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Alegría de Pío

Alegría de Pío is a place in Oriente Province, Niquero municipality, near Cape Cruz, where on December 5, 1956, the dictatorship's forces surprised us.

We were exhausted from a trek not long so much as painful. We had landed on December 2, at a place known as Las Coloradas beach. We had lost almost all our equipment, and with new boots we had trudged for endless hours through salt-water marshes. Now almost the entire troop was suffering from open blisters on their feet. But boots and fungus infections were not our only enemies. We had reached Cuba following a seven-day voyage across the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, without food, in a boat in poor condition, with almost everyone plagued by seasickness from lack of experience in sea travel. We had left the port of Tuxpan on November 25, a day when a stiff gale was blowing and all navigation was prohibited. All this had left its mark upon our troop made up of raw recruits who had never seen combat.

All that was left of our war equipment was our rifles, cartridge belts and a few wet rounds of ammunition. Our medical supplies had disappeared, and most of our knapsacks had been left behind in the swamps. The previous night we had passed through one of the cane fields of the Niquero sugar mill, owned by Julio Lobo at the time. We had managed to satisfy our hunger and thirst by eating sugarcane, but due to our lack of experience we had left a trail of cane peelings and bagasse all over the place. Not that the guards looking for us needed any trail to follow our steps, for it had been our guide — as we found out years later — who had betrayed us and brought them there. We had let him go the night before — an error we were to repeat several times during our long struggle until we learned that civilians whose backgrounds were unknown to us were not to be trusted while in dangerous areas. We should never have permitted that false guide to leave.

By daybreak on December 5 hardly anyone could go a step further. On the verge of collapse, we would walk a short distance and then beg for a long rest. Because of this, orders were given to halt at the edge of a cane field, in a thicket close to the dense woods. Most of us slept through the morning hours.

At noon we began to notice unusual signs of activity. Piper planes as well as other types of small army planes together with small private aircraft began to circle around us. Some of our group went on peacefully cutting and eating sugarcane without realizing that they were perfectly visible to those flying the enemy planes, which were now circling at slow speed and low altitude. I was the troop physician, and it was my duty to treat the blistered feet. I recall my last patient that morning: his name was Humberto

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Lamothe and it was to be his last day on earth. I still remember how tired and wornout he looked as he walked from my improvised first-aid station to his post, still carrying in one hand the shoes he could not wear. *Compañero* [Jesús] Montané and I were leaning against a tree talking about our respective children, eating our meager rations — half a sausage and two crackers — when we heard a shot. Within seconds, a hail of bullets — at least that's the way it seemed to us, this being our baptism of fire — descended upon our 82-man troop. My rifle was not one of the best; I had deliberately asked for it because I was in very poor physical condition due to an attack of asthma that had bothered me throughout our ocean voyage and I did not want to be held responsible for wasting a good weapon. I can hardly remember what followed the initial burst of gunfire. [Juan] Almeida, then a captain, approached us requesting orders but there was nobody there to issue them. Later I was told that Fidel had tried vainly to get everybody together into the adjoining cane field, which could be reached by simply crossing a path. The surprise had been too great and the gunfire had been too heavy. Almeida ran back to take charge of his group. A *compañero* dropped a box of ammunition at my feet. I pointed to it, and he answered me with an anguished expression, which I remember perfectly, that seemed to say "It's too late for ammunition boxes," and immediately went toward the cane field. (He was murdered by Batista's henchmen some time later.) Perhaps this was the first time I was faced with the dilemma of choosing between my devotion to medicine and my duty as a revolutionary soldier. There, at my feet, were a knapsack full of medicine and a box of ammunition. I couldn't possibly carry both of them; they were too heavy. I picked up the box of ammunition, leaving the medicine, and started to cross the clearing, heading for the cane field. I remember Faustino Pérez, kneeling and firing his submachine gun. Near me, a *compañero* named [Emilio] Albentosa was walking toward the cane field. A burst of gunfire hit us both. I felt a sharp blow on my chest and a wound in my neck, and I thought for certain I was dead. Albentosa, vomiting blood and bleeding profusely from a deep wound made by a .45-caliber bullet, shouted, "They've killed me!" and began to fire his rifle at no-one in particular. Flat on the ground, I turned to Faustino, saying, "I've been hit!" — only I used a stronger word — and Faustino, still firing away, looked at me and told me it was nothing, but I could see by the look in his eyes that he considered me as good as dead.

Still on the ground, I fired a shot in the direction of the woods, following an impulse similar to that of the other wounded man. Immediately, I began to think about the best way to die, since all seemed lost. I recalled an old Jack London story where the hero, aware that he is bound to freeze to death in the wastes of Alaska, leans calmly against a tree and prepares to die in a dignified manner. That was the only thing that came to my mind at that moment. Someone on his knees said that we had better surrender, and I heard a voice — later I found out it was that of Camilo Cienfuegos — shouting:

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"Nobody surrenders here!" followed by a four-letter word. [José] Ponce approached me, agitated and breathing hard, and showed me a bullet wound, apparently through his lungs. He said "I'm wounded," and I replied indifferently, "Me, too." Then Ponce and other *compañeros* who were still unhurt, crawled toward the cane field. For a moment I was left alone, just lying there waiting to die. Almeida approached, urging me to go on, and despite the intense pain I dragged myself into the cane field. There I met *compañero* Raúl Suárez, whose thumb had been blown away by a bullet, being attended by Faustino Pérez, who was bandaging his hand. Then everything became a blur of airplanes flying low and strafing the field, adding to the confusion, amid Dantesque as well as grotesque scenes such as a *compañero* of considerable corpulence who was desperately trying to hide behind a single stalk of sugarcane, while in the midst of the din of gunfire another man kept on yelling "Silence!" for no apparent reason. A group was organized, headed by Almeida, including Lt. Ramiro Valdés, now a commander, and *compañeros* [Rafael] Chao and [Reynaldo] Benítez. With Almeida leading, we crossed the last path among the rows of cane and reached the safety of the woods. The first shouts of "Fire!" were heard in the cane field and columns of flame and smoke began to rise. I cannot remember exactly what happened; I was thinking more of the bitterness of defeat and that I was sure I would die.

We walked until the darkness made it impossible to go on, and decided to lie down and go to sleep all huddled together in a heap. We were starving and thirsty, and the mosquitoes added to our misery. This was our baptism of fire on December 5, 1956, in the outskirts of Niquero. Such was the beginning of forging what would become the Rebel Army.

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The battle of La Plata

Our first victory was the result of an attack on a small army garrison at the mouth of the La Plata River in the Sierra Maestra. The effect of our victory was electrifying and went far beyond that craggy region. It was like a clarion call, proving that the Rebel Army really existed and was ready to fight. For us, it was the reaffirmation of our chances for the final victory.

On January 14, 1957, a little more than a month after the surprise attack at Alegría de Pío, we came to a halt by the Magdalena River, which is separated from La Plata by a piece of land originating at the Sierra Maestra and ending at the sea. Fidel gave orders for target practice as an initial attempt at some sort of training for our troop. Some of the men were using weapons for the first time in their lives. We had not washed for many days and we seized upon the opportunity to bathe. Those who were able to do so changed into clean clothes. At that time we had 23 weapons in operating condition: nine rifles equipped with telescopic sights, five semiautomatic rifles, four bolt-action rifles, two Thompson machine guns, two submachine guns and a 16-gauge shotgun.

That afternoon we climbed the last hill before reaching the environs of La Plata. We were following a not-well-traveled trail marked specially for us with a machete by a peasant named Melquiades Elías. This man had been recommended by our guide Eutimio, who at that time was indispensable to us and seemed to be the prototype of the rebel peasant. He was later apprehended by Casillas, however, who, instead of killing him, bribed him with an offer of \$10,000 and a rank in the army if he managed to kill Fidel. Eutimio came close to fulfilling his bargain but he lacked the courage to do so. He was nonetheless very useful to the enemy, since he informed them of the location of several of our camps.

At the time, Eutimio was serving us loyally. He was one of the many peasants fighting for their land in the struggle against the landowners, and anyone fighting them was also fighting against the Rural Guards, who did the landowners' bidding.

That day we captured two peasants who turned out to be our guide's relatives. One of them was released but we kept the other one as a precautionary measure. The next day, January 15, we sighted the La Plata army barracks, under construction, with its zinc roof. A group of half-naked men were moving about but we could nevertheless make out the enemy uniform. Just before sundown, about 6 p.m., a boat came in; some guards landed and others got aboard. We did not quite make out the maneuver, so we postponed the attack to the following day.

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At dawn on the 16th we began watching the barracks. The boat had disappeared during the night and no soldiers could be seen anywhere. At 3 p.m. we decided to approach the road along the river leading to the barracks and take a look. By nightfall we crossed the shallow La Plata River and took up our positions on the road. Five minutes later we took two peasants into custody; one of them had a record as an informer. When we told them who we were and reassured them that no harm would befall them, they gave us some valuable information: the barracks held about 15 soldiers. They also told us that Chicho Osorio, one of the region's most notorious foremen, was to go by at any moment. These foremen worked for the Laviti family plantation. The Lavitis had established an enormous fiefdom, holding onto it by means of a regime of terror with the help of characters such as Chicho Osorio. Shortly afterward, Chicho showed up, astride a mule, with a little black boy riding "double." Chicho was drunk. Universo Sánchez gave him the order to halt in the name of the Rural Guards and immediately Chicho replied: "Mosquito." That was the password.

We must have looked like a bunch of pirates, but Chicho Osorio was so drunk we were able to fool him. Fidel stepped forward and, looking very indignant, said he was an army colonel who had come to find out why the rebels had not yet been wiped out. He bragged about going into the woods, which accounted for his beard. He added that the army was "botching things up." In a word, he cut the army's efficiency to pieces. Sheepishly, Chicho Osorio admitted that the guards spent all their time inside the barracks, eating and doing nothing but occasional useless rounds. He emphasized that the rebels must be wiped out. We began asking discreetly about friendly and unfriendly people living in the area and we noted his replies, naturally reversing the roles: when Chicho called somebody a bad man we knew he was one of our friends, and so on. We had about 20-odd names by now and he was still jabbering away. He told us how he had killed two men, adding: "But my General Batista set me free at once." He spoke of having slapped two peasants who "had gotten a little out of hand," adding that the guards would not do such a thing; on the contrary, they let the peasants talk without punishing them. Fidel asked Osorio what he would do if he ever caught Fidel Castro, and Osorio, with a very expressive gesture, replied: "We'll have to cut his — off." He said he would do the same thing to Crescencio [Pérez]. "Look," he said, showing us his shoes (they were the kind of Mexican-made shoes our men wore), "these shoes belonged to one of those sons of — we killed." Without realizing it, Chicho Osorio had signed his own death sentence. At Fidel's suggestion, he agreed to accompany us to the barracks in order to surprise the soldiers and prove to them they were badly prepared and were neglecting their duties.

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As we neared the barracks, with Chicho Osorio in the lead, I still did not feel so sure he had not become wise to our trick. But he kept going on, completely unaware, for he was so drunk he could not think straight. When he crossed the river to get near the barracks Fidel told Osorio that military rules called for the prisoner to be tied up. The man did not resist and he went on, this time unwittingly as a real prisoner. He explained to us that the only guards were set up at the entrance of the barracks under construction and at the house of a foreman named Honorio. Osorio guided us to a place near the barracks, near the road to El Macío. *Compañero* Luis Crespo, now a commander, went on to scout around and returned saying that the foreman's report was correct. Crespo had seen the barracks and the pinpoints of light made by the guards' cigarettes.

We were just about ready to approach the barracks when we had to pull back into the woods to let three guards on horseback go by. The men were driving a prisoner on foot like a mule. They passed very close to me, and I remember the peasant saying: "I'm just like one of you" and the answer by one of the men whom we later identified as Corporal Basol: "Shut up and keep going or I'll use the whip on you!" At the time we thought that the peasant would be out of danger by not being in the barracks and would escape our bullets when we attacked. But the following day when the guards heard of the attack they murdered him at El Macío.

We had 22 weapons ready for the attack. It was a crucial moment because we were short of ammunition. The army barracks had to be taken at all costs, for a failure would have meant expending all our ammunition, leaving us practically defenseless. Lt. Julio Díaz — who later died heroically at the battle of El Uvero — Camilo Cienfuegos, [Reynaldo] Benítez, and Calixto Morales, armed with semiautomatic rifles, were to surround the palm-thatched house on the right side. Fidel, Universo Sánchez, Luis Crespo, Calixto García, [Manuel] Fajardo — today a commander with the same last name as our physician, Piti Fajardo, killed in the Escambray — and myself, would attack the center. Raúl [Castro] and his squad and Almeida with his, would attack the barracks from the left.

We approached to within 40 meters of the barracks. By the light of a full moon, Fidel opened the hostilities with two bursts of machinegun fire and all available rifles joined in. Immediately, we demanded the enemy's surrender, but we got no results. Murderer-informer Chicho Osorio was executed as soon as the shooting broke out.

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The attack had begun at 2:40 a.m., and the guards put up a much stiffer resistance than we had expected. A sergeant, armed with an M-1, opened up with a burst every time we asked them to surrender. We were given orders to use our old Brazilian-type hand grenades. Luis Crespo and I threw ours but they did not go off; Raúl Castro threw a stick of dynamite with the same negative result. It became necessary to get close to the houses and set them on fire even at the risk of our own lives. Universo Sánchez made a futile attempt and Camilo Cienfuegos also failed. Finally, Luis Crespo and I got close to one of the buildings and set it on fire. The light from the blaze allowed us to see that it was simply a place for storing coconuts, but the soldiers had been intimidated and gave up the fight. One of them, trying to escape, ran smack into Luis Crespo's rifle; Luis shot him in the chest, took the man's rifle, and continued firing toward the house. Camilo Cienfuegos, sheltered behind a tree, fired on the fleeing sergeant and ran out of ammunition. The soldiers, almost defenseless, were being cut to pieces by our bullets. Camilo Cienfuegos was first into the house, where shouts of surrender were being heard.

Quickly, we took stock of our booty: eight Springfields, one Thompson machine gun and about 1,000 rounds; we had fired approximately 500 rounds. In addition, we now had cartridge belts, fuel, knives, clothing and some food. Casualties: they lost two dead, five wounded. Some, along with the wretched Honorio, had fled. We took three prisoners. On our side, not a scratch.

We withdrew after setting fire to the soldiers' quarters and after taking care of the wounded — three of them were seriously wounded and we were told after the final victory that they had died — leaving them in the care of the prisoners. One of the soldiers later joined the forces under Commander Raúl Castro, was promoted to lieutenant, and died in an airplane accident following the war.

Our attitude toward the wounded was in open contrast to that of Batista's army. Not only did they kill our wounded men; they abandoned their own. This difference made a great impact on the enemy over time and it was a factor in our victory. Fidel gave orders that the prisoners be given all the medicines to take care of the wounded. I was pained at this decision because, as a physician, I felt the need to save all available medicine and drugs for our own men. We freed all the civilians and at 4:30 on the morning of January 17 we started for Palma Mocha, arriving there at dawn and seeking out the most inaccessible zones of the Sierra Maestra.

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A most pitiful scene awaited us: the day before, an army corporal and one of the foremen had warned all the families living in the area that the air force was going to bomb the entire zone, and the exodus toward the coast had begun. No-one knew of our presence in the area, so it was evidently a maneuver on the part of the foremen and the Rural Guards to take the land and belongings away from the peasants. But their lie had coincided with our attack and now became a reality. Terror was rampant among the peasants and it was impossible for us to stop their flight.

