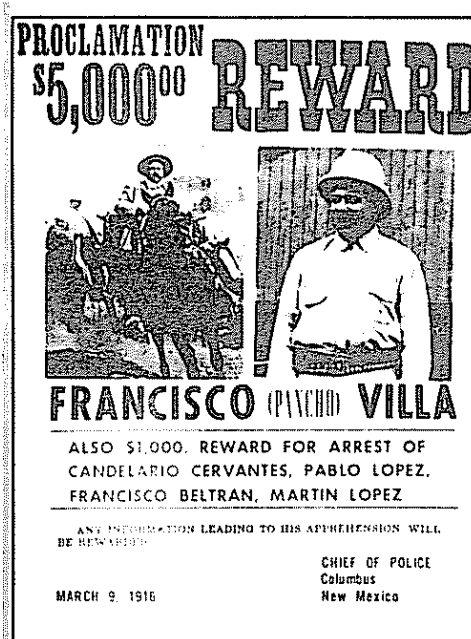
Generally not, but the independent peasant organisations do have a high level of consciousness. We are under no illusions that the revolution in Mexico will take place today or tomorrow; we realise that it will take a long time and that we'll have to fight not only against the Mexican army.

What democratic demands are being put forward by the various classes and strata - Workers, peasants and the indigenous population - even if on the whole they support the socialist revolution?

One can sum this up in the demand for keeping to the Mexican constitution. In February 1917 there took place in Queretaro a constituent assembly. Troops of the Northern Division under the command of Francisco Villa and the Southern Liberation Army led by Emiliano Zapata took part. Besides, also representatives of bourgeois forces led by Carranza attended it. This assembly drew up the constitution of the United States of Mexico, in which are anchored the economic, political and social rights of the Mexican people. At this time it had an extremely progressive character because of armed pressure from the revolutionary forces, but since the murder of Villa and Zapata it exists practically only on paper. Especially in the last six years one can see this in the policies of the Mexican oligarchy, where the purpose has been to integrate into the U.S. economy; the Mexican constitution has 132 articles of which 97 were altered in the course of negotiations on the N.A.F.T.A. agreements.

What is the relationship between holding to the constitution in practice and the demand for the dictatorship of the proletariat?

Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa



Facsimile of the 'wanted' poster published in 1916

The two best known heroes and leaders of the Mexican revolution were and are beyond any doubt Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa.

Zapata (1883 - 1919) was a peasant from the south of Mexico and all his life represented the interests of the oppressed and exploited indigenous peasant masses. In November 1911 he proclaimed the "Ayala Plan", which aimed at returning the stolen land to the indigenous village communities, the dispossession of the big landowners as well as the expropriation without compensation of the counter-revolutionaries and the smashing of their power.

The parents of Pancho Villa (1876 - 1923) were landless peasants from the north of Mexico. At the age of sixteen he shot a government official who was harassing the population.

It was the armed masses of the people, with Villas Northern Division and Zapatas Liberation Army from the south (which at one time consisted of 70,000 fighters) who finally between 1910 and 1919 helped the democratic revolution in Mexico on to the road to success under the banner of "land and freedom", even although the Mexican bourgeoisie later succeeded in crushing the revolutionary forces, murdering Emiliano Zapata in 1919 and Pancho Villa in 1923 and establishing their own absolute power. Under the leadership of Carranza they first attacked the revolutionary armies of Villa and Zapata, but were forced nevertheless under pressure from the armed masses to adopt a democratic constitution in February 1917.

