

spectrum, including a significant portion of Napoleon Duarte's Christian Democratic Party, the base of support for the guerrillas broadened dramatically. This process was only partially checked in the late 1970s by the 1979 coup and the willingness of the subsequent junta — under US pressure, but also reflecting the commitments of reformist groups within the military — to embark on a process of substantial economic and political reform. The position of moderates and reformers in the junta was, however, steadily eroded by more conservative elements within the military leadership. The growing influence of the latter, in addition to the distractions of the war and the assassination of leading officials associated with the process of reform, has considerably delayed, if it has not actually reversed, the process. This deterioration, in the eyes of many Salvadorans, effectively foreclosed the possibility of peaceful adaptation to pressure from below.

As in the case of Nicaragua, the position of the Salvadoran Communist Party during the 1970s was to oppose armed struggle, with the result that the party's influence over the guerrilla movement was, and is, limited. This position, moreover, divided the party itself, as party officials such as Caetano Carpio, impatient with the gradualist peaceful approach of the leadership, broke with it in order to form guerrilla groups. There is good reason to believe that this attitude of the party was approved of by, if it did not originate with, the party's Soviet mentors.

As noted earlier, in the aftermath of the success of the Nicaraguan Revolution, the party shifted its position to embrace armed struggle as the only promising tactic for the Salvadoran Revolution. The fact that this shift was revealed in articles by the party secretary, Shafik Khandal, in *Kommunist and Latinskaya Amerika*⁶⁸, again suggests the backing of the CPSU. There was, however, good reason for the party to re-orient itself in any case, given

1. the foreclosure of gradualist options as oppression intensified in early 1980;
2. the growing success of the guerrilla movement, not only in the field, but in broadening its ties to more moderate opposition groups;
3. the party's steady loss of ground owing to its opposition to violent revolution.

⁶⁸ "Salvador: Edinstvo Revolyutsionnykh Sil", *Latinskaya Amerika* (1980), #7, p. 83; S. Khandal', "Na Puti K Svobode", *Kommunist* (1980), #17, pp. 96-7, 101, 103.