

16.14 Nehru (India) and Guevara (Cuba) Denounce Imperialism

Sources: Sheean, V. (1960) *Nehru: The Years of Power* (New York: Random House); <http://www.marxists.org/archive/guevara/1964/12/11.htm>, accessed February 12, 2019.

Background: Jawaharlal Nehru was a leader of the Indian independence movement and the nation's first Prime Minister from 1947-1964. Ernesto "Ché" Guevara was an Argentine born leader of the 1959 Cuban Revolution. In December 1964 he traveled to New York City where as a representative of the Cuban government he gave a speech at the United Nations denouncing United States imperialism. During the Cold War, Guevara considered himself both a Communist or Marxist-Leninist who supported the Soviet Union and a spokesperson for non-aligned Third World nations. In 1968 Guevara was murdered by Bolivian troops assisted by U.S. forces when he participated in a campaign to incite a peasant uprising in Bolivia.

Questions

1. Why did Jawaharlal Nehru oppose imperialism and colonialism?
2. Why is Nehru concerned about conditions after independence?
3. According to Guevara, what role does Cuba play in the struggle to end imperialism?
4. What does Guevara believe will happen to imperialism and imperialist nations?
5. In your opinion, why would United Nations representatives from the United States and Western Europe be suspicious of the claims made by Guevara and Cuba?

A. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Basic Approach* (1958)

"Imperialism or colonialism suppressed, and suppresses the progressive social forces. Inevitably, it aligns itself with certain privileged groups or classes because it is interested in preserving the social and economic status quo. Even after a country has become independent, it may continue to be economically dependent on other countries. This kind of thing is euphemistically called having close cultural and economic ties" (311).

B. Ernesto "Ché" Guevara Addresses the United Nations (1964)

A. The final hour of colonialism has struck, and millions of inhabitants of Africa, Asia and Latin America rise to meet a new life and demand their unrestricted right to self-determination and to the independent development of their nations . . . [O]ur country is one of the trenches of freedom in the world, situated a few steps away from U.S. imperialism, showing by its actions, its daily example, that in the present conditions of humanity the peoples can liberate themselves and can keep themselves free. The right to full independence from all forms of colonial oppression is a fundamental principle of this organization. That is why we express our solidarity with the colonial peoples of so-called Portuguese Guinea, Angola and Mozambique, who have been massacred for the crime of demanding their freedom. And we are prepared to help them to the extent of our ability.

B. We have declared that we are supporters of those who strive for peace. We have declared ourselves to be within the group of Non-aligned countries, although we are Marxist-Leninists (Communists), because the Non-aligned countries, like ourselves, fight imperialism. We want peace. We want to build a better life for our people. That is why we avoid, insofar as possible, falling into the provocations manufactured by the Yankees. But we know the mentality of those who govern them. They want to make us pay a very high price for that peace. We reply that the price cannot go beyond the bounds of dignity.

C. Although we reject any accusations against us of interference in the internal affairs of other countries, we cannot deny that we sympathize with those people who strive for their freedom. We must fulfill the obligation of our government and people to state clearly and categorically to the world that we morally support and stand in solidarity with peoples who struggle anywhere in the world to make a reality of the rights of full sovereignty proclaimed in the UN Charter.

D. It is the United States that intervenes. It has done so historically in Latin America . . . Covert interventions are carried out through military missions that participate in internal repression, organizing forces designed for that purpose in many countries, and also in coups d'état, which have been repeated so frequently on the Latin American continent during recent years . . . Imperialism considered us a weak and submissive flock; and now it begins to be terrified of that flock; a gigantic flock of 200 million Latin Americans in whom Yankee monopoly capitalism now sees its gravediggers.