This was the first victorious battle of the Rebel Army. This battle and the one following it were the only times that we had more weapons than men. Peasants were not yet ready to join in the struggle, and communication with the city bases was practically nonexistent.

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Guerrilla warfare: A method

(September 1963)

Guerrilla warfare has been employed throughout history on innumerable occasions and in different circumstances to obtain different objectives. Lately it has been employed in various people's wars of liberation when the vanguard of a people have chosen the road of irregular armed struggle against enemies of superior military power. Asia, Africa and Latin America have been the scenes of such actions in attempts to obtain power in the struggle against feudal, neocolonial, or colonial exploitation. In Europe, guerrilla units have been used as supplements to native or allied regular armies.

Guerrilla warfare has been employed in the Americas on several occasions. We have had, as a case in point, the experience of César Augusto Sandino fighting against the Yankee expeditionary force on Nicaragua's Segovia [River]. Recently we had Cuba's revolutionary war. In the Americas since then the problem of guerrilla war has been raised in theoretical discussions by the progressive parties of the continent with the question of whether its utilization is possible or convenient. This has become the topic of very controversial polemics.

This article will express our views on guerrilla warfare and its correct utilization. Above all, we must emphasize at the outset that this form of struggle is a means to an end. That end, essential and inevitable for any revolutionary, is the conquest of political power. In the analysis of specific situations in different countries of America, we must therefore use the concept of guerrilla warfare in the limited sense of a method of struggle in order to gain that end.

Almost immediately the questions arise: Is guerrilla warfare the only formula for seizing power in Latin America? Or, at any rate, will it be the predominant form? Or will it simply be one formula among many used during the struggle? And ultimately we may ask: Will Cuba's example be applicable to the present situation on the continent? In the course of polemics, those who want to undertake guerrilla warfare are criticized for forgetting mass struggle, implying that guerrilla warfare and mass struggle are opposed to each other. We reject this implication, for guerrilla warfare is a people's warfare; an attempt to carry out this type of war without the population's support is a prelude to inevitable disaster. The guerrilla is the combat vanguard of the people, situated in a specified place in a certain region, armed and willing to carry out a series of warlike actions for the one possible strategic end — the seizure of power. The guerrilla is supported by the peasant and worker masses of the region and of the whole territory in

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which it acts. Without these prerequisites, guerrilla warfare is not possible.

We consider that the Cuban Revolution made three fundamental contributions to the laws of the revolutionary movement in the current situation in America. First, people's forces can win a war against the army. Second, it is not always necessary to wait for all conditions favorable to revolution to be present; the insurrection itself can create them. Third, in the underdeveloped parts of America, the battleground for armed struggle should in the main be the countryside.

(Ernesto Che Guevara, *Guerrilla Warfare*)

Such are the contributions to the development of the revolutionary struggle in America, and they can be applied to any of the countries on our continent where guerrilla warfare may develop.

The Second Declaration of Havana points out:

In our countries two circumstances are linked: underdeveloped industry and an agrarian system of feudal character so no matter how hard the living conditions of the urban workers are, the rural population lives under even worse conditions of oppression and exploitation. With few exceptions, the rural population also constitutes the absolute majority, comprising more than 70 percent of the Latin American populations.

Not counting the landowners who often live in the cities, this great mass earns its livelihood by working for miserable wages as peons on plantations. They till the soil under conditions of exploitation no different from those of the Middle Ages. These circumstances determine in Latin America that the poor rural population constitutes a tremendous potential revolutionary force.

The armies in Latin America are set up and equipped for conventional warfare. They are the force through which the power of the exploiting classes is maintained. When they are confronted with the irregular warfare of peasants based on their home ground, they become absolutely powerless; they lose 10 men for every revolutionary fighter who falls. Demoralization among them mounts rapidly when they are beset by an invisible and invincible army which provides them no chance to display their military academy tactics and their military fanfare, of which they boast so heavily, and which they use to repress the city workers and students.

The initial struggle of the small fighting units is constantly nurtured by new forces; the mass movement begins to grow bold, bit by bit the old order breaks into a thousand pieces, and that is when the working class and the urban masses decide the battle.

What is it that from the very beginning of the fight makes these units invincible, regardless of the numbers, strengths and resources of their enemies? It is the people's support, and they can count on an ever-increasing mass support.

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The peasantry, however, is a class that because of the ignorance in which it has been kept and the isolation in which it lives, requires the revolutionary and political leadership of the working class and the revolutionary intellectuals. It cannot launch the struggle and achieve victory alone.

In the present historical conditions of Latin America, the national bourgeoisie cannot lead the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle. Experience demonstrates that in our nations this class – even when its interests clash with those of Yankee imperialism – has been incapable of confronting imperialism, paralyzed by fear of social revolution and frightened by the clamor of the exploited masses. Completing the foresight of the preceding statements that constitute the essence of the revolutionary declaration of Latin America, the Second Declaration of Havana states:

The subjective conditions in each country, the factors of revolutionary consciousness, organization and leadership, can accelerate or delay revolution, depending on the state of their development. Sooner or later in each historic epoch objective conditions ripen, consciousness is acquired, organization is achieved, leadership arises, and revolution takes place.

Whether this takes place peacefully or comes into the world after painful labor does not depend on the revolutionaries; it depends on the reactionary forces of the old society, who resist the birth of the new society engendered by contradictions carried in the womb of the old. Revolution, in history, is like the doctor assisting at the birth of a new life, who will not use forceps unless necessary, but who will use them unhesitatingly every time labor requires them. It is a labor bringing the hope of a better life to the enslaved and exploited masses.

In many Latin American countries revolution is inevitable. This fact is not determined by the will of any person. It is determined by the horrifying conditions of exploitation under which the Latin American people live, the development of a revolutionary consciousness in the masses, the worldwide crisis of imperialism and the universal liberation movements of the subjugated nations. We shall begin from this basis to analyze the whole matter of guerrilla warfare in Latin America.

We have already established that it is a means of struggle to attain an end. First, our concern is to analyze the end in order to determine whether the winning of power in Latin America can be achieved in ways other than armed struggle.

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Peaceful struggle can be carried out through mass movements that compel — in special situations of crisis — governments to yield; thus, the popular forces would eventually take over and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat. Theoretically this is correct. When analyzing this in the Latin American context, we must reach the following conclusions: Generally on this continent objective conditions exist that propel the masses to violent action against their bourgeois and landholding governments. In many countries there are crises of power and also some subjective conditions necessary for revolution. It is clear, of course, that in those countries where all of these conditions are found, it would be criminal not to act to seize power. In other countries where these conditions do not occur, it is right those different alternatives will appear and out of theoretical discussions the tactic suitable to each country should emerge. The only thing history does not allow is that the analysts and executors of proletarian politics be mistaken.

No-one can solicit the role of vanguard party as if it were a diploma given by a university. To be the vanguard party means to be at the forefront of the working class through the struggle for achieving power. It means to know how to guide this fight through shortcuts to victory. This is the mission of our revolutionary parties and the analysis must be profound and exhaustive so that there will be no mistakes.

At the present time we can observe in America an unstable balance between oligarchical dictatorship and popular pressure. We mean by “oligarchical” the reactionary alliance between the bourgeoisie and the landowning class of each country in which feudalism remains to a greater or lesser degree.

These dictatorships carry on within a certain “legal” framework adjudicated by themselves to facilitate their work throughout the unrestricted period of their class domination. Yet we are passing through a stage in which pressure from the masses is very strong and is straining bourgeois legality so that its own authors must violate it in order to halt the impetus of the masses.

Barefaced violation of all legislation or of laws specifically instituted to sanction ruling class deeds only increases the pressure from the people’s forces. The oligarchical dictatorships then attempt to use the old legal order to alter constitutionality and further oppress the proletariat without a frontal clash. At this point a contradiction arises. The people no longer support the old, and much less the new, coercive measures established by the dictatorship and try to smash them. We should never forget the class character, authoritarian and restrictive, that typifies the bourgeois state. Lenin refers to it in the following manner [in *State and Revolution*]: “The state is the product

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and the manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state arises when, where, and to the extent that class antagonisms objectively cannot be reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that class antagonisms are irreconcilable.”

In other words, we should not allow the word “democracy” to be utilized apologetically to represent the dictatorship of the exploiting classes; to lose its deeper meaning and acquire that of granting the people certain liberties, more or less adequate. To struggle only to restore a certain degree of bourgeois legality without considering the question of revolutionary power is to struggle for the return of a dictatorial order established by the dominant social classes. In other words, it is to struggle for a lighter iron ball to be fixed to the prisoner’s chain.

In these conditions of conflict, the oligarchy breaks its own contracts, its own mask of “democracy,” and attacks the people, though it will always try to use the superstructure it has formed for oppression. We are faced once again with a dilemma: What must be done? Our reply is: Violence is not the monopoly of the exploiters and as such the exploited can use it too and, moreover, ought to use it when the moment arrives. [José] Martí said, “He who wages war in a country when he can avoid it is a criminal, just as he who fails to promote war which cannot be avoided is a criminal.” Lenin said, “Social democracy has never taken a sentimental view of war. It unreservedly condemns war as a bestial means of settling conflicts in human society. But social democracy knows that as long as society is divided into classes, as long as there is exploitation of human by human, wars are inevitable. In order to end this exploitation we cannot walk away from war, which is always and everywhere begun by the exploiters, by the ruling and oppressing classes.” He said this in 1905. Later, in *Military Program of the Proletarian Revolution*, a far-reaching analysis of the nature of class struggle, he affirmed: “Whoever recognizes the class struggle cannot fail to recognize civil wars, which in every class society are the natural, and under certain conditions, inevitable continuation, development and intensification of the class struggle. All the great revolutions prove this. To repudiate civil war, or to forget about it, would mean sinking into extreme opportunism and renouncing the socialist revolution.” That is to say, we should not fear violence, the midwife of new societies, but violence should be unleashed at that precise moment in which the leaders have found the most favorable circumstances.

What will these be? Subjectively, they depend on two factors that complement each other and which deepen during the struggle: consciousness of the necessity of change and confidence in the possibility of this revolutionary change. Both of these factors – combined with the objective conditions (favorable in all of Latin America for the development of the struggle) – and the firm will to achieve revolutionary change, as well as the new correlation of forces in the world, will determine the mode of action.

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Regardless of how far away the socialist countries may be, their favorable influence will be felt by the people who struggle, just as their example will give the people further strength. Fidel Castro said on July 26 [1963]: The duty of the revolutionaries, especially at this moment, is to know how to recognize and how to take advantage of the changes in the correlation of forces that have taken place in the world and to understand that these changes facilitate the people's struggle. The duty of revolutionaries, of Latin American revolutionaries, is not to wait for the change in the correlation of forces to produce a miracle of social revolutions in Latin America, but to take full advantage of everything that is favorable to the revolutionary movement – and to make revolution!

There are some who say, "Let us admit that in certain specific cases revolutionary war is the best means to achieve political power; but where do we find the great leaders, the Fidel Castros, who will lead us to victory?" Fidel Castro, like any other human being, is the product of history. The political and military leaders who will lead the insurrectional uprisings in the Americas, merged if possible in one person, will learn the art of war during the course of war itself. There exists neither trade nor profession that can be learned from books alone. In this case, the struggle itself is the great teacher.

Of course, the task will not be easy and it is not exempt from grave dangers.

During the development of armed struggle, there are two moments of extreme danger for the future of the revolution. The first of these arises in the preparatory stage and the way it is dealt with will give the measure of determination to struggle as well as clarity of purpose of the people's forces. When the bourgeois state advances against the people's positions, obviously there must arise a process of defense against the enemy who at this point, being superior, attacks. If the basic subjective and objective conditions are ripe, the defense must be armed so that the popular forces will not merely become recipients of the enemy's blows. Nor should the armed defense camp be allowed to be transformed into the refuge of the pursued.

The guerrilla army, the defensive movement of the people, at a given moment carries within itself the capacity to attack the enemy and must develop this constantly. This capacity is what determines, with the passing of time, the catalytic character of the people's forces. That is, guerrilla warfare is not passive self-defense; it is defense with attack. From the moment we recognize it as such, it has as its final goal the conquest of political power.

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This moment is important. In social processes the difference between violence and nonviolence cannot be measured by the number of shots exchanged; rather it lies in concrete and fluctuating situations. We must be able to see the right moment in which the people's forces, conscious of their relative weakness and their strategic strength, must take the initiative against the enemy so the situation will not deteriorate. The equilibrium between oligarchic dictatorship and popular pressure must be changed. The dictatorship tries to function without resorting to force so we must try to oblige it to do so, thereby unmasking its true nature as the dictatorship of the reactionary social classes. This event will deepen the struggle to such an extent that there will be no retreat from it. The success of the people's forces depends on the task of forcing the dictatorship to a decision — to retreat, or to unleash the struggle — thus beginning the stage of long-range armed action. Skillful avoidance of the next dangerous moment depends on the growing power of the people's forces. Marx always recommended that once the revolutionary process has begun the proletariat should strike blows again and again without rest. A revolution that does not constantly expand is a revolution that regresses. The fighters, if weary, begin to lose faith; and at this point some of the bourgeois maneuvers may bear fruit — for example, the holding of elections to turn a government over to another gentleman with a sweeter voice and a more angelic face than the outgoing tyrant, or the staging of a coup by reactionaries, generally led by the army, with the direct or indirect support of the progressive forces. There are others, but it is not our intention to analyze all such tactical stratagems.

Let us focus on the military coup mentioned previously. What can the military contribute to democracy? What kind of loyalty can be asked of them if they are merely an instrument of domination for the reactionary classes and imperialist monopolies and if, as a caste whose worth rests on the weapons in their hands, they aspire only to maintain their prerogatives? When, in difficult situations for the oppressors, the military establishment conspires to overthrow a dictator who in reality has already been defeated, it can be said that they do so because the dictator is unable to preserve their class prerogatives without extreme violence, a method that generally does not suit the interests of the oligarchies at that point. This statement does not mean to reject the service of military men as individual fighters who, once separated from the society they served, have in fact now rebelled against it. They should be utilized in accordance with the revolutionary line they adopt as fighters and not as representatives of a caste.

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A long time ago Engels, in the preface to the third edition of *Civil War in France*, wrote:

The workers were armed after every revolution; for this reason the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeois at the helm of the state. Hence, after every revolution won by the workers there was a new struggle ending with the defeat of the workers. (Quoted by Lenin in *State and Revolution*)

This play of continuous struggle, in which some change is obtained and then strategically withdrawn, has been repeated for many dozens of years in the capitalist world. Moreover, the permanent deception of the proletariat along these lines has been practiced for over a century.

There is danger also that progressive party leaders, wishing to maintain conditions more favorable for revolutionary action through the use of certain aspects of bourgeois legality, will lose sight of their goal (which is common during the action), thus forgetting the primary strategic objective: *the seizure of power*.

These two difficult moments in the revolution, analyzed briefly here, become obvious when the leaders of Marxist-Leninist parties are capable of clearly perceiving the implications of the moments and of mobilizing the masses to the fullest, leading them on the correct path of resolving fundamental contradictions.

In developing the thesis, we have assumed that eventually the idea of armed struggle as well as guerrilla warfare as a method of struggle will be accepted. Why do we think that in the present situation in the Americas guerrilla warfare is the best method? There are fundamental arguments that in our opinion determine the necessity of guerrilla action as the central axis of struggle in the Americas.

First, accepting as true that the enemy will fight to maintain itself in power, one must think about destroying the oppressor army. To do this, a people's army is necessary. Such an army is not born spontaneously; rather it must be armed from the enemy's arsenal and this requires a long and difficult struggle in which the people's forces and their leaders will always be exposed to attack from superior forces and will be without adequate defense and maneuverability.