Zapata referred emphatically to the bourgeois character of the recently proclaimed liberties:

"What are Carranza and his lot offering us? ... Freedom of the press for those who cannot read; free elections for those who don't know the candidates; a fair jurisdiction for those who have never had anything to do with a lawyer ... but with or without elections, with or without an "effective" election law, with the dictatorship of Porfiriano or the democracy of Madero, with a muzzled press or a free press, the fate of the people remains a bitter one." (quoted from: John Reed: "Aufbruch in Mexiko", Berlin 1972, p. 27)

From this he came to the conclusion "to continue the struggle until the final victory of the people". Of course neither Zapata nor Villa had a socialist programme; there was no communist party to organise or build consciousness, to create clarity among the masses as to the aims, the allies and the enemies of the coming revolution. Nevertheless they were uncompromising revolutionaries, who knew from their own experience that the counter-revolution cannot be "won over by words", that bourgeois freedoms are worthless if the material requirements which would underpin these freedoms have not been created. And Zapata felt drawn to the programme of socialism. Writing about the revolutionary uprising in Mexico and its relationship to the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia, he said:

"Just as it was there, the oppressed here, whose consciousness is still asleep, are beginning to awake, to stretch their backs in order to punish their oppressors." (Op. cit., p. 29)

We make a distinction here; the revolutionary process develops on a revolutionary and also on a democratic level. Both of these differ from one another with regard to the aims as well as with regard to the forms of the struggle. The revolutionary objective is the seizure of power, the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of socialism. The democratic aim consists in fulfilling the economic, political, social and cultural demands of our people and contributing to the further development of the revolution. As far as the various forms of the struggle are concerned, the basic form of the revolutionary struggle is the armed struggle.

What is the role played by the anti-imperialist liberation struggle in Mexico?

This plays an essential role.

And yet Mexico is in the stage of the proletarian revolution?

Yes, not only on the basis of economic development, but also on the basis of political development. The role of the Mexican bourgeoisie in Latin America can be compared with the role of the French bourgeoisie in Europe. The Mexican bourgeoisie is politically the most highly developed bourgeoisie in Latin America, but at the same time they do the dirty work of U.S. imperialism vis-a-vis other Latin American countries.

The Mexican national bourgeoisie was able as a whole to develop capitalism and in this respect they have used up their revolutionary potential in contrast for example to El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala. The Mexican bourgeoisie have been in power for 60 years, whereas in these other countries there were always dictatorships which prevented that a section of the bourgeoisie could develop as it wished. At the same time Mexico as a country is dependant on U.S. imperialism. Since 1945 U.S. imperialism has invested heavily in Mexico, but these investments were in the interests of the Mexican bourgeoisie as a whole.

Does the Mexican bourgeoisie also exploit - by way of example - Colombian workers?

The Mexican oligarchy owns some factories which have also branches in other Latin American countries.

West/German Imperialism in Mexico

In your opinion what is the role of West/German imperialism in Mexico? There is Volkswagen-Mexico...

...Bayer...

and there is an agreement between the German police and the German Bundeswehr (federal army) and the Mexican military. The Bundeswehr has trained Mexican officers.

Mexico is a strategic point for all imperialists, not only for U.S. imperialism. There are many industrial plants owned by the U.S.A., Germany, France, Spain, Switzerland and also Japan. If the Mexican government were threatened by a revolutionary struggle, then not only would a U.S.

army arrive but they would get the backing of the other imperialists.

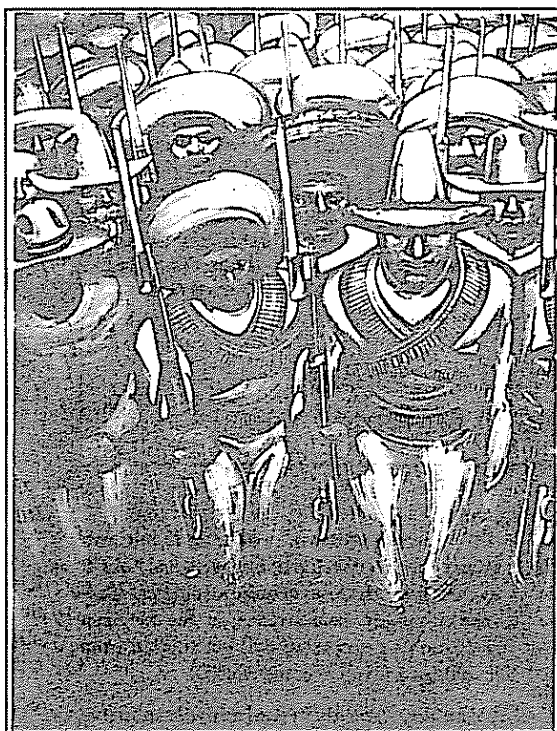
It is also possible, however, that the West/German imperialists, driven by their own imperialist interests, would try with the help of the revolutionaries to move against the U.S. imperialists. Do you see this as a possibility?