On the other hand the guerrilla nucleus, established in terrain favorable for the struggle, ensures the security and continuity of the revolutionary command. The urban forces, led by the general staff of the people's army, can perform actions of the greatest importance. The eventual destruction of these groups, however, would not kill the soul of the revolution; its leadership would continue from its rural bastion to spark the revolutionary spirit of the masses and would continue to organize new forces for other battles. More importantly, in this region begins the construction of the future

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state apparatus entrusted to lead the class dictatorship efficiently during the transition period. The longer the struggle becomes, the larger and more complex the administrative problems; and in solving them, cadres will be trained for the difficult task of consolidating power and, at a later stage, economic development.

Second, there is the general situation of the Latin American peasantry and the ever more explosive character of the struggle against feudal structures within the framework of an alliance between local and foreign exploiters.

Returning to the Second Declaration of Havana:

At the outset of the past century, the peoples of the Americas freed themselves from Spanish colonialism, but they did not free themselves from exploitation. The feudal landlords assumed the authority of the governing Spaniards, the Indians continued in their painful serfdom, the Latin American remained a slave one way or another, and the minimal hopes of the peoples died under the power of the oligarchies and the tyranny of foreign capital. This is the truth of the Americas, to one or another degree of variation. Latin America today is under a more ferocious imperialism that is more powerful and ruthless than the Spanish colonial empire.

What is Yankee imperialism's attitude toward confronting the objective and historically inexorable reality of the Latin American revolution? To prepare to fight a colonial war against the peoples of Latin America; to create an apparatus of force establishing the political pretexts and the pseudo-legal instruments underwritten by the representatives of the reactionary oligarchies in order to curb, by blood and by iron, the struggle of the Latin American peoples.

This objective situation shows the dormant force of our peasants and the need to utilize it for Latin America's liberation.

Third, there is the continental nature of the struggle. Could we imagine this stage of Latin American emancipation as the confrontation of two local forces struggling for power in a specific territory? Hardly. The struggle between the people's forces and the forces of repression will be to the death. This also is predicted within the paragraphs cited previously. The Yankees will intervene due to conjunction of interest and because the struggle in Latin America is decisive. As a matter of fact they are intervening already, preparing the forces of repression and the organization of a continental apparatus of repression. But from now on they will do so with all their energies; they will punish the popular forces with all the destructive weapons at their disposal. They will not allow a revolutionary

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power to consolidate; and, if it ever happens, they will attack again, they will not recognize such a power, and will try to divide the revolutionary forces. They will infiltrate saboteurs, create border problems, force other reactionary states to oppose it and will impose economic sanctions attempting, in one word, to annihilate the new state.

This being the panorama in Latin America, it is difficult to achieve and consolidate victory in an isolated country. The unity of the repressive forces must be confronted with the unity of the popular forces. In all countries where oppression reaches intolerable proportions, the banner of rebellion must be raised; and this banner of historical necessity will have a continental character.

As Fidel has said, the cordillera of the Andes will be the Sierra Maestra of Latin America; and the immense territories this continent encompasses will become the scene of a life or death struggle against imperialism. We cannot predict when this struggle will reach a continental dimension or how long it will last. But we can predict its advent and triumph because it is the inevitable result of historical, economic and political conditions; and its direction cannot change.

The task of the revolutionary forces in each country is to initiate the struggle when the conditions are present there, regardless of the conditions in other countries. The development of the struggle will bring about the general strategy. The prediction of the continental character of the struggle is the outcome of the analysis of the strength of each contender but this does not exclude independent outbreaks. The beginning of the struggle in one area of a country is bound to cause its development throughout the region; the beginning of a revolutionary war contributes to the development of new conditions in the neighboring countries.

The development of revolution has usually produced high and low tides in inverse proportion. To the revolution's high tide corresponds the counterrevolutionary low tide and vice versa, as there is a counterrevolutionary ascendancy in moments of revolutionary decline. In those moments, the situation of the people's forces becomes difficult and they should resort to the best means of defense in order to suffer the least damage. The enemy is extremely powerful and has continental scope. The relative weakness of the local bourgeoisie cannot therefore be analyzed with a view to making decisions within restricted boundaries. Still less can one think of an eventual alliance by these oligarchies with a people in arms. The Cuban Revolution sounded the bell that raised the alarm. The polarization of forces will become complete: exploiters on one side and exploited on the other. The mass of the petty bourgeoisie will lean to one side or the other according to their interests and the political skill with which they are handled. Neutrality will be an exception. This is how revolutionary war will be.

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Let us think how a guerrilla foco can start. Nuclei with relatively few people choose places favorable for guerrilla warfare with the intention of either unleashing a counterattack or weathering the storm, and from there they start taking action. What follows, however, must be very clear: At the beginning the relative weakness of the guerrilla is such that they should work only toward becoming acquainted with the terrain and its surroundings while establishing connections with the population and fortifying the places that will eventually be converted into bases.

There are three conditions for survival that a guerrilla force must embrace if it is emerging subject to the premises described here: constant mobility, constant vigilance and constant distrust. Without these three elements of military tactics the guerrilla will find it hard to survive. We must remember that the heroism of the guerrilla fighter, at this moment, consists of the scope of the planned goal and the enormous number of sacrifices they must make in order to achieve it. These sacrifices are not made in daily combat or in face-to-face battle with the enemy; rather they will take subtler forms, more difficult for the guerrilla fighter to resist both physically and mentally.

Perhaps the guerrillas will be punished heavily by the enemy, divided at times into groups, while at other times those who are captured will be tortured. They will be pursued as hunted animals in the areas where they have chosen to operate; the constant anxiety of having the enemy on their track will be with them. They must distrust everyone, for the terrorized peasants will in some cases give them away to the repressive troops in order to save themselves. Their only alternatives are life or death, at times when death is a concept a thousand times present and victory only a myth for a revolutionary to dream about.

This is the guerrilla's heroism. For this it is said that walking is a form of fighting and that avoiding combat at a given moment is another. Facing the general superiority of the enemy at a given place, one must find the tactics with which to gain relative superiority at that moment, either by being capable of concentrating more troops than the enemy or by using the terrain fully and well in order to secure advantages that unbalance the correlation of forces. In these conditions tactical victory is assured; if relative superiority is not clear, it is better not to act. As long as the guerrilla army is in the position of deciding the "how" and the "when," no combat should be fought that will not end in victory.

Within the framework of the great political-military action of which they are a part, the guerrilla army will grow and reach consolidation. Bases will continue to be formed, for they are essential to the success of the guerrilla army. These bases are points the enemy can enter only at the cost of heavy losses; they are the revolution's bastions, they are both refuge and starting point for the guerrilla army's more daring and distant raids.

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This point is reached if difficulties of a tactical and political nature have been overcome. The guerrillas cannot forget their function as vanguard of the people – their mandate – and as such they must create the necessary political conditions for the establishment of a revolutionary power based on the support of the masses. The peasants' aspirations or demands must be satisfied to the degree and in the form that circumstances permit so as to bring about the decisive support and solidarity of the whole population. If the guerrillas' military situation is difficult from the very first moment, the political situation is just as delicate. If a single military error can liquidate the guerrilla, a political error can hold back its development for long periods. The struggle is political-military and it must be developed and understood as such.

In the process of the guerrilla's growth, the fighting reaches a point where its capacity for action in a given region is so great there are too many fighters in too great a concentration. Then begins the "beehive action" in which one of the commanders, a distinguished guerrilla, moves to another region and repeats the chain of development of guerrilla warfare. That commander is nevertheless subject to a central command.

It is imperative to point out that one cannot hope for victory without the formation of a popular army. The guerrilla forces can be expanded to a certain magnitude; the people's forces in the cities and in other areas can inflict losses; but the military potential of the reactionaries will still remain intact. One must always keep in mind the fact that the final objective is the enemy's annihilation. All these new zones that are being created, as well as the infiltrated zones behind enemy lines and the forces operating in the principal cities, should be unified under one command.

Guerrilla war or liberation war will generally have three stages. First is the strategic defensive stage when the small force nibbles at the enemy and runs. It is not sheltered to make a passive defense within a small circumference, but rather its defense consists of the limited attacks it can successfully strike. After this comes a state of equilibrium in which the possibilities of action on both sides – the enemy and the guerrillas – are established. Finally, the last stage consists of overrunning the repressive army leading to the capture of the big cities, large-scale decisive encounters, and ultimately the complete annihilation of the enemy.

After reaching a state of equilibrium, when both sides respect each other, the guerrilla war develops and acquires new characteristics. The concept of maneuver is introduced: large columns attacking strong points; mobile warfare with the shifting of forces and relatively potent means of attack. But due to the capacity for resistance and counterattack that the enemy still has, this war of maneuver does not replace guerrilla fighting; rather, it is

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only one form of action taken by the guerrillas until that time when they crystallize into a people's army with an army corps. Even at this moment the guerrilla, marching ahead of the action of the main forces, will continue the tactics of the first stage, destroying communications and sabotaging the whole defensive apparatus of the enemy.

We have predicted that the war will be continental. This means that it will be a protracted war, it will have many fronts and it will cost much blood and countless lives for a long period of time.

Another phenomenon occurring in Latin America is the polarization of forces, that is, the clear division between exploiters and exploited. When the armed vanguard of the people achieves power both the imperialists and the national exploiting class will be liquidated at one stroke. The first stage of the socialist revolution will have crystallized and the people will be ready to heal their wounds and initiate the construction of socialism. Are there less bloody possibilities? A while ago the last dividing-up of the world took place and the United States took the lion's share of our continent. Today the imperialists of the Old World are developing again — and the strength of the European Common Market frightens the United States itself. All this might lead to the belief that the possibility exists for us merely to observe as spectators, perhaps in alliance with the stronger national bourgeoisie, the struggle among the imperialists trying to make further advances. Yet a passive policy never brings good results in class struggle and alliances with the bourgeoisie, though they might appear to be revolutionary, have only a transitory character. The time factor will induce us to choose another ally. The sharpening of the most important contradiction in Latin America appears to be so rapid that it disturbs the "normal" development of the imperialist camp's contradiction in its struggle for markets.

The majority of national bourgeoisie have united with U.S. imperialism so their fate shall be the same. Even in the cases where pacts or common contradictions are shared between the national bourgeoisie and other imperialists, this occurs within the framework of a fundamental struggle which will sooner or later embrace *all the exploited and all the exploiters*. The polarization of antagonistic forces among class adversaries is up till now more rapid than the development of the contradiction among exploiters over splitting the spoils. There are two camps. The alternative becomes clearer for each individual and for each specific stratum of the population. The Alliance for Progress attempts to slow that which cannot be stopped. But if the advance on the U.S. market by the European Common Market, or any other imperialist group, were more rapid than the development of the fundamental contradiction, the forces of the people would only have to penetrate into the open breach, carrying on the struggle and utilizing the new intruders whilst having a clear awareness of what their true intentions are.

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Not a single position, weapon or secret should be given to the class enemy, under penalty of losing all. In fact, the eruption of the Latin American struggle has begun. Will its storm center be in Venezuela, Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, Ecuador...? Are today's skirmishes only manifestations of a restlessness that has not come to fruition? The outcome of today's struggles does not matter. It does not matter in the final count that one or two movements were temporarily defeated, because what is definite is the decision to struggle which matures every day, the consciousness of the need for revolutionary change, and the certainty that it is possible. This is a prediction. We make it with the conviction that history will prove us right. Analysis of the objective and subjective conditions of Latin America and the imperialist world indicates to us the certainty of these assertions based on the Second Declaration of Havana.

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Political sovereignty and economic independence

(March 20, 1960)

This speech was given as the first in a television series entitled "People's University," a program of talks by leaders of the revolution. Televised live every Sunday, the format of the program was a presentation followed by an open question-and-discussion period. This speech, the first in a series on the development of Cuba's economy, was given before a studio audience of several hundred.

Naturally, when beginning an appearance of this kind we have to extend greetings to all the listeners in Cuba. We should also reiterate our *compañero's* explanation of the importance of this type of popular education directly reaching all our workers and peasants, explaining the truths of the revolution while stripping away the cover of language specifically designed to distort the truth, baring the truth of all deceptions, and showing it as it is.

I am honored to begin this series of appearances that — although initially assigned to *compañero* Raúl Castro — have fallen to me since they deal with economic issues. As soldiers of the revolution, we carry out the tasks that duty calls for, although often we don't have the ideal training, to say the least. Perhaps this is one of those tasks: to put into simple words, and into concepts that everyone can understand, the enormous importance of the issues of political sovereignty and economic independence, and to also explain the extremely close link between these two goals. One can sometimes precede the other — as happened at a certain point in Cuba — but they necessarily go together, and in a short time they must join together. In some cases this union is a positive affirmation, as in Cuba, which achieved its political independence and immediately afterward set out to win economic independence. There are also negative cases, countries that achieve or enter onto the road of political independence, but because they do not secure their economic independence, little by little the former gets weaker and finally disappears. Our revolutionary task today is to think not only of the present, with all the threats being made against us, but also to think of the future.

The watchword of this moment is planning: the conscious, intelligent restructuring of all the problems that will face the people of Cuba in future years. We cannot just think of a rejoinder, of a counterattack when faced with a more or less immediate aggression. We have to make an effort to draw up a whole plan to be able to predict the future. The men of the revolution have to advance toward their destiny consciously, but it is not enough for this to be done by the men of the revolution. It is also necessary for the

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entire people of Cuba to understand exactly what all the revolutionary principles are, so they can know that, after these times, in which some feel uncertain about the future, there will be — and let there be no doubt about it — a happy and glorious future. Because we have been the ones who have set the cornerstone of liberty in Latin America.

That is why a program of this kind is so important, a program in which everyone who has something to say comes and says it. Not that this is new, because every time our prime minister appears before the cameras he gives a masterful lesson, as only a teacher of his stature can give. But we have also planned our teaching; we are trying to divide it into specific topics and are not just answering interview questions. So we will go into the topic of political sovereignty and economic independence, as I said before. But before talking about the tasks that the revolution is carrying out to make these two terms a reality — these two concepts that must always go together — it would be good to define them and make them clear to you. Definitions always have defects; they always tend to freeze terms, to make them dead. But it would be good to at least give a general idea of these twin terms.

It happens that there are some people who do not understand or do not want to understand — which is the same thing — what sovereignty is. They are frightened when our country, for example, signs an agreement — in which, by the way, I had the honor of taking part — like the trade agreement with the Soviet Union, and also receives a line of credit from that nation.

This whole struggle is something that has its antecedents in the history of Latin America. Recently — exactly two days ago — was the anniversary of the expropriation of the Mexican oil companies during the government of General Lázaro Cárdenas.¹ We young people were very young children in those days (more than 20 years have gone by), and we cannot remember exactly the commotion it brought about in Latin America. In any case, the accusations were exactly the same as the ones Cuba has to put up with today; as the ones Guatemala had to put up with in a more recent past, and that I personally lived through; and as the accusations all countries that decide to follow this road of liberty will have to put up with in the future. We can say today, almost without making a caricature, that big business, the news media, and the opinion columnists in the United States provide us the key to a leader's importance and honesty — only in reverse. When a leader is most attacked, then undoubtedly he is better. And today we have the privilege of being the most attacked country and government, not only at this moment, but perhaps ever in the history of Latin America, much more than Guatemala, and perhaps more than Mexico in 1938, or 1936, when General Cárdenas ordered the expropriation. Oil at that time played

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a very important role in Mexico's life. In our case sugar has the same importance: the role of a single product that goes to a single market. "Without sugar there is no country," screamed the spokesmen of reaction. And they also believe that if the market that buys our sugar stops doing so, the country's ruin will be absolute. As if that market were buying our sugar just because they want to help us out.

For centuries political power was in the hands of slave-owners, then of feudal lords. And to facilitate their war-making against enemies and against rebellions of the oppressed, they delegated power to one man among them, the one who united them, the most determined one, the most cruel perhaps. He became king, the sovereign, the despot. Little by little, throughout various epochs of history, he imposed his will until at a certain point it became absolute.

Naturally, we are not going to recount the whole historical process of humanity. And anyway, the times of the kings are gone. There are just a few token ones left in Europe. Fulgencio Batista never thought of calling himself Fulgencio I. It was enough for him that a certain powerful neighbor recognized him as president, and that the officers of an army obeyed him. That is, he had the support and obedience of those with the physical power, with the material forces, with implements of destruction. They supported and obeyed him as the strongest among them, as the most cruel, or as the one with the best friends abroad.

Today there are kings without crowns; they are the monopolies, the true masters of entire nations and at times of entire continents. That has been the case until now on the African continent and a good part of the Asian continent and unfortunately on our Latin American continent as well. Other times they have tried to rule the world. First it was Hitler, a representative of the big German monopolies who tried to take the idea of the superiority of a race and impose it on the world in a war that cost 40 million lives. The importance of the monopolies is immense, so great that it makes political power disappear in many of our republics. Some time ago I was reading an essay by Papini where his character, Gog, bought a republic and said that although the republic thought it had presidents, legislatures, armies and that it was sovereign, he had actually bought it. The caricature is exact. Some republics have all the formal characteristics necessary to be one, but actually depend on the all-embracing will of the United Fruit Company, for example, whose hated director was a lawyer who is now deceased. Others are dependent on Standard Oil or some other oil monopoly, while still others are under the control of the kings of tin or the coffee merchants. These are just some examples on our continent, not to mention Africa or Asia.

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In other words, political sovereignty is a term not to be sought in formal definitions. Rather we have to go deeper, we have to look for its roots. All the treaties, codes of law and politicians in the world maintain that national political sovereignty is an idea inseparable from the notion of a sovereign state, of a modern state. If that were not so, some powers would not feel obliged to call their colonies associated free states, that is, to conceal colonization with a phrase.² Whether the internal regime of each nation allows its sovereignty to be exercised to a greater or lesser degree, or in full, or absolutely not at all — that should be a matter to be decided by that nation. However, national sovereignty means, in the first place, the right of a country to have no-one interfere in its life, the right of a people to choose whatever form of government and way of life suits it. That should depend on its will, and only that nation can decide whether a government changes or not. But all these concepts of political sovereignty, of national sovereignty, are fictitious if there is no economic independence to go along with them.

At the beginning we said that political sovereignty and economic independence go hand in hand. If a country does not have its own economy, if it is penetrated by foreign capital, then it cannot be free from the tutelage of the country it is dependent on. Much less can a country make its will prevail if it clashes with the powerful interests of the country that dominates it economically. That idea is not yet absolutely clear to the Cuban people, and it is necessary to go over it time and again. The pillars of political sovereignty, which were put in place on January 1, 1959, will be totally consolidated only when we achieve absolute economic independence. And we can say we are on the right track if every day we take measures to assure our economic independence. Anytime that governmental measures cause a halt along this road or a turning back, even if it's only one step, everything is lost and inevitably begins to return to the more or less covert systems of colonization, according to the given country's characteristics and social context.

Right now it is very important to understand these concepts. These days it is very difficult to do away with a country's national political sovereignty by the use of pure and simple violence. The most recent two examples are the merciless and treacherous attack by the English and French colonialists on Port Said in Egypt and the landing of U.S. troops in Lebanon.³ But the marines are no longer sent in with the same impunity as before. And it is much easier to put up a veil of lies than to invade a country simply because some big monopoly's interests have been injured. It is difficult in these days of the United Nations, where all peoples want to have a voice and vote, to invade a country that is demanding its right to exercise its sovereignty.

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It is not easy to calm domestic or international public opinion about this. A tremendous propaganda effort is needed to prepare the conditions to make such an intervention appear less odious. That is precisely what they are doing to us. We should never stop pointing out that they are preparing the conditions to subdue Cuba in whatever way necessary, and that it is up to us alone not to let that aggression take place. Economically they can go as far as they want, but we must secure a consciousness in our country such that if they want to launch physical aggression (directly with soldiers from the same country as the monopolies or with mercenaries from other countries), it would be so costly they cannot do it. They are trying to drown us, preparing the necessary conditions to drown this revolution in blood if need be, just because we are on the road toward economic liberation, because we are setting an example of measures aimed at totally liberating our country and at making our level of economic liberty equal the level of our political liberty and of our political maturity today. We have taken political power. We have begun our struggle for liberation with this power firmly in the hands of the people. The people cannot even dream of sovereignty unless there is a power that defends their interests and aspirations. People's power means not only that the Council of Ministers, the police, the courts and all other government bodies are in the hands of the people. It also means that economic bodies are being transferred to the people. Revolutionary power or political sovereignty is the instrument for the conquest of the economy and for making national sovereignty a reality in its broadest sense. In Cuban terms, it means that the revolutionary government is the instrument so that in Cuba only Cubans have power, in every sense of the word: from politics, to being able to decide what to do with the riches of our land and our industry.

We cannot yet swear on our martyrs' graves that Cuba is economically independent. It cannot be so when having just one ship detained in the United States forces a factory in Cuba to stop production, when simply at the command of any of the monopolies a workplace here is paralyzed. Cuba will be independent when it has developed all its means, all its natural resources, when it makes sure through agreements, through trade with the whole world, that no unilateral action by any foreign power can prevent it from maintaining its rhythm of production, and keeping its factories and farms producing at the best possible rate according to plans that we have drawn up.

What we can say for sure is the exact date on which Cuba won its national political sovereignty as a first step. That was the day that people's power was victorious, the day that the revolution triumphed, that is, January 1, 1959. This was a day that more and more is being established as the

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beginning not only of an extraordinary year in the history of Cuba, but also as the beginning of an era. And we even like to think that it is not only the beginning of an era in Cuba, but the beginning of an era in Latin America. For Cuba, January 1 is the culmination of July 26, 1953, and August 12, 1933, and also of February 24, 1895, or October 10, 1868.⁴ But for Latin America, too, it is a glorious date. It may be the continuation of that May 25, 1809, when Murillo rose up in arms in Upper Peru, or of May 25, 1810, the date of the Cabildo Abierto in Buenos Aires, or of any other date that marks the beginning of the struggle of the peoples of Latin America for their political independence at the beginning of the 19th century.⁵

This date, January 1, won at an enormously high price for the people of Cuba, sums up the struggle of generations and generations of Cubans, since the formation of the nationality, for sovereignty, for the homeland, for Cuba's liberty, and for full political and economic independence. No-one can talk now of reducing it to a bloody episode, a decisive and spectacular one perhaps, but only a moment in Cuban history. Because January 1 is the date of the death of the despotic regime of Fulgencio Batista, that small native version of Weyler.⁶ But it also is the birth date of the true republic, politically free and sovereign, that takes as its supreme law the full dignity of man.

This January 1 means victory for all the martyrs who came before us, since José Martí, Antonio Maceo, Máximo Gómez, Calixto García, [Guillermo] Moncada, or Juan Gualberto Gómez, whose antecedents are to be found in Narciso López, in Ignacio Agramonte, and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes. What they started was continued by the whole constellation of martyrs from our republican history: the [Julio Antonio] Mellas, the [Antonio] Guiterras, the Frank Países, the José Antonio Echeverrías, and the Camilo Cienfuegos.

As always, Fidel, having devoted everything to battles on behalf of his people, has been aware of the magnitude of revolutionary firmness, of the greatness of the date that made possible the collective heroism of an entire people: this marvelous Cuban people from which sprang the Rebel Army, a continuation of the *mambí* army.⁷ That is why Fidel always likes to compare the tasks now to be undertaken with those that lay ahead for the handful of survivors of the legendary *Granma* landing. When they disembarked the *Granma*, all individual hopes were left behind. They were beginning the struggle in which an entire people had to either triumph or fail. Because of this, because of that great faith and that great union between Fidel and his people, they never lost heart, not even in the most difficult moments of the campaign. They knew that the struggle was not centered and isolated in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra, but that the struggle was taking place everywhere in Cuba, wherever a man or a woman raised the banner of dignity.

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Fidel knew, as all of us knew later, that it was a struggle like today's, in which the entire Cuban people would triumph or be defeated. Now he insists on the same terms and says: either we are all saved or we all sink. You know the phrase. The obstacles to overcome are difficult, as they were in those days following the *Granma* landing. But now our fighters are not to be counted by the ones or by the dozens but by the millions. All of Cuba has become a Sierra Maestra to fight, wherever the enemy may be, the decisive battle for freedom, for our homeland's future and honor. And at this point, unfortunately, Cuba alone is ready to wage this struggle.

Cuba's battle is the battle of all Latin America; not the definitive one, at least not definitive in one sense. Even assuming Cuba loses the battle, it would not be lost for all Latin America. But if Cuba wins this battle, the entire continent will have won the fight. That is the importance of our island, and that is why they want to suppress this "bad example" we are setting. Back in 1956, the strategic objective, that is, the broad objective of our war, was to overthrow the Batista dictatorship. In other words, the reestablishment of all the ideas of democracy and sovereignty and independence that were trampled underfoot by the foreign monopolies. Starting from the days of March 10, [1952] all Cuba had become a garrison – a garrison like those that we are now turning over to the people [as a school]. All of Cuba was a garrison. March 10 was not the work of one man but of a caste, a group of men united by a series of privileges. One of them, the most ambitious, the most daring, the Fulgencio I of our story, was the captain. This caste defended the interests of the reactionary class in our country, the large landowners, parasitic capitalists, and was closely linked to foreign colonialism. It was made up of a whole series of specimens who disappeared like magic – from the cheap huckster politicians to the journalists who hung around presidential halls, from the scabs to the czars of gambling and prostitution.

The fundamental strategic objective of the revolution at that time was achieved on January 1 with the destruction of the dictatorship that for almost seven years had brutalized the Cuban people. But our revolution, which is a conscious revolution, knows that political sovereignty is closely linked to economic sovereignty.

This revolution does not want to repeat the mistakes committed in the 1930s, simply getting rid of one man without realizing that this man is a representative of a class and of a status quo, and that if that whole status quo is not destroyed, then the enemies of the people create another man.^s For that reason the revolution is compelled to destroy the roots of the evil that afflicted Cuba. We would have to imitate Martí and repeat once again that a *radical* is nothing less than that – one who goes to the roots. Those who do not see the roots of things, those who do not aid men's security and happiness, are not radicals. This revolution is determined to eliminate injustice at the roots, as Fidel has said paraphrasing Martí.

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We have achieved the great strategic goal of the fall of the dictatorship and the establishment of the revolutionary power that arose from the people and is responsible to it, whose armed branch is now an army synonymous with the people. Today, the new strategic goal is the conquest of economic independence, once again the conquest of total national sovereignty. Yesterday, the tactical objectives of the struggle were the Sierra, the plains, Santa Clara, the Presidential Palace, Camp Columbia, the production centers — which were to be conquered through direct attack, a siege or underground action. Our tactical objectives today are the triumph of the agrarian reform, which provides the basis for the country's industrialization, diversification of foreign trade, and raising the people's living standards to reach that great strategic goal of the liberation of the national economy.

The economic front has turned out to be the main battlefield, although there are others of enormous importance, such as education, for example. Recently, we talked about the importance of an education system that would make it possible to provide the necessary technicians for this battle. But that itself indicates that in this battle the economic front is the most important, and that education is aimed at providing officers for this battle in the best possible conditions.

I can call myself a military man, a military man of the people, who took up arms like so many others, simply responding to a call, who fulfilled his duty when it was necessary, and who today is assigned to the post you know. I do not pretend to be an economist. Like all revolutionary fighters, I am simply in this new trench where I have been assigned, and I have to worry, as few others do, about the fate of the national economy, since the future of the revolution depends on it.

These battles on the economic front are different from those waged in the Sierra. These are battles of positions, battles where the unexpected almost never happens, where you gather troops and prepare the attacks very carefully. Victories are the result of work, perseverance and planning. This is a war that demands collective heroism, sacrifice by all. And it does not last a day or a week or even a month. It is very long; it is longer the more isolated we are, and longer still the less we study all the characteristics of the battlefield and analyze the enemy over and over again. It has to be waged with many weapons, too, from the contribution of four percent from the workers for the country's industrialization, to work in each cooperative, to the establishment of branches hitherto unknown in the national industry such as citrochemicals, heavy chemicals, or the steel industry. And the main strategic goal — and we must underline this constantly — is the conquest of national sovereignty.

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In other words, in order to conquer something we have to take it away from somebody, and it is good to speak clearly and not hide behind concepts that could be misinterpreted. That something we must conquer — the country's sovereignty — has to be taken away from that somebody called monopoly. And that somebody called monopoly — although monopolies as a rule have no homeland, at least they have a common definition — all the monopolies that have been in Cuba, that have benefited from the Cuban land, have very close ties with the United States. That means that our economic war will be fought against the big power to the north, that our war is not a simple one. It means that our road to liberation will be opened up with a victory over the monopolies, and concretely over the U.S. monopolies. Control of one country's economy by another without a doubt hurts that country's economy. Fidel asked on February 24 at the CTC: How can anyone think that a revolution would sit back and wait for a solution from private foreign investment capital? How can anyone think that a revolution that was born defending workers' rights, which had been trampled underfoot for many years, would sit back and wait for the solution to the problem from private foreign investment capital, which acts according to its interests, which is not invested in products that are the most necessary for the country, but rather the most profitable for the owners? So the revolution could not follow this road; this was a road of exploitation. In other words, another road had to be found.

We had to strike at the most troublesome of all the monopolies — the monopoly in land ownership — destroy it, turn the land over to the people, and then start the real struggle, because despite everything, this was just the first contact between two enemies. The battle was not waged at the level of the agrarian reform, that is a fact.¹⁰ The battle will be waged now. It will be waged in the future, because although the monopolies had large landholdings here, that is not where the most important holdings are. The most important ones are in the chemical industry, in engineering, in oil, and that is where Cuba's example worries them, the "bad example," as they call it. We had to start with the agrarian reform, however. One and a half percent of the landowners — Cubans or foreigners, but owners of Cuban land — possessed 46 percent of the national territory, while 70 percent owned only 12 percent of the national territory. There were 62,000 farms that had less than three-quarters of a *caballería*. Under our agrarian reform two *caballerías* are considered to be the vital minimum, that is, the minimum required on nonirrigated land for a family of five to live satisfying their minimum needs. In Camagüey, five companies, five or six sugar companies, controlled 56,000 *caballerías* of land — 20 percent of Camagüey's total area. Besides that, the monopolies own the nickel, the cobalt, the iron, the

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chromium, the manganese and all the oil concessions. In the case of oil, for example, the concessions, adding those granted and those requested, came to three times the national territory. In other words, the entire national territory had been granted, as had the keys and the Cuban continental shelf. Besides that, there were zones that had been requested by two or three companies that were in litigation. We have proceeded to eliminate these holdings of U.S. companies.

Housing speculation was also hit, first by the lowering of rents and now by INAV's [National Institute of Savings and Housing] plans to provide low-cost housing. Here there used to be many housing monopolies, and even though perhaps they were not U.S.-owned they were parasitic capital linked to the U.S. monopolies, at least in regard to the ideological conception of private property in the service of one person for the exploitation of a people. We put an end to speculation and the monopoly in domestic trade — or took the first step toward ending it — with the revolutionary government's intervention in the big markets and the creation of people's stores, of which there are 1,400 in the Cuban countryside.