The same problem arose in Nicaragua where West/German imperialists moved against U.S. imperialism. They were enemies of the Nicaraguan revolution, but wanted nevertheless to throw out the U.S. imperialists in order to become the No. 1 imperialism instead of the U.S.A.

The problem is that German imperialism - in any situation - is very intelligent. There is of course always the possibility that they might do something to grab the leadership if the revolutionaries were not sufficiently clear about the situation. If there are weaknesses among the Mexican revolutionaries then the possibility exists that German imperialism will penetrate. Of course the European imperialists as well as Japanese and U.S. imperialism are trying to play a part.

By competing with one another?

Yes, as regards competition it is possible that European and Japanese imperialism will exert pressure on the United States, but if and when they see the Mexican state being overthrown, then they will line up on the side of U.S. imperialism.



We take a somewhat different position. We believe there is a great danger that West/German imperialism will try in a cunning way to buy over the revolutionaries after their victory, pretending to support them in order to control the leadership.

On International Relationships

Let's come to another point: events in Mexico

appeared like a ray of hope. We sincerely mean that. There are two or three other revolutionary movements, such as in Kurdistan and Peru, and we would be interested in your position. What is your relationship with the Communist Party of Peru and what developments are there?

We have some differences with the Communist Party of Peru, since we believe Maoism is mistaken. Mao was a revolutionary who applied Marxism-Leninism to the particular situation in China and carried out a revolution - all these things are correct.

But they apply this to Peru?

The problem is that every country has its own features, which demand differences in approach. In the forties in China feudalism and feudal production methods were widespread and this situation determined the special features of the Chinese revolution. However to apply this to another country, to Peru for example, is a mistake.

That is also our opinion and we have published a criticism of the Communist Party of Peru. We also think that there is no such thing as "Maoism". Mao Tse-Tung was a Marxist-Leninist, but "Maoism" is not a special ideology or a separate system. Nevertheless we published a leaflet in solidarity protesting at the massacre of 600 political prisoners in 1986 by the Peruvian state. In spite of all the differences do you take a position of solidarity with the Communist Party of Peru or do you consider it reactionary?

Of course we take up a position of solidarity. We regard the Communist Party of Peru as a revolutionary organisation, which has made some mistakes, just as we have made many mistakes; but the struggle itself will correct these mistakes.

Have you had discussions or debates directly or in writing?

The problem is that they remain deaf to criticism. However we believe this is a sign of immaturity, an ideological problem inside the Communist Party of Peru. The C.P. of Peru is not the only revolutionary organisation in Peru; for example there is the Tupac Amaru and some other small organisations engaged in the armed struggle and we consider all these organisations as revolutionary. We believe these organisations will at some future time unite, because without such unity they will not achieve victory.

We would be interested in your position on Cuba.

We ourselves hold in great esteem the beginning of the Cuban revolution, but we also see that through their ties with the revisionist Soviet Union they took part in counter-revolutionary activities, for example in Eritrea. And we are also aware of the huge influence of Cuba above all in Latin American countries because of its struggle against the U.S.A. Nevertheless we believe that Fidel Castro has propagated the peaceful road to socialism and for this reason he has played a reactionary role which has been damaging to the revolutionary movement in Latin America.

We do not see it in this way. Fidel Castro had to

"Inside or Outside - We Will Continue the Struggle!"