You know how prices go up. If there are peasants listening to us, you will know of the great difference between the current prices and the prices charged by the cutthroats throughout the Cuban countryside in those ghastly days. The unbridled actions of the public utility monopolies have at least been reined in. Telephones and electricity are two examples. Monopolies figured in all aspects of the Cuban people's life. Not only in the economy, which we are talking about today, but also in politics and culture.

Now we had to take another important step in our struggle for liberation: dealing a blow against the monopolies' stranglehold on foreign trade. Several trade agreements have already been signed with various countries, and new countries are constantly coming to seek the Cuban market on an absolutely equal footing. Of all the agreements signed, the most important, without a doubt, is with the Soviet Union. It is good to emphasize this, because at this point we have already sold something unprecedented: our entire [sugar] quota, without having to sell anything on the world market. And we still have requests estimated at between one million or 800,000 to a million tons, if we do not make new contracts, new agreements, with other nations. In addition, we have secured the sale of one million tons a year for five years.

It is true that we are not being paid in dollars, except for 20 percent of that sugar. But the dollar is nothing more than an instrument for buying; the dollar has no value other than its buying power. So by getting paid with manufactured products or raw materials, we are simply using sugar like a dollar. Somebody told me that such a contract was ruinous, since the distance separating the Soviet Union from Cuba would significantly increase the price of all the goods we would import. The oil agreement has

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torn apart all these predictions. The Soviet Union is committed to sell Cuba oil of different specifications at a price 33 percent lower than the U.S. monopoly companies, which are but a step away from us. That is called economic liberation.

Naturally, there are some who claim all these sales by the Soviet Union are political sales. Some claim that it is being done only to annoy the United States. We can admit that this may be true. The Soviet Union, making use of its sovereignty, can, if it feels like annoying the United States, sell us oil and buy sugar from us to annoy the United States. But what do we care? That's a separate question. What their intentions may or may not be is a separate question. In our trade we are simply selling merchandise, not our national sovereignty as we used to do. We simply intend to talk on equal terms. Every time a representative of a new nation of the world comes here, now, he comes to talk on equal terms. No matter what size country he comes from, or the power of its guns. As an independent nation, Cuba has one vote at the United Nations, just like the United States and the Soviet Union. That has been the spirit in which all the treaties have been made, and that will be the spirit in which all new trade agreements will be made. We have to insist on what Martí understood and clearly stated many years ago: that the nation that buys is the one that commands and the nation that sells is the one that obeys.

When Fidel Castro explained that the trade agreement with the Soviet Union was very advantageous for Cuba, he was simply explaining... more than explaining, we could say he was synthesizing the sentiments of the Cuban people. Really, everyone felt a bit freer when we learned that we could sign trade agreements with whomever we pleased. Everyone should feel even freer today when we fully realize that we not only exercised the country's national sovereignty by signing a commercial agreement, but that it was also one of Cuba's most advantageous commercial agreements. When the time comes to analyze the onerous loans of the U.S. companies, and to compare them with the loan or credit granted by the Soviet Union for a 12-year term at a 2.5 percent interest rate, the lowest in the history of international trade relations, then we will see its importance. It is true that this credit is for purchasing Soviet goods. But it is no less true that the loans, for example, from the Export Bank, which supposedly is an international agency, are made to buy goods in the United States. And furthermore, that they are granted to acquire specific goods from foreign monopolies. The Export Bank, for instance, lends (of course, this is a hypothetical example) the Burmese Electricity Company – let us assume the Burmese Electricity Company is [foreign-owned] just like the Cuban Electricity

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Company — so it lends that company 8, 10 or 15 million pesos. The company then sets up its equipment, begins to supply electricity at a very high price and with very bad service, charges huge prices, and then the nation pays. Those are the international credit systems.

There is a tremendous difference between that and a loan granted to really benefit a nation, so that it is worthwhile for its sons and daughters to make a sacrifice for that loan. It would be very different if the Soviet Union had loaned 100 million pesos to a subsidiary firm it owned to establish a business here and then export the dividends back to the Soviet Union. But instead we have now planned to build a big steel plant and an oil refinery, totally national and at the service of the people.

In other words, today whatever we pay represents only the payment for what we receive, and it is a correct and honest payment, as we have seen in the case of oil. I am not saying that as we sign other contracts, in the same open way that the Cuban Government explains everything, we will be able to report extraordinarily cheap prices for all goods produced by the Soviet Union, and furthermore for all quality manufactured products. The *Diario de la Marina* — we have to quote it one more time — is opposed to the trade agreement. Unfortunately, I did not bring a very interesting article that gives five, six or seven reasons why it thinks the agreement is a bad one. Of course, they are all false. But not only is their interpretation false, which is bad enough. Even their news is false. It is false, for example, when they say that this means Cuba is committed to supporting Soviet moves in the United Nations. It is an entirely different matter that — in a declaration absolutely separate from this agreement and drafted by mutual accord — Cuba commits itself to struggle for peace within the United Nations. In other words, as Fidel has explained, Cuba is being accused of doing exactly what the United Nations was created for, according to its founding charter.

All the other economic issues raised have been refuted very well by our minister of trade, and suffer from very big flaws, including gross lies. The most important lie is related to the price. As you know the price of sugar naturally depends on the world market, on supply and demand. The *Diario de la Marina* says that if that million tons of sugar that Cuba sells is later put back on the market by the Soviet Union, then Cuba has not gained anything. That is a lie, for the simple reason that it is clearly established in the agreement that the Soviet Union can export sugar only to countries that usually buy it from them. The Soviet Union is a sugar importer, but it also exports refined sugar to some neighboring countries that have no refineries, such as Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan. And the Soviet Union will, naturally, continue to supply those countries to which it usually exports. But our sugar will be

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used entirely in the plans to increase that country's domestic consumption. If up in the United States they are very worried – since they are already talking in Congress itself about the Soviet Union overtaking them – if they believe the Soviet Union, then why shouldn't we? Especially when the Soviet Union tells us – and puts it in writing besides, because it's not just verbal – that this sugar is for their domestic consumption? Why does any newspaper here have to spread doubts, doubts that are picked up internationally and that can indeed adversely affect sugar prices? It is nothing but the work of the counterrevolution, of those who do not want to resign themselves to losing their privileges.

On another point, with regard to the price of Cuban sugar, which merited an unwarranted comment by U.S. spokesman Lincoln Price, regarding a statement we made a few days ago; they insist that those extra 100 or 150 million dollars they are paying for our sugar is a gift to Cuba. That is not so. For that, Cuba signs tariff agreements that obligate us to buy \$1.15 worth of U.S. goods for every dollar spent by the U.S. interests in Cuba. That means that in 10 years \$1 billion has been transferred from the hands of the Cuban people to the U.S. monopolies.

We don't have to give things away to anybody, but if they went from the hands of the Cuban people to the hands of the people of the United States we would be happier. However, they go into the monopolies' coffers, which are only used as instruments of oppression to prevent the subjugated peoples of the world from beginning their road to liberation. The loans the United States has granted Cuba have cost Cuba 61 percent interest on every dollar – and that's on a short-term agreement, not to mention what the cost would be on a long-term agreement like the one signed with the Soviet Union. That's why at every step we have followed Martí's teachings, and in foreign trade we have insisted on diversifying as much as possible, not tying ourselves to any one buyer. And we are not only diversifying our foreign trade but also our domestic production in order to be able to serve more markets.

So Cuba is moving forward. We are living a truly brilliant moment of our history, a moment in which all the countries of Latin America have their eyes on this small island, and the reactionary governments accuse Cuba of responsibility for every explosion of popular indignation anywhere in the continent.

We have stated very clearly that Cuba does not export revolutions. Revolutions cannot be exported. Revolutions take place when there are a series of insurmountable contradictions within a country. Cuba does export an example, that bad example I've mentioned. It is the example of a small people that challenges the laws of a false science called "geopolitics" and – in the very jaws of the monster, as Martí called it – ventures to hurl its cries of liberty.

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That is the crime and that is the example feared by the imperialists, the U.S. colonialists. They want to crush us because we are a banner for Latin America. They want to apply the Monroe Doctrine to us, as there is a new version of the one stated by Monroe that has been presented in the U.S. Senate. Fortunately for them, I think that it was not approved or did not go beyond some committee. I had the opportunity to read the *whereases* – whereas it shows such a cave-dweller mentality, such an extraordinarily colonialist mentality that I think adopting it would have been a disgrace to the people of the United States. That motion revived the Monroe Doctrine, but it was much clearer. I remember perfectly that one of the paragraphs said: “Whereas: the Monroe Doctrine establishes very clearly that no country outside the Americas can enslave the American countries.” In other words, countries inside the Americas can. And this new version of the Monroe Doctrine went on to say that now the United States could intervene without having to notify the OAS, afterward presenting the OAS with a *fait accompli*. Well, these are the political dangers that stem from our campaign to win our economic liberation.

We have... first of all we have a time crunch, but anyway... we have the last problem, how to invest our foreign exchange reserves, how to invest the nation's efforts so that we can rapidly move our economic aspirations forward. Speaking to the workers on February 24, when he was presented with the symbolic total amount of that four percent, Fidel Castro said: “When the revolution came to power, the reserves could not have been more depleted, and the people were used to consuming more imports than what was exported.” In that situation a country has to invest. It has to save or it has to receive capital from abroad.

Now, what was our idea? To save and save, especially our foreign exchange, to develop our own industry. It replaced the idea of importing private capital. When it is a matter of private national capital, that capital is already in the country. But when it is a matter of imports – because you need capital, and the advisable solution is the investment of private capital – we have that situation.

Private foreign capital is not motivated by generosity; it's not motivated by an act of noble charity; it's not motivated by the desire to reach the people. Foreign capital is motivated by the desire to help itself. Private foreign capital is the surplus capital of a country that is transferred to another country, where wages and living conditions are lower, where raw materials are cheaper, in order to obtain higher profits. What motivates private foreign capital is not generosity but profit. And the idea that had always been upheld here was to give guarantees to private investment capital in order to solve the problems of industrialization.

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In agriculture and industry together \$300 million will be invested. That is the battle to economically develop our country and solve its ills. Of course, it is not an easy road. You know we are being threatened, you know there is talk of economic retaliation, you know there is talk of maneuvers, of taking away our quota, and so on. Meanwhile we are trying to sell our products. Does this mean we have to retreat? Does this mean that because they threaten us we have to abandon all hopes of improvement? What is the correct road for the people? Does our desire for progress harm anyone? Do we want to live off the labor of other peoples? Do we want to live off the wealth of other peoples? What do we Cubans want here?

We do not want to live off the sweat of others, but to live off our own sweat. Not to live off the wealth of others, but off our own wealth, so that all the material needs of our people are satisfied, and on that basis to solve the country's other problems. We don't talk of economics purely for the sake of economics, but of economics as a foundation for meeting all the country's other needs: education, a clean and healthy life, the need for a life not only of work but of recreation. How are we going to spend all those millions? That is something another *compañero* will explain to you in one of these talks, showing not only how but why they will be spent along the road we have chosen.

Now for the weak, for those who are afraid, for those who think that we're in a unique situation in history, that this is an insurmountable situation, and that if we don't stop or turn back we're lost, I want to read you one last quotation. It is a brief anecdote by Jesús Silva Herzog, a Mexican economist who was the author of the Oil Expropriation Law. It refers precisely to that period Mexico lived through, when international capital was also moving threateningly against the spiritual and cultural values of the peoples. The quotation is a synthesis of what is now being said about Cuba. It says:

Of course, it was said that Mexico was a communist country. The ghost of communism appeared. Ambassador Daniels, in the book I have quoted in other lectures, tells the story of going to Washington on a visit in those difficult days, and an English gentleman speaks to him about Mexican communism. Mr. Daniels says to him: "Well, in Mexico the only communist I know is Diego Rivera; but, what is a communist?" Daniels then asks the English gentleman. The latter sits back in an easy chair, ponders, stands up, and tries to offer a definition. It does not satisfy him. He sits down again, ponders once more, perspires a little, stands up once more, and gives another definition. It is not satisfactory either. And he goes on like that until finally, desperate, he says to Daniels: "Mister, a communist is anybody who annoys us."

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You can see how historical situations repeat themselves. I am sure that all of us annoy other people quite a bit. It seems I have the honor, along with Raúl [Castro], of being among the most annoying. But historical situations have their similarities. Just as Mexico nationalized its oil and was able to move forward, and Cárdenas is recognized as the greatest president that republic has had, so we will continue to forge ahead. All those who are on the other side will call us whatever names they wish. They will say whatever they wish. What is certain is that we are working for the benefit of the people, that we will not go back, and that they, the expropriated, the confiscated, will not return.

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Cuba: Historical exception or vanguard in the anticolonial struggle?

(April 9, 1961)

The working class is the creative class; the working class produces what material wealth exists in a country. And while power is not in their hands, while the working class allows power to remain in the hands of the bosses who exploit them, in the hands of landlords, the speculators, the monopolies and in the hands of foreign and national interest groups, while armaments are in the hands of those in the service of these interest groups and not in their own hands, the working class will be forced to lead a miserable existence no matter how many crumbs those interest groups should let fall from their banquet table.

—Fidel Castro

Never in the Americas has an event of such extraordinary character, with such deep roots and such far-reaching consequences for the destiny of the continent's progressive movements taken place as our revolutionary war. This is true to such an extent that it has been appraised by some to be the decisive event of the Americas, on a scale of importance second only to that great trilogy — the Russian Revolution, the victory over Nazi Germany and the subsequent social transformations and the victory of the Chinese Revolution.

Our revolution, unorthodox in its forms and manifestations, has nevertheless followed the general lines of all the great historical events of this century that are characterized by anticolonial struggles and the transition toward socialism.

Nevertheless some sectors, whether out of self-interest or in good faith, claim to see in the Cuban Revolution exceptional origins and features whose importance for this great historical-social event they inflate even to the level of decisive factors. They speak of the exceptionalism of the Cuban Revolution as compared with the course of other progressive parties in Latin America. They conclude that the form and road of the Cuban Revolution are unique and that in the other countries of the Americas the historical transition will be different.

We accept that exceptions exist which give the Cuban Revolution its peculiar characteristics. It is clearly established that in every revolution there are specific factors, but it is no less established that all follow laws that society cannot violate. Let us analyze, then, the factors of this purported exceptionalism.

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The first, and perhaps the most important and original, is that cosmic force called Fidel Castro Ruz, whose name in only a few years has attained historic proportions. The future will provide the definitive appraisal of our prime minister's merits, but to us they appear comparable to those of the great historic figures of Latin America. What is exceptional about Fidel Castro's personality? Various features of his life and character make him stand out far above his *compañeros* and followers. Fidel is a person of such tremendous personality that he would attain leadership in whatever movement he participated. It has been like that throughout his career, from his student days to the premiership of our country and as a spokesperson for the oppressed peoples of the Americas. He has the qualities of a great leader, added to which are his personal gifts of audacity, strength, courage, and an extraordinary determination always to discern the will of the people — and these have brought him the position of honor and sacrifice that he occupies today. But he has other important qualities — his ability to assimilate knowledge and experience in order to understand a situation in its entirety without losing sight of the details, his unbounded faith in the future, and the breadth of his vision to foresee events and anticipate them in action, always seeing farther and more accurately than his *compañeros*. With these great cardinal qualities, his capacity to unite, resisting the divisions that weaken; his ability to lead the whole people in action; his infinite love for the people; his faith in the future and with his capacity to foresee it, Fidel Castro has done more than anyone else in Cuba to create from nothing the present formidable apparatus of the Cuban Revolution.