Well over a thousand revolutionary fighters in Mexico were murdered or have "disappeared" since their arrest and ensuing interrogation in the secret torture cells of the Mexican state - one of these for example is the Military Camp No. 1 in Mexico City.

Among the total of more than 90,000 prisoners there are 10,000 men and women comrades. The charges made against them - in accordance with the depoliticisation policies of Mexican class justice - are of robbery, assault or abduction and in some federal states of "justifying terrorism".

Torture is also systematically used by the Mexican state apparatus; 90% of all prisoners were tortured to extort "confessions". However particularly in the case of a revolutionary prisoner great importance is attached to carrying out torture "under medical supervision", so that the torturers don't "inadvertently" cause the death of the prisoner, before they manage to get everything out of him. This is the case especially with well-known comrades and where it is public knowledge that they are in the clutches of these thugs. Mock shootings and other forms of psychological terror such as the torture of family members are part of the arsenal of such "methods of interrogation". This description by four men and women comrades of the PROCUP-PDLP of their arrest in June 1990 affords a glimpse into the "methods of interrogation" of the Mexican police:

"... after our arrest our eyes were tightly blindfolded, our hands tied behind our backs and they set about beating and insulting us. We were dragged to a police

car and driven to a prison, we don't know where, since we lost all feeling for space or time.

From Wednesday June 13th till Monday June 18th we were subjected to all sorts of cruel tortures (...) We were beaten all over our bodies, stripped and our genitals, nipples, head and so on drenched with water and then tortured by electric shock: water was poured into our lungs and a plastic bag pulled over our heads until we almost suffocated..."

(quoted from: "Una Trinchera de la Dignidad - Experiencias desde la prision politica", p. 25)

During several hunger strikes the prisoners were successful in emphasising their demands. These concerned basic things like the right to have a bed, which had been refused some prisoners, the right to visits from friends and family members, abolition of solitary confinement, provision of medical treatment, the guarantee of freedom from bodily harm for family members. But also when other comrades fell into the hands of the police, the prisoners exerted pressure through hunger strikes so that those arrested should be shown publicly and thus give proof that they were still alive.

Freedom for the prison collective of PROCUP-PDLP, for *Ana María Vera Smith, Blanca Lirio Muro Gamboa, Felipe Edgardo Canseco Ruiz, David Cabañas Barrientos, Delfino de Jesus Aguilar Hernández, Rey Venegas Castro, Italo Ricardo Díaz Díaz, Rubén Díaz Díaz, Pablo Torres Hernández, Enrique Itehua Salas, Juan González Hernández, Hermenegildo Torres Cruz* and for all the others!!

Freedom for all comrades imprisoned in Mexico!

follow certain policies and the problems are more that of Latin American revolutionaries who say, Fidel Castro said this or that and therefore this must also apply to us. So, I think you must put the blame on the revolutionaries in Latin America.

We have never received support from Cuba, whether economic or military or any other, because the relationship between the Cuban and Mexican governments is very good. We have a whole string of criticisms we could level at Cuba; that isn't our problem. Nevertheless we believe that Cuba represents a great hope for the people of the world and in particular for the peoples of Latin America. Cuba has also made many mistakes as regards the Mexican revolutionaries, for they sought contact with the Mexican government and never had any contact with the Mexican revolutionaries. Nor did we seek such contacts.

Why not?

Because the Mexican revolution is our own affair; we must develop it, finance it and build it up ourselves. We do not require ideological guidance or money from anyone; as the Mexican revolution develops, we will get support from revolutionaries all over the world.

What do you regard as the decisive break in the development of the Soviet Union?

After Stalin's death the Soviet Union ceased to be a socialist country politically and ideologically, even if economically it did not immediately become capitalist.

What positive relationships do you have with revolutionary movements in other countries?

We have never had relationships with other countries, not with the Soviet Union, nor Cuba, Vietnam, Albania, China or Korea - and always for the same reason: they all had good relationships

with the Mexican government. For this reason things have been very difficult for us. But that has been the way of the Mexican revolution for thirty years. We saw that as the surest way - to make revolution in our own country, with our own mistakes and successes. The path we have chosen in Mexico and which has developed in the course of the struggle is to rely upon ourselves alone.