No-one, however, could assert that specific political and social conditions existed in Cuba that were totally different from those in the other countries of the Americas, or that precisely because of those differences the revolution took place. Neither could anyone assert, conversely, that Fidel Castro made the revolution despite a lack of difference. Fidel, a great and able leader, led the revolution in Cuba, at the time and in the way he did, by interpreting the profound political disturbances that were preparing the people for their great leap onto the revolutionary road. Certain conditions were not unique to Cuba but it will be hard for other peoples to take advantage of them because imperialism — in contrast to some progressive groups — does learn from its errors.

The condition we would describe as exceptional was the fact that U.S. imperialism was disoriented and was never able to accurately assess the true scope of the Cuban Revolution. This partly explains the many apparent contradictions in U.S. policy.

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The monopolies, as is habitual in such cases, began to think of a successor for Batista precisely because they knew that the people were opposed to him and were looking for a revolutionary solution. What more intelligent and expert stroke than to depose the now unserviceable little dictator and to replace him with the new "boys" who would in turn serve the interests of imperialism? The empire gambled for a time on this card from its continental deck, and lost miserably.

Prior to our military victory they were suspicious of us, but not afraid. Actually, with all their experience at this game they were so accustomed to winning, they played with two decks. On various occasions emissaries of the U.S. State Department came, disguised as reporters, to investigate our rustic revolution, yet they never found any trace of imminent danger. By the time the imperialists wanted to react — when they discovered that the group of inexperienced young men marching in triumph through the streets of Havana had a clear awareness of their political duty and an iron determination to carry out that duty — it was already too late. Thus, in January 1959, the first social revolution in the Caribbean and the most profound of the Latin American revolutions dawned.

It could not be considered exceptional that the bourgeoisie, or at least a part of it, favored the revolutionary war over the dictatorship at the same time as it supported and promoted movements seeking negotiated solutions that would permit them to substitute elements disposed to curb the revolution for the Batista regime. Considering the conditions in which the revolutionary war took place and the complexity of the political tendencies that opposed the dictatorship, it was not at all exceptional that some elements adopted a neutral, or at least a nonbelligerent, attitude toward the insurrectionary forces. It is understandable that the national bourgeoisie, choked by imperialism and the dictatorship — whose troops sacked small properties and made extortion a daily way of life — felt a certain sympathy when they saw those young rebels from the mountains punish the mercenary army, the military arm of imperialism. Nonrevolutionary forces did indeed aid the coming of revolutionary power.

A further exceptional factor was that in most of Cuba the peasants had been progressively proletarianized due to the needs of large-scale, semimechanized capitalist agriculture. They had reached a new level of organization and therefore a greater class consciousness. In mentioning this we should also point out, in the interest of truth, that the first area in which the Rebel Army operated (comprising the survivors of the defeated column who had made the *Granma* voyage) was an area inhabited by peasants whose social and cultural roots were different from those of the peasants

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found in the areas of large-scale, semimechanized Cuban agriculture. In fact the Sierra Maestra, the site of the first revolutionary settlement, is a place where peasants who had struggled against large landholders took refuge. They went there seeking new land — somehow overlooked by the state or the voracious landholders — on which to earn a modest income. They struggled constantly against the demands of the soldiers, always allied to the landholders, and their ambitions extended no further than a property deed. The peasants who belonged to our first guerrilla armies came from that section of this social class which most strongly shows love for the land and the possession of it; that is to say, which most perfectly demonstrates the petty-bourgeois spirit. The peasants fought because they wanted land for themselves and their children, to manage and sell it and to enrich themselves through their labor.

Despite their petty-bourgeois spirit, the peasants soon learned that they could not satisfy their desire to possess land without breaking up the large landholding system. Radical agrarian reform, the only type that could give land to the peasants, clashed directly with the interests of the imperialists, the large landholders and the sugar and cattle magnates. The bourgeoisie was afraid to clash with those interests but the proletariat was not. In this way the course of the revolution itself brought the workers and peasants together. The workers supported the demands of the peasants against the large landholders. The poor peasants, rewarded with ownership of land, loyally supported the revolutionary power and defended it against its imperialist and counterrevolutionary enemies.

In our opinion no further exceptionalism can be claimed. We have been generous to extend it this far. We shall now examine the permanent roots of all social phenomena in the Americas: the contradictions that mature in the wombs of present societies and produce changes that can reach the magnitude of a revolution such as Cuba's.

First, in chronological order although not in order of importance at present, is the large landholding system. It was the economic power base of the ruling class throughout the entire period following the great anticolonial revolutions of the last century. The large landholding social class, found in all Latin American countries, generally lags behind the social developments that move the world. In some places, however, the most alert and clear sighted members of this class are aware of the dangers and begin to change the form of their capital investment, at times opting for mechanized agriculture, transferring some of their wealth to industrial investment or becoming commercial agents of the monopolies. In any case, the first liberating revolutions never destroyed the large landholding powers that always constituted a reactionary force and upheld the principle of servitude on the land.

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This phenomenon, prevalent in all the countries of the Americas, has been the foundation of all the injustices committed since the era when the King of Spain gave huge grants of land to his most noble *conquistadores*. In the case of Cuba, only the unappropriated royal lands — the scraps left between where three circular landholdings met — were left for the natives, Creoles and mestizos.

In most countries the large landholders realized they couldn't survive alone and promptly entered into alliances with the monopolies — the strongest and most ruthless oppressors of the Latin American peoples. U.S. capital arrived on the scene to exploit the virgin lands and later carried off, unnoticed, all the funds so "generously" given, plus several times the amount originally invested in the "beneficiary" country. The Americas were a field of interimperialist struggle. The "wars" between Costa Rica and Nicaragua, the separation of Panama from Colombia, the infamy committed against Ecuador in its dispute with Peru, the fight between Paraguay and Bolivia, are nothing but expressions of this gigantic battle between the world's great monopolistic powers, a battle decided almost completely in favor of the U.S. monopolies following World War II. From that point on the empire dedicated itself to strengthening its grip on its colonial possessions and perfecting the whole structure to prevent the intrusion of old or new competitors from other imperialist countries. This resulted in a monstrously distorted economy which has been described by the shamefaced economists of the imperialist regime with an innocuous vocabulary revealing the deep compassion they feel for us inferior beings. They call our miserably exploited Indians, persecuted and reduced to utter wretchedness, "little Indians" and they call blacks and mulattos, disinherited and discriminated against, "colored" — all this as a means of dividing the working masses in their struggle for a better economic future. For all of us, the peoples of the Americas, they have a polite and refined term: "underdeveloped." What is underdevelopment?

A dwarf with an enormous head and a swollen chest is "underdeveloped" inasmuch as his weak legs or short arms do not match the rest of his anatomy. He is the product of an abnormal formation distorting his development. In reality that is what we are — we, politely referred to as "underdeveloped," in truth are colonial, semicolonial or dependent countries. We are countries whose economies have been distorted by imperialism, which has abnormally developed those branches of industry or agriculture needed to complement its complex economy. "Underdevelopment," or distorted development, brings a dangerous specialization in raw materials, inherent in which is the threat of hunger for all our peoples. We, the "underdeveloped," are also those with the single crop, the single product, the single

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market. A single product whose uncertain sale depends on a single market imposing and fixing conditions. That is the great formula for imperialist economic domination. It should be added to the old, but eternally youthful Roman formula: *Divide and Conquer!*

The system of large landholding, then, through its connections with imperialism, completely shapes so-called "underdevelopment," resulting in low wages and unemployment that in turn create a vicious cycle producing ever lower wages and greater unemployment. The great contradictions of the system sharpen, constantly at the mercy of the cyclical fluctuations of its own economy, and provide the common denominator for all the peoples of America, from the Rio Bravo to the South Pole. This common denominator, which we shall capitalize and which serves as the starting point for analysis by all who think about these social phenomena, is called the People's Hunger. The people are weary of being oppressed, persecuted, exploited to the maximum. They are weary of the wretched selling of their labor-power day after day — faced with the fear of joining the enormous mass of unemployed — so that the greatest profit can be wrung from each human body, profit later squandered in the orgies of the masters of capital. We see that there are great and inescapable common denominators in Latin America, and we cannot say we were exempt from any of those, leading to the most terrible and permanent of all: the people's hunger.

Large landholding, whether in its primitive form of exploitation or as a form of capitalist monopoly, adjusts to the new conditions and becomes an ally of imperialism — that form of finance and monopoly capitalism which goes beyond national borders — in order to create economic colonialism, euphemistically called "underdevelopment," resulting in low wages, underemployment and unemployment: the people's hunger. All this existed in Cuba. Here, too, there was hunger. Here, the proportion of unemployed was one of the highest in Latin America. Here, imperialism was more ruthless than in many countries of America. And here, large landholdings existed as much as they did in any other Latin American country.

What did we do to free ourselves from the vast imperialist system with its entourage of puppet rulers in each country, its mercenary armies to protect the puppets and the whole complex social system of the exploitation of human by human? We applied certain formulas, discoveries of our empirical medicine for the great ailments of our beloved Latin America, empirical medicine which rapidly became scientific truth.

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Objective conditions for the struggle are provided by the people's hunger, their reaction to that hunger, the terror unleashed to crush the people's reaction and the wave of hatred that the repression creates. The rest of the Americas lacked the subjective conditions, the most important of which is consciousness of the possibility of victory against the imperialist powers and their internal allies through violent struggle. These conditions were created through armed struggle — which progressively clarified the need for change and permitted it to be foreseen — and through the defeat and subsequent annihilation of the army by the popular forces (*an absolutely necessary condition for every genuine revolution*).

Having already demonstrated that these conditions are created through armed struggle, we have to explain once more that the scene of the struggle should be the countryside. A peasant army pursuing the great objectives for which the peasantry should fight (the first of which is the just distribution of land) will capture the cities from the countryside. The peasant class of Latin America, basing itself on the ideology of the working class whose great thinkers discovered the social laws governing us, will provide the great liberating army of the future — as it has already done in Cuba. This army, created in the countryside where the subjective conditions for the taking of power mature, proceeds to take the cities, uniting with the working class and enriching itself ideologically. It can and must defeat the oppressor army, at first in skirmishes, engagements and surprises and, finally, in big battles when the army will have grown from small-scale guerrilla footing to a great popular army of liberation. A vital stage in the consolidation of the revolutionary power, as we have said, will be the liquidation of the old army.

If these conditions present in Cuba existed in the rest of the Latin American countries, what would happen in other struggles for power by the dispossessed classes? Would it be feasible to take power or not? If it was feasible, would it be easier or more difficult than in Cuba?

Let us mention the difficulties that in our view will make the new Latin American revolutionary struggles more difficult. There are general difficulties for every country and more specific difficulties for some whose level of development or national peculiarities are different. We mentioned at the beginning of this essay that we could consider the attitude of imperialism, disoriented in the face of the Cuban Revolution, as an exceptional factor. The attitude of the national bourgeoisie was, to a certain extent, also exceptional. They too were disoriented and even looked sympathetically upon the action of the rebels due to the pressure of the empire on their interests — a situation which is indeed common to all our countries.

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Cuba has again drawn the line in the sand, and again we see Pizarro's dilemma: On the one hand there are those who love the people and on the other, those who hate the people. The line between them divides the two great social forces, the bourgeoisie and the working class, each of which are defining, with increasing clarity, their respective positions as the process of the Cuban Revolution advances.

Imperialism has learned the lesson of Cuba well. It will not allow itself to be caught by surprise in any of our 20 republics or in any of the colonies that still exist in the Americas. This means that vast popular struggles against powerful invading armies await those who now attempt to violate the peace of the sepulchers, pax Romana. This is important because if the Cuban liberation war was difficult, with its two years of continuous struggle, anguish and instability, the new battles awaiting the people in other parts of Latin America will be infinitely more difficult.

The United States hastens the delivery of arms to the puppet governments they see as being increasingly threatened; it makes them sign pacts of dependence to legally facilitate the shipment of instruments of repression and death and of troops to use them. Moreover, it increases the military preparation of the repressive armies with the intention of making them efficient weapons against the people.

And what about the bourgeoisie? The national bourgeoisie generally is not capable of maintaining a consistent struggle against imperialism. It shows that it fears popular revolution even more than the oppression and despotic dominion of imperialism which crushes nationality, tarnishes patriotic sentiments, and colonizes the economy.

A large part of the bourgeoisie opposes revolution openly, and since the beginning has not hesitated to ally itself with imperialism and the landowners to fight against the people and close the road to revolution.

A desperate and hysterical imperialism, ready to undertake any maneuver and to give arms and even troops to its puppets in order to annihilate any country which rises up; ruthless landowners, unscrupulous and experienced in the most brutal forms of repression; and, finally, a bourgeoisie willing to close, through any means, the roads leading to popular revolution: These are the great allied forces which directly oppose the new popular revolutions of Latin America.

Such are the difficulties that must be added to those arising from struggles of this kind under the new conditions found in Latin America following the consolidation of that irreversible phenomenon represented by the Cuban Revolution.

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There are still other, more specific problems. It is more difficult to prepare guerrilla groups in those countries that have a concentrated population in large centers and a greater amount of light and medium industry, even though it may not be anything like effective industrialization. The ideological influence of the cities inhibits the guerrilla struggle by increasing the hopes for peacefully organized mass struggle. This gives rise to a certain "institutionalization," which in more or less "normal" periods makes conditions less harsh than those usually inflicted on the people. The idea is even conceived of possible quantitative increases in the congressional ranks of revolutionary forces until a point is someday reached which allows a qualitative change.

It is not probable that this hope will be realized given present conditions in any country of the Americas, although a possibility that the change can begin through the electoral process is not to be excluded. Current conditions, however, in all countries of Latin America make this possibility very remote. Revolutionaries cannot foresee all the tactical variables that may arise in the course of the struggle for their liberating program. The real capacity of a revolutionary is measured by their ability to find adequate revolutionary tactics in every different situation and by keeping all tactics in mind so that they might be exploited to the maximum. It would be an unpardonable error to underestimate the gain a revolutionary program could make through a given electoral process, just as it would be unpardonable to look only to elections and not to other forms of struggle, including armed struggle, to achieve power – the indispensable instrument for applying and developing a revolutionary program. If power is not achieved, all other conquests, however advanced they appear, are unstable, insufficient and incapable of producing necessary solutions.

When we speak of winning power via the electoral process, our question is always the same: If a popular movement takes over the government of a country by winning a wide popular vote and resolves as a consequence to initiate the great social transformations which make up the triumphant program, would it not immediately come into conflict with the reactionary classes of that country? Has the army not always been the repressive instrument of that class? If so, it is logical to suppose that this army will side with its class and enter the conflict against the newly constituted government. By means of a more or less bloodless coup d'état, this government can be overthrown and the old game renewed again, never seeming to end. It could also happen that an oppressor army could be defeated by an armed popular reaction in defense and support of its government. What appears difficult to believe is that the armed forces would accept profound social reforms with good grace and peacefully resign themselves to their liquidation as a caste.

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Where there are large urban concentrations, even when economically backward, it may be advisable — in our humble opinion — to engage in struggle outside the limits of the city in a way that can continue for a long time. The existence of a guerrilla center in the mountains of a country with populous cities maintains a perpetual focus of rebellion because it is very improbable that the repressive powers will be able, either rapidly or over a long period of time, to liquidate guerrilla groups with established social bases in territory favorable to guerrilla warfare, if the strategy and tactics of this type of warfare are consistently employed.

What would happen in the cities is quite different. Armed struggle against the repressive army can develop to an unanticipated degree, but this struggle will become a frontal one only when there is a powerful army to fight against [the enemy] army. A frontal fight against a powerful and well equipped army cannot be undertaken by a small group.

For the frontal fight, many arms will be needed, and the question arises: Where are these arms to be found? They do not appear spontaneously; they must be seized from the enemy. But in order to seize them from the enemy, it is necessary to fight; and it is not possible to fight openly. The struggle in the big cities must therefore begin clandestinely, capturing military groups or weapons one by one in successive assaults. If this happens, a great advance can be made.

Still, we would not dare to say that victory would be denied to a popular rebellion with a guerrilla base inside the city. No one can object on theoretical grounds to this strategy; at least we have no intention of doing so.

But we should point out how easy it would be as the result of a betrayal, or simply by means of continuous raids, to eliminate the leaders of the revolution. In contrast, if while employing all conceivable maneuvers in the city (such as organized sabotage and, above all, that effective form of action, urban guerrilla warfare) and if a base is also maintained in the countryside, the revolutionary political power, relatively safe from the contingencies of the war, will remain untouched even if the oppressor government defeats and annihilates all the popular forces in the city. *The revolutionary political power should be relatively safe, but not outside the war, not giving directions from some other country or from distant places. It should be within its own country fighting.* These considerations lead us to believe that even in countries where the cities are predominant, the central political focus of the struggle can develop in the countryside.

Returning to the example of relying on help from the military class in effecting the coup and supplying the weapons, there are two problems to analyze: First, supposing it was an organized nucleus and capable of independent decisions, if the military really joins with the popular forces to

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strike the blow, there would in such a case be a coup by one part of the army against another, probably leaving the structure of the military caste intact. The other problem, in which armies unite rapidly and spontaneously with popular forces, can occur only after the armies have been violently beaten by a powerful and persistent enemy, that is, in conditions of catastrophe for the constituted power. With an army defeated and its morale broken, this phenomenon can occur. For that, struggle is necessary; we always return to the question of how to carry on that struggle. The answer leads us toward developing guerrilla struggle in the countryside, on favorable ground and supported by struggle in the cities, always counting on the widest possible participation of the working masses and guided by the ideology of that class.

We have sufficiently analyzed the obstacles revolutionary movements in Latin America will encounter. It can now be asked whether or not there are favorable conditions for the preliminary stage, like, for example, those encountered by Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra. We believe that here, too, general conditions can facilitate these centers of rebellion and specific conditions in certain countries exist which are even more favorable. Two subjective factors are the most important consequences of the Cuban Revolution: the first is the possibility of victory, knowing that the capability exists to crown an enterprise like that of the group of idealistic *Granma* expeditionaries who successfully struggled for two years in the Sierra Maestra. This immediately indicates there can be a revolutionary movement operating from the countryside, mixing with the peasant masses, that will grow from weakness to strength, that will destroy the army in a frontal fight, that will capture cities from the countryside, that will strengthen through its struggle the subjective conditions necessary for seizing power. The importance of this fact is demonstrated in the huge number of "exceptionalists" who have recently appeared. "Exceptionalists" are those special beings who say they find in the Cuban Revolution a unique event which cannot be followed — led by someone who has few or no faults, who led the revolution through a unique path. We affirm this is completely false. Victory by the popular forces in Latin America is clearly possible in the form of guerrilla warfare undertaken by a peasant army in alliance with the workers, defeating the oppressor army in a frontal assault, taking cities by attack from the countryside, and dissolving the oppressor army — as the first stage in completely destroying the superstructure of the colonial world.

We should point out a second subjective factor: The masses not only know the possibility of triumph, they know their destiny. They know with increasing certainty that whatever the tribulations of history during short periods, the future belongs to the people; the future will bring about social justice. This knowledge will help raise revolutionary ferment to even greater heights than those prevailing in Latin America today.

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Some less general factors do not appear with the same intensity from country to country. One very important one is the greater exploitation of the peasants in Latin America than there was in Cuba. Let us remind those who pretend to see the proletarianization of the peasantry in our insurrectionary stage, that we believe it was precisely this which accelerated the emergence of cooperatives as well as the achievement of power and the agrarian reform. This is in spite of the fact that the peasant of the first battles, the core of the Rebel Army, is the same one to be found today in the Sierra Maestra, proud owner of their parcel of land and intransigently individualistic.

There are, of course, characteristics specific to the Latin American countries: an Argentine peasant does not have the same outlook as a communal peasant in Peru, Bolivia or Ecuador. But hunger for land is permanently present in the peasants, and they generally hold the key to the Americas. In some countries they are even more exploited than they were in Cuba, increasing the possibility that this class will rise up in arms. Another fact is Batista's army, which with all its enormous defects, was structured in such a way that everyone, from the lowest soldier to the highest general, was an accomplice in the exploitation of the people. They were complete mercenaries, and this gave the repressive apparatus some cohesiveness. The armies of Latin America generally include a professional officers' corps and recruits who are called up periodically. Each year, young recruits leave their homes where they have known the daily sufferings of their parents, have seen them with their own eyes, where they have felt poverty and social injustice. If one day they are sent as cannon fodder to fight against the defenders of a doctrine they feel in their own hearts is just, their capacity to fight aggressively will be seriously affected. Adequate propaganda will enable the recruits to see the justice of and the reasons for the struggle, and magnificent results will be achieved.

After this brief study of the revolutionary struggle we can say that the Cuban Revolution had exceptional factors giving it its own peculiarities as well as factors which are common to all the countries of the Americas and which express the internal need for revolution. New conditions will make the flow of these revolutionary movements easier as they give the masses consciousness of their destiny and the certainty that it is possible. On the other hand, there are now obstacles making it harder for the armed masses to achieve power rapidly, such as imperialism's close alliance with the bourgeoisie, enabling them to fight to the utmost against the popular forces. Dark days await Latin America. The latest declarations of those that rule the United States seem to indicate that dark days await the world: Lumumba, savagely assassinated, in the greatness of his martyrdom showed the tragic mistakes that cannot be committed. Once the antiimperialist struggle begins, we must constantly strike hard, where it hurts

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the most, never retreating, always marching forward, counterstriking against each aggression, always responding to each aggression with even stronger action by the masses. This is the way to victory. We will analyze on another occasion whether the Cuban Revolution, having taken power, followed these new revolutionary paths with its own exceptional characteristics or if, as in this analysis, while respecting the existence of certain special characteristics, it fundamentally followed a logic derived from laws intrinsic to the social process.

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Against bureaucratism

(February 1963)

Our revolution was essentially the product of a guerrilla movement that initiated the armed struggle against the dictatorship and brought it to fruition in the seizure of power. The first steps of the revolutionary state, like the whole of the primitive epoch of our management of the government, were strongly tinged by fundamental elements of guerrilla tactics as a form of state administration. "Guerrillism" translated the experience of the armed struggle in the Cuban mountains and countryside into the work of the different administrative and mass organizations, and this meant that only the main revolutionary slogans were followed — and often interpreted in different ways — by bodies in the administration and in society in general. The method of solving concrete problems was chosen at will by each leader.

Because they occupied the whole complex apparatus of society, the fields of action of these "administrative guerrillas" clashed among themselves, producing constant friction, orders and counter-orders, and different interpretations of the laws. This reached the point, in some cases, of state institutions countering laws by issuing their own dictates in the form of decrees, ignoring the central administrative apparatus. After a year of painful experiences we reached the conclusion that we had to totally revamp our style of work and reorganize the state apparatus in a rational manner, utilizing planning techniques known in the fraternal socialist countries. As a countermeasure, the strong bureaucratic apparatus that characterized this first period in the building of our socialist state began to be organized. But the swing went too far, and a whole number of institutions, including the Ministry of Industry, initiated a policy of centralization that put too many restrictions on the initiative of administrators. This idea of centralization can be explained by the shortage of middle-level cadres and the previous anarchic spirit, which required enormous zeal in ensuring that instructions were being carried out. At the same time, the lack of adequate control mechanisms made it difficult to correctly spot administrative errors in time, which were often hidden by the general chaos. In this way, cadres — the most conscious ones as well as the most timid ones — curbed their initiatives in order to adjust them to the sluggish motion of the administrative machinery. Others continued doing as they pleased, without feeling obliged to respect any authority, and this called for new control measures to put a stop to their activity. This is how our revolution began to suffer from the evil called bureaucratism.

Bureaucratism, obviously, is not the offspring of socialist society, nor is it a necessary component of it. The state bureaucracy existed in the period of bourgeois governments with its retinue of hangers-on and lackeys, as a

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great number of opportunists – who made up the “court” of the politicians in power – flourished in the shade of the government budget. In a capitalist society, where the entire state apparatus is at the service of the bourgeoisie, the state bureaucracy’s importance as a leading body is very small. The main thing is that it be permeable enough to allow opportunists to pass through, yet impenetrable enough to keep the people trapped in its nets. Given the weight of the “original sins” in the old administrative apparatus and the situations created after the triumph of the revolution, the evil of bureaucratism began to develop strongly. If we were to search for its roots today, we would have to add new motives to the old causes, coming up with three fundamental reasons.

One is the lack of inner motivation. By this we mean the individual’s lack of interest in rendering a service to the state and in overcoming a given situation. It is based on a lack of revolutionary consciousness or, at any rate, on acquiescence in things that are wrong.

We can establish a direct and obvious relationship between the lack of inner motivation and the lack of interest in resolving problems. In this case, whether the weakness in ideological motivation is due to an absolute lack of conviction or to a certain dose of desperation in the face of repeated insoluble problems, the individual or group of individuals take refuge in bureaucratism, filling out papers, shirking their responsibility, and establishing a written defense in order to continue vegetating or to protect themselves from the irresponsibility of others.

Another cause is the lack of organization. Attempting to destroy “guerrillaism” without sufficient administrative experience has produced dislocations and bottlenecks that unnecessarily curb the flow of information from below, as well as the instructions or orders emanating from the central apparatus. Sometimes, the former or the latter take the wrong course; other times, they are translated into poorly formulated, absurd instructions that contribute even more to the distortion.

The lack of organization is fundamentally characterized by the weakness of the methods used to deal with a given situation. We can see examples in the ministries, when attempts are made to solve problems at an inappropriate level or when problems are dealt with through the wrong channels and get lost in the labyrinth of paperwork. Bureaucratism is like a ball and chain weighing down the type of official who is trying as best he can to solve his problem but keeps crashing time and again into the established way of doing things, without finding a solution. It’s common to observe how the only way out for many officials is to ask for more personnel to do a task, when an easy solution requires only a little logic. This in turn creates new reasons for unnecessary paperwork.

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As a healthy self-criticism, we must never forget that the revolution's economic management is responsible for the majority of bureaucratic ills. The state apparatus was not developed by means of a single plan and with well-worked out relationships; this left a wide margin for conjecture about administrative methods. The central economic apparatus, the Central Planning Board, did not fulfill its task of leadership and could not do so because it lacked sufficient authority over the other bodies. It was unable to issue precise orders based on a single system and with adequate supervision, and it lacked the requisite assistance of an overall plan. In the absence of good organization, excessive centralization curbed spontaneous action without replacing it in time with correct methods. An accumulation of minor decisions obstructed our view of the big problems, and finding solutions for all of them came to a standstill without rhyme or reason. Lastminute decisions, made hastily and without analysis, became characteristic of our work.

The third cause, a very important one, is the lack of sufficiently developed technical knowledge to be able to make correct decisions on short notice. Not being able to do this meant we had to gather many experiences of little value and try to draw some conclusion from them. Discussions became endless and no-one had sufficient authority to settle things. After one, two, or more meetings, the problem remained until it resolved itself or until a decision had to be made willy-nilly, no matter how bad it might be. The almost total lack of knowledge, which as I mentioned earlier was made up for by a long series of meetings, led to "meetingitis" – basically a lack of perspective for solving problems. In these cases bureaucratism – the brake that endless paper shuffling and indecision place on society's development – becomes the fate of the bodies affected. These three fundamental causes, one by one or acting together in various combinations, affect the country's entire institutional life to a greater or lesser degree. The time has come to break away from these malignant influences. Concrete measures must be taken to streamline the state apparatus, in such a way as to establish the strict central control that enables the leadership to have in its hands the keys to the economy while also releasing initiative as much as possible, thus developing on a logical basis the relationships among the productive forces.

If we know the causes and effects of bureaucratism, we can analyze accurately the possibilities of correcting the malady. Of all the fundamental causes, we can consider the need for organization to be our central problem, and we can tackle it with all the necessary rigor. To do so we must modify our style of work. We must prioritize problems, assigning each body and each decision-making level its particular task. We must establish the concrete relationships between each one of them and all the others, from the center of economic decision making to the last administrative unit, as well as the

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relationships among their different components – horizontally – until we establish all the interrelationships within the economy. This is the task most within our reach at the present time, and it will afford us an additional advantage: redirecting to other areas of work a large number of employees who are not needed, who are not working, who carry out minimal duties, or who duplicate the work of others with no results whatsoever. Simultaneously, we must develop our political work with dogged determination to rid ourselves of the lack of internal motivation, that is, the lack of political clarity, which translates into things not getting done. This can be done, first, through continuous education, through concrete explanations of the tasks, through instilling in administrative employees an interest in their work, and through the example set by the vanguard workers. And, second, by taking drastic measures to eliminate the parasites, whether it be those who conceal in their stance a deep enmity to socialist society, or those who are irremediably opposed to work.

Finally, we must correct the inferiority that comes from our lack of knowledge. We have begun the gigantic task of transforming society from top to bottom in the midst of imperialist aggression, of an increasingly tighter blockade, of a complete change in our technology, of drastic shortages of raw materials and foodstuffs, and of a massive exodus of the few qualified technicians we have. In these conditions, we must set ourselves the task of working seriously and persistently with the masses to fill the vacancies left by the traitors and to meet our need for a skilled work force resulting from the rapid rate of our development. That is why training is a top priority of all the revolutionary government's plans.

The training of active workers begins in the workplace at the most basic educational level: the elimination of any remaining illiteracy in the most remote areas; continuing education courses and, later, workers' improvement courses for those who have reached the third grade; courses in basic technical skills for the better educated workers; extension courses to turn skilled workers into assistant engineers; university courses for all types of professionals and also for administrators.

The revolutionary government intends to turn our country into one big school where study and success in one's studies become a basic factor for bettering the individual, both economically and in his moral standing in society, to the extent of his abilities.

If we manage to unravel the massive amount of red tape, the intricate relationships among institutions and among departments, the duplication of functions and frequent "potholes" into which our institutions fall, we will find the roots of the problem. We will develop organizational norms,

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elementary at first and later more complex. We will wage a head-on battle against those who are confused, indifferent, or lazy. We will educate and reeducate that mass of people, incorporate them into the revolution and eliminate what should be thrown out. At the same time we will tirelessly continue the great task of education at all levels, whatever obstacles we may face. If we do all this, we will be in a position to do away in a short time with bureaucratism.

The experience of the last mobilization [during the October 1962 Missile Crisis] motivated us in the Ministry of Industry to discuss and analyze what happened: in the middle of the mobilization, when the entire country steeled itself to resist the enemy attack, industrial production did not drop, absenteeism disappeared and problems were solved with surprising speed. Upon analyzing this, we concluded that a number of factors came together that destroyed the basic causes of bureaucratism. There was a great patriotic and national impulse to resist imperialism, and this sentiment was shared by the immense majority of the Cuban people. Each worker, at his own level, became a soldier of the economy, ready to solve any problem. In this way the stimulus of foreign aggression became an ideological driving force. Organizational norms were boiled down strictly to pointing out what could not be done and the fundamental problem that needed to be solved: to maintain production at all costs, to maintain certain production with even greater emphasis, and to free the enterprises, factories and institutions from all functions that, although necessary in normal social periods, are not essential.