In all these years we have never received money from anywhere. It was the Mexican people who gave their support to the struggle. Every Mexican revolutionary who lives underground, is fed and clothed as well as his children with money from the Mexican people. It was not possible to buy other items like weapons or means of communication with money from the people and so we just had to get these from the bourgeoisie. But support for the revolutionaries with the necessities of life, food, clothes etc. was provided by the people and the organisation has never had to worry about such things.

Which revolutionary political movements at the moment in the world do you think worth supporting or of any significance - perhaps Kurdistan or others, which you publicise in your newspapers?

We report on all organisations about which we have information, for example ETA in Spain or the revolutionary movements in Ireland or in Turkey and Kurdistan.

But don't you have links with these organisations either?

No, not yet, but we are trying to contact them.

Is there a danger of nationalism in the Mexican revolution and in what does it consist?

Nationalism in Mexico is different from in Europe. Mexican nationalism is a process of finding and defending ourselves against the U.S. invasion. So it plays a progressive role for the Mexican revolution, but we never neglect internationalism.

On the Revolutionary Organisations in Mexico and the Question of the Communist Party

On behalf of which organisation are you speaking?

I am speaking on behalf of the "Movimiento Revolucionario de México" (Mexican Revolutionary Movement) which is an amalgamation of all the revolutionary organisations engaged in an armed struggle in Mexico. There are seven:

- ★ the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN),
- ★ the Revolutionary Clandestine Workers' Party - People's Union (PROCUP),
- ★ the Party of the Poor (P.D.L.P.),
- ★ the Armed Vanguard of the People (V.A.P.),
- ★ the Che Guevara Brigade (B.C.G.),
- ★ the Simon Bolivar Brigade (B.S.B.),
- ★ the Revolutionary Armed People's Organisation (O.R.A.P.).

For how long have these organisations been working together?

Since 1978.

Can you describe briefly the most important differences among these organisations.

The main difference is in their date of origin. The oldest organisation, the Revolutionary Clan-destine Workers' Party was founded as early as 1964, the People's Union in 1970 and the others between 1970 and 1978.

That is a quite formal difference. But what is the ideological difference?

There are no ideological differences. There are some differences on questions of the tactics to be followed, but since the seven organisations have been working together these are less important.

Which of these organisations describe themselves as communist?

By name none of them - but we are fighting for communism.

But surely these organisations have a programme. Is communism defined as the goal?

Of course. The aims of our struggle are:

- ★ the seizure of power,
- ★ the smashing of the Mexican state and
- ★ the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to build socialism.
- ★ Obviously, and I need not mention this expli-

citly, socialism is the first step on the road to communism.

What is the position of these organisations as regards the building of the Communist Party?

We believe that unity is a strategic task of the revolution. Out of this unity the Communist Party will grow. The unity of the Mexican Revolutionary movement had to develop over the last sixteen years and this development is not yet completed.

Have all these seven organisations got the aim of building the Communist Party?

Yes, ever since the day we formed the Mexican Revolutionary Movement.

You said that there were tactical differences among the seven but no strategic differences. Why then have these seven organisations not joined together to form one Communist Party?

That's something history will show, but we do already have as our aim the building of the Communist Party. When one looks at history one can see that there are three types of vanguard. First of all there is the revolutionary vanguard to which all the revolutionary organisations belong, but they are scattered across the whole country and when they do have links with one another this is a fairly loose coordination. A revolutionary organisation consists of a core of professional revolutionaries; they have worked out a correct political line and strategy based on Marxism-Leninism; they train their cadres not only in revolutionary determination in the face of the enemy, but also in the adoption of a revolutionary

attitude towards one's comrades, towards the masses and to life in general - for example the necessity of criticism and self-criticism - the basic form of struggle being the armed struggle. Then there is the vanguard of the stage; this will be only one of the revolutionary organisations, which becomes in practice the vanguard for a certain stage of the struggle. They stand out because of their maturity and ability; they lead an ideological struggle against the mistakes and deviations of the other revolutionary organisations; they determine the correct line and guide the other revolutionary organisations, just as Lenin with Iskra secured the political and ideological leadership of the Bolsheviks. Then there is the historically determined vanguard, the Communist Party. This is the most conscious vanguard of the working class, which leads and organises the oppressed and exploited masses in the struggle for the proletarian revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This develops during the struggle and arises out of the unity of the revolutionary vanguards.

A further question as regards the vanguard of the stage. It is the most developed and it develops solutions and policies which the other seven organisations adopt, if these prove to be correct in practice. Is this then a process at the end of which an amalgamation emerges on a firmer basis?

Yes, that is correct.

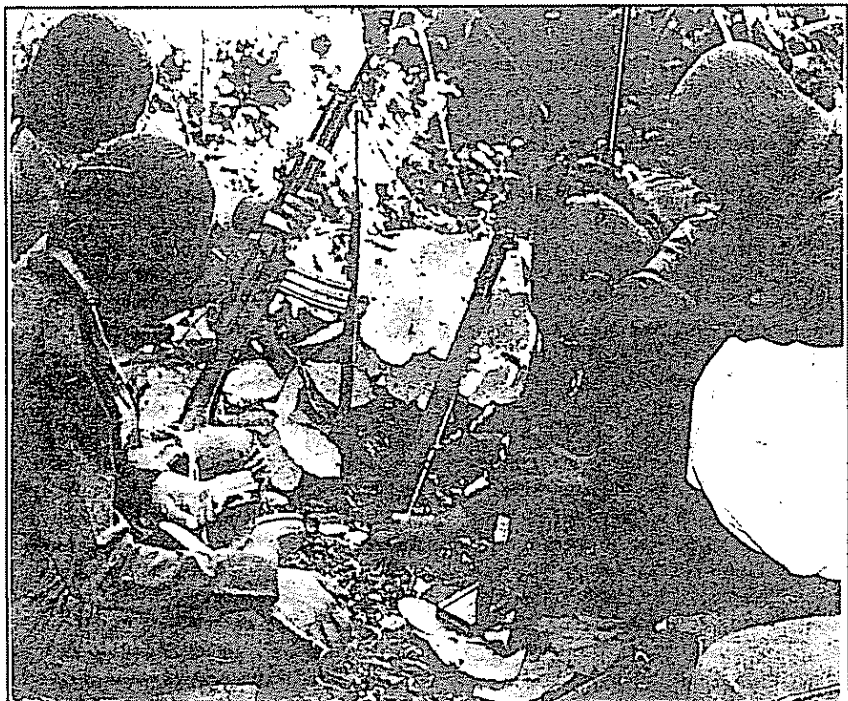
Are you still in that stage?

No, that stage lasted from 1975 until 1982.

Study Marxism-Leninism!

Which Marxist-Leninist writings do you use in Mexico in training your cadres?

As a basic programme we study the "Communist Manifesto" by Marx and Engels, then "What is to be done?", "One Step forward, two steps back", "Two tactics of social democracy in the democratic revolution" and "State and revolution" by Lenin and the "History of the C.P.S.U. (B) - Short course" by Stalin. In addition to these, of course, we also study the "Capital" by Marx, "Socialism: utopian and scientific" by Engels or the "Three sources and three component parts of Marxism" by Lenin. And of course, military writings are very important for us; we study the writings of Lenin on such topics or also "Strategy and tactics" by Stalin. Alongside these theoretical and military texts our cadres also read autobiographical novels, for example "The Young Guard" by Fadeyev, "How the steel was tempered" by Ostrovsky or "Chapayev" by Furmanov.



Comrades in Mexico during their studies

DECLARATION FROM THE LACANDON JUNGLE

TODAY WE SAY:
ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

TO THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO:

MEXICAN BROTHERS AND
SISTERS:

We are a product of 500 years of struggle: first against slavery, then during the War of Independence against Spain led by insurgents, then to avoid being absorbed by North American imperialism, then to promulgate our constitution and expel the French empire from our soil, and later the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz denied us the just application of the Reform laws and the people rebelled and leaders like Vela and Zapata emerged, poor men just like us. We have been denied the most elemental preparation so they can use us as cannon fodder and pillage the wealth of our country. They don't care that we have nothing, absolutely nothing, not even a roof over our heads, no land, no work, no health care, no food nor education. Nor are we able to freely and democratically elect our political representatives, nor is there independence from foreigners, nor is there peace nor justice for ourselves and our children.

But today, we say ENOUGH IS ENOUGH. We are the inheritors of the true builders of our nation. The dispossessed, we are millions and we thereby call upon our brothers and sisters to join this struggle as the only path, so that we will not die of hunger due

to the insatiable ambition of a 70 year dictatorship led by a clique of traitors that represent the most conservative and sell-out groups.

They are the same ones that opposed Hidalgo and Morelos, the same ones that betrayed Vicente Guerrero, the same ones that sold half our country to the foreign invader, the same ones that imported a European prince to rule our country, the same ones that formed the "scientific" Porfirista dictatorship, the same ones that opposed the Petroleum Expropriation, the same ones that massacred the railroad workers in 1956 and the students in 1968, the same ones the today take everything from us, absolutely everything.

To prevent the continuation of the above and as our last hope, after having tried to utilize all legal means based on our Constitution, we go to our Constitution, to apply Article 39 which says:

"National Sovereignty essentially and originally resides in the people. All political power emanates from the people and its purpose is to help the people. The people have, at all times, the inalienable right to alter or modify their form of government."

Therefore, according to our constitution, we declare the following to the Mexican federal army, the pillar of the Mexican dictatorship that we suffer from, monopolized by a one-party system and led by Carlos Salinas de Gortari, the maximum and illegitimate federal executive that today holds power.

According to this Declaration of War, we ask that other powers of the nation advocate to restore the legitimacy and the stability of the nation by overthrowing the dictator.

We also ask that international organizations and the International Red Cross watch over and regulate our battles, so that our efforts are carried out while still protecting our civilian population. We

declare now and always that we are subject to the Geneva Accord, forming the EZLN as our fighting arm of our liberation struggle. We have the Mexican people on our side, we have the beloved tri-colored flag highly respected by our insurgent fighters. We use black and red in our uniform as our symbol of our working people on strike. Our flag carries the following letters, "EZLN," Zapatista Army of National Liberation, and we always carry our flag into combat.

Beforehand, we refuse any effort to disgrace our just cause by accusing us of being drug traffickers, drug guerrillas, thieves, or other names that might be used by our enemies. Our struggle follows the constitution which is held high by its call for justice and equality.

Therefore, according to this declaration of war, we give our military forces, the EZLN, the following orders:

First. Advance to the capital of the country, overcoming the Mexican federal army, protecting in our advance the civilian population and permitting the people in the liberated areas the right to freely and democratically elect their own administrative authorities.

Second. Respect the lives of our prisoners and turn over all wounded to the International Red Cross.

Third. Initiate summary judgements against all soldiers of the Mexican federal army and the political police that have received training or have been paid by foreigners, accused of being traitors to our country, and against all those that have repressed and treated badly the civil population and robbed or stolen from or attempted crimes against the good of the people.

Fourth. Form new troops with all those Mexicans that show their interest in joining our struggle, including those that, being enemy soldiers, turn themselves in without having fought against us, and promise to take orders from the General Command of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation.

Fifth. We ask for the unconditional surrender of the enemy's headquarters before we begin any combat to avoid any loss of lives.

Sixth. Suspend the robbery of our natural resources in the areas controlled by the EZLN.

To the People of Mexico: We, the men and women, full and free, are conscious that the war that we have declared is our last resort, but also a just one. The dictators are applying an undeclared genocidal war against our people for many years. Therefore we ask for your participation, your decision to support this plan that struggles for work, land, housing, food, health care, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace. We declare that we will not stop fighting until the basic demands of our people have been met by forming a government of our country that is free and democratic.

JOIN THE INSURGENT FORCES OF THE ZAPATISTA ARMY OF NATIONAL LIBERATION.

General Command of the EZLN

1993

Lacandon jungle, Chiapas, Mexico

- The first "Declaration from the Lacandon jungle" published in German as a poster in support of the Mexican Revolution -

We would like to ask a question which we believe is justified and which we think the workers of Mexico will also be asking you - if you have among yourselves unity in principle, why don't you form a Communist Party? What are the obstacles in your path today?

Building the Party is not just for us the adding together of individual organisations. The founding of the Party is a qualitative as well as a quantitative leap; something new and higher will be created qualitatively and quantitatively.

Let me apply this to real life in order to illustrate what I mean. First of all you should not forget that we are working underground and so it was not easy for us to establish contacts with one another. We don't have offices, fax or phones to arrange a meeting quickly. In practice we have established contact with one another in the course of the struggle.

I can give you an example, a fictitious one and yet very realistic. Let's suppose I am working politically in a certain part of the town and I am organising the people there in a struggle to get the road paved. We establish contact with others in the district who are also organising there. We make demonstrations and in the course of this struggle a member of one of these organisations approaches me and says: "Comrade, why don't we strengthen our links with one another?" without this comrade being aware that I too am carrying out political work in the district for my own organisation. And the comrade says: "Why don't we study Marxism-Leninism together?" And so we study Marxism-Leninism. After some time he asks me: "Comrade, wouldn't you like to become a bit more involved in what we're doing?" I agree and he arranges for me to go somewhere or another and so I get to know another revolutionary organisation. But at this point I still cannot say that I am working in the Movimiento Revolucionario. My work consists in strengthening links to find out what are the programme and aims and the methods of struggle of this organisation. And so you can find out whether you are establishing links with a really revolutionary organisation. Then I can say "O.K. comrade, I am working with this or that revolu-

tionary organisation", and then begins a process of getting to know one another. Then you might say: "Shall we build up a movement in another district?" and so on. Something of this sort could last about three years.

The important thing is the relationship among the seven politico-military organisations, but during this process of getting to know one another further contacts were made with dozens of other politico-military organisations, which had just been formed. These organisations then joined one of the organisations of the Movimiento Revolucionario. Which of the individual organisations they join in no way depends on which comrades from whichever organisation first made the contact. They join according to the requirements of the struggle.



Finally we would like to say that for us it was important to understand that our way of thinking and the world in which we live is very different from the world you and your comrades come from, the world of the armed uprising, in which many of the ideological questions do not have the importance they might have for us here. We do not mean that contradictions should be hushed up. - we will discuss them. We merely want to stress that direct participation in the revolution and within this framework carrying out ideological debate is a correct procedure. We cannot sit here in our privileged situation, where we are able to arrange meetings or conferences to discuss problems and then approach revolutionary movements in other countries from above. Quite the reverse; we should attempt primarily to learn from the experiences and difficulties of the revolutionary movements and in this process of learning discuss our positions on basic questions such as the communist party or the dictatorship of the proletariat. We do not want to set such questions aside, but in West/Germany we

do want to consider as one of our basic tasks to do all we can with practical propaganda in support of the revolution in Mexico. We will seek constantly to be informed on the revolutionary process in Mexico and on the armed struggle, so that public opinion around the world will be aware of the importance of your struggle and give all the support possible.

I bring greetings to you from all our fighters. Our struggle did not begin on January 1st 1994, but thirty years ago. It will continue for a very long time, for the enemy we are dealing with is economically and politically powerful. However we are sure - otherwise we would not have embarked on this struggle in the first place - that sooner or later we will be victorious.

VENCEREMOS!



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