Each individual had a special responsibility, which forced him to make rapid decisions. We were faced with a situation of national emergency, and decisions had to be made whether they were correct or not; we had to make them, and quickly. This was done in many cases. We have yet to draw a balance sheet of the mobilization and, obviously, it will not be a positive balance sheet in financial terms. But it was positive in terms of ideological mobilization, in the deepening of the masses' consciousness. What lesson do we draw? That we must make our workers, toilers, peasants and office workers realize that the danger of imperialist aggression still hangs over our heads, that there is no peace, and that our duty is to continue to strengthen the revolution day by day, which is also the best guarantee an invasion will not occur. The costlier it is for the imperialists to take this island, the stronger our defenses and the higher our people's awareness, the more they will think twice. But at the same time, the economic development of the country eases our situation and brings greater material well-being. The ideological task is to make permanent the great example of the mobilization in response to imperialist aggression. We must analyze each official's responsibilities and define them as

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strictly as possible within limits that must not be overstepped on penalty of severe sanctions. On that basis we can grant officials the broadest possible authority. At the same time we must examine what is fundamental and what is incidental in the work of the different units of the state institutions and limit all that is incidental in order to emphasize the fundamental, thereby permitting quicker action. We must demand action from our officials, establishing deadlines for carrying out instructions from the central bodies, correctly supervising them and making them reach decisions in a reasonable amount of time.

If we succeed in all this work, bureaucratism will disappear. This is not a task for a single economic body or even all the economic bodies in the country. It is the task of the entire nation, which is to say, of the leading bodies, fundamentally the United Party of the Revolution and the mass organizations. We must all work to implement the following pressing slogans of the day:

War on bureaucratism. Streamline the state apparatus. Production without restraints, and responsibility for production.

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Socialism and man in Cuba

(1965)

This article was written in the form of a letter to Carlos Quijano, editor of Marcha, a weekly published in Montevideo, Uruguay. Guevara wrote it while on a three-month overseas trip, during which he addressed the United Nations General Assembly and then visited a number of countries in Africa. Subheads have been added.

Dear *compañero*,²⁹

Though belatedly, I am completing these notes in the course of my trip through Africa,³⁰ hoping in this way to keep my promise. I would like to do so by dealing with the theme set forth in the title above. I think it may be of interest to Uruguayan readers.

A common argument from the mouths of capitalist spokespeople, in the ideological struggle against socialism, is that socialism, or the period of building socialism into which we have entered, is characterized by the abolition of the individual for the sake of the state. I will not try to refute this argument solely on theoretical grounds but rather to establish the facts as they exist in Cuba and then add comments of a general nature. Let me begin by broadly sketching the history of our revolutionary struggle before and after the taking of power.

As is well known, the exact date of the beginning of the revolutionary struggle — which would culminate in January 1959 — was July 26, 1953. A group led by Fidel Castro attacked the Moncada barracks in Oriente Province on the morning of that day. The attack was a failure; the failure became a disaster; and the survivors ended up in prison, beginning the revolutionary struggle again after they were freed by an amnesty. In this process, in which there was only the germ of socialism, the individual was a fundamental factor. We put our trust in him — individual, specific, with a first and last name — and the triumph or failure of the mission entrusted to him depended on that individual's capacity for action. Then came the stage of guerrilla struggle. It developed in two distinct environments: the people, the still sleeping mass that had to be mobilized; and its vanguard, the guerrillas, the motor force of the mobilization, the generator of revolutionary consciousness and militant enthusiasm. This vanguard was the catalyzing agent that created the subjective conditions necessary for victory.

Here again, in the framework of the proletarianization of our thinking, of this revolution that took place in our habits and our minds, the individual was the basic factor. Every one of the combatants of the Sierra Maestra who reached an upper rank in the revolutionary forces has a record of outstanding deeds to his or her credit. They attained their rank on this basis.

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First heroic stage

This was the first heroic period, and in which combatants competed for the heaviest responsibilities, for the greatest dangers, with no other satisfaction than fulfilling a duty. In our work of revolutionary education we frequently return to this instructive theme. In the attitude of our fighters could be glimpsed the man and woman of the future.³¹

On other occasions in our history the act of total dedication to the revolutionary cause was repeated. During the October [1962 missile] crisis and in the days of Hurricane Flora [in October 1963] we saw exceptional deeds of valor and sacrifice performed by an entire people.³² Finding the method to perpetuate this heroic attitude in daily life is, from the ideological standpoint, one of our fundamental tasks.

In January 1959, the revolutionary government was established with the participation of various members of the treacherous bourgeoisie. The presence of the Rebel Army was the basic element constituting the guarantee of power.

Serious contradictions developed right away. In the first instance, in February 1959, these were resolved when Fidel Castro assumed leadership of the government, taking the post of prime minister. This process culminated in July of the same year with the resignation under mass pressure of President Urrutia.³³

In the history of the Cuban Revolution there now appeared a character, well defined in its features, which would systematically reappear: the mass. This multifaceted being is not, as is claimed, the sum of elements of the same type (reduced, moreover, to that same type by the ruling system), which acts like a flock of sheep. It is true that it follows its leaders, basically Fidel Castro, without hesitation. But the degree to which he won this trust results precisely from having interpreted the full meaning of the people's desires and aspirations, and from the sincere struggle to fulfill the promises he made.

Participation of the masses

The mass participated in the agrarian reform and in the difficult task of administering state enterprises;³⁴ it went through the heroic experience of the Bay of Pigs;³⁵ it was hardened in the battles against various groups of bandits armed by the CIA; it lived through one of the most important decisions of modern times during the October [missile] crisis; and today it continues to work for the building of socialism.

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Viewed superficially, it might appear that those who speak of the subordination of the individual to the state are right. The mass carries out with matchless enthusiasm and discipline the tasks set by the government, whether in the field of the economy, culture, defense, sports, etc. The initiative generally comes from Fidel, or from the revolutionary leadership, and is explained to the people, who make it their own. In some cases the party and government take a local experience and generalize it, following the same procedure.

Nevertheless, the state sometimes makes mistakes. When one of these mistakes occurs, one notes a decline in collective enthusiasm due to the effect of a quantitative diminution in each of the elements that make up the mass. Work is paralyzed until it is reduced to an insignificant level. It is time to make a correction. That is what happened in March 1962, as a result of the sectarian policy imposed on the party by Aníbal Escalante.³⁶ Clearly this mechanism is not enough to ensure a succession of sensible measures. A more structured connection with the mass is needed, and we must improve it in the course of the coming years. But as far as initiatives originating in the upper strata of the government are concerned, we are currently utilizing the almost intuitive method of sounding out general reactions to the great problems we confront.

In this Fidel is a master. His own special way of fusing himself with the people can be appreciated only by seeing him in action. At the great public mass meetings one can observe something like the dialogue of two tuning forks whose vibrations interact, producing new sounds. Fidel and the mass begin to vibrate together in a dialogue of growing intensity until they reach the climax in an abrupt conclusion crowned by our cry of struggle and victory. The difficult thing to understand for someone not living through the experience of the revolution is this close dialectical unity between the individual and the mass, in which both are interrelated and, at the same time, in which the mass, as an aggregate of individuals, interacts with its leaders.

Some phenomena of this kind can be seen under capitalism, when politicians appear capable of mobilizing popular opinion. But when these are not genuine social movements — if they were, it would not be entirely correct to call them capitalist — they live only so long as the individual who inspires them, or until the harshness of capitalist society puts an end to the people's illusions.

Invisible laws of capitalism

In capitalist society individuals are controlled by a pitiless law usually beyond their comprehension. The alienated human specimen is tied to

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society as a whole by an invisible umbilical cord: the law of value.³⁷ This law acts upon all aspects of one's life, shaping its course and destiny. The laws of capitalism, which are blind and are invisible to ordinary people, act upon the individual without he or she being aware of it. One sees only the vastness of a seemingly infinite horizon ahead. That is how it is painted by capitalist propagandists who purport to draw a lesson from the example of Rockefeller³⁸ — whether or not it is true — about the possibilities of individual success. The amount of poverty and suffering required for a Rockefeller to emerge, and the amount of depravity entailed in the accumulation of a fortune of such magnitude, are left out of the picture, and it is not always possible for the popular forces to expose this clearly. (A discussion of how the workers in the imperialist countries gradually lose the spirit of working-class internationalism due to a certain degree of complicity in the exploitation of the dependent countries, and how this at the same time weakens the combativity of the masses in the imperialist countries, would be appropriate here, but that is a theme that goes beyond the scope of these notes.)

In any case, the road to success is portrayed as beset with perils — perils that, it would seem, an individual with the proper qualities can overcome to attain the goal. The reward is seen in the distance; the way is lonely. Furthermore, it is a contest among wolves. One can win only at the cost of the failure of others.

The individual and socialism

I would now like to try to define the individual, the actor in this strange and moving drama of the building of socialism, in a dual existence as a unique being and as a member of society.

I think the place to start is to recognize the individual's quality of incompleteness, of being an unfinished product. The vestiges of the past are brought into the present in one's consciousness, and a continual labor is necessary to eradicate them.³⁹ The process is two-sided. On the one hand, society acts through direct and indirect education; on the other, the individual submits to a conscious process of self-education.

The new society in formation has to compete fiercely with the past. This past makes itself felt not only in one's consciousness — in which the residue of an education systematically oriented toward isolating the individual still weighs heavily — but also through the very character of this transition period in which commodity relations still persist. The commodity is the economic cell of capitalist society. So long as it exists its effects will make themselves felt in the organization of production and, consequently, in consciousness.

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Marx outlined the transition period as resulting from the explosive transformation of the capitalist system destroyed by its own contradictions. In historical reality, however, we have seen that some countries that were weak limbs on the tree of imperialism were torn off first — a phenomenon foreseen by Lenin.

In these countries, capitalism had developed sufficiently to make its effects felt by the people in one way or another. But it was not capitalism's internal contradictions that, having exhausted all possibilities, caused the system to explode. The struggle for liberation from a foreign oppressor; the misery caused by external events such as war, whose consequences privileged classes place on the backs of the exploited; liberation movements aimed at overthrowing neo-colonial regimes — these are the usual factors in unleashing this kind of explosion. Conscious action does the rest. A complete education for social labor has not yet taken place in these countries, and wealth is far from being within the reach of the masses through the simple process of appropriation. Underdevelopment, on the one hand, and the usual flight of capital, on the other, make a rapid transition without sacrifices impossible.⁴⁰ There remains a long way to go in constructing the economic base, and the temptation is very great to follow the beaten track of material interest as the lever with which to accelerate development.

There is the danger that the forest will not be seen for the trees. The pipe dream that socialism can be achieved with the help of the dull instruments left to us by capitalism (the commodity as the economic cell, profitability, individual material interest as a lever, etc.) can lead into a blind alley. When you wind up there after having traveled a long distance with many crossroads, it is hard to figure out just where you took the wrong turn. Meanwhile, the economic foundation that has been laid has done its work of undermining the development of consciousness. To build communism it is necessary, simultaneous with the new material foundations, to build the new man and woman.

New consciousness

That is why it is very important to choose the right instrument for mobilizing the masses. Basically, this instrument must be moral in character, without neglecting, however, a correct use of the material incentive — especially of a social character.⁴¹

As I have already said, in moments of great peril it is easy to muster a powerful response with moral incentives. Retaining their effectiveness, however, requires the development of a consciousness in which there is a new scale of values. Society as a whole must be converted into a gigantic school.

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In rough outline this phenomenon is similar to the process by which capitalist consciousness was formed in its initial period. Capitalism uses force, but it also educates people in the system. Direct propaganda is carried out by those entrusted with explaining the inevitability of class society, either through some theory of divine origin or a mechanical theory of natural law. This lulls the masses, since they see themselves as being oppressed by an evil against which it is impossible to struggle.

Next comes hope of improvement — and in this, capitalism differed from the earlier caste systems, which offered no way out. For some people, the principle of the caste system will remain in effect: The reward for the obedient is to be transported after death to some fabulous other world where, according to the old beliefs, good people are rewarded. For other people there is this innovation: class divisions are determined by fate, but individuals can rise out of their class through work, initiative, etc. This process, and the myth of the self-made man, has to be profoundly hypocritical: it is the self-serving demonstration that a lie is the truth.

In our case, direct education acquires a much greater importance.⁴² The explanation is convincing because it is true; no subterfuge is needed. It is carried on by the state's educational apparatus as a function of general, technical and ideological education through such agencies as the Ministry of Education and the party's informational apparatus. Education takes hold among the masses and the foreseen new attitude tends to become a habit. The masses continue to make it their own and to influence those who have not yet educated themselves. This is the indirect form of educating the masses, as powerful as the other, structured, one.

Conscious process of self-education

But the process is a conscious one. Individuals continually feel the impact of the new social power and perceive that they do not entirely measure up to its standards. Under the pressure of indirect education, they try to adjust themselves to a situation that they feel is right and that their own lack of development had prevented them from reaching previously. They educate themselves.

In this period of the building of socialism we can see the new man and woman being born. The image is not yet completely finished — it never will be, since the process goes forward hand in hand with the development of new economic forms.

Aside from those whose lack of education makes them take the solitary road toward satisfying their own personal ambitions, there are those —

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even within this new panorama of a unified march forward – who have a tendency to walk separately from the masses accompanying them. What is important, however, is that each day individuals are acquiring ever more consciousness of the need for their incorporation into society and, at the same time, of their importance as the motor of that society.

They no longer travel completely alone over lost roads toward distant aspirations. They follow their vanguard, consisting of the party, the advanced workers, the advanced individuals who walk in unity with the masses and in close communion with them.⁴³ The vanguard has its eyes fixed on the future and its reward, but this is not a vision of reward for the individual. The prize is the new society in which individuals will have different characteristics: the society of communist human beings.

The road is long and full of difficulties. At times we lose our way and must turn back. At other times we go too fast and separate ourselves from the masses. Sometimes we go too slow and feel the hot breath of those treading at our heels. In our zeal as revolutionaries we try to move ahead as fast as possible, clearing the way. But we know we must draw our nourishment from the mass and that it can advance more rapidly only if we inspire it by our example.

Despite the importance given to moral incentives, the fact that there remains a division into two main groups (excluding, of course, the minority that for one reason or another does not participate in the building of socialism) indicates the relative lack of development of social consciousness. The vanguard group is ideologically more advanced than the mass; the latter understands the new values, but not sufficiently. While among the former there has been a qualitative change that enables them to make sacrifices in their capacity as an advance guard, the latter see only part of the picture and must be subject to incentives and pressures of a certain intensity. This is the dictatorship of the proletariat operating not only on the defeated class but also on individuals of the victorious class.

All of this means that for total success a series of mechanisms, of revolutionary institutions, is needed.⁴⁴ Along with the image of the multitudes marching toward the future comes the concept of institutionalization as a harmonious set of channels, steps, restraints and well-oiled mechanisms which facilitate the advance, which facilitate the natural selection of those destined to march in the vanguard, and which bestow rewards on those who fulfill their duties and punishments on those who commit a crime against the society that is being built.

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Institutionalization of the revolution

This institutionalization of the revolution has not yet been achieved. We are looking for something new that will permit a complete identification between the government and the community in its entirety, something appropriate to the special conditions of the building of socialism, while avoiding at all costs transplanting the commonplaces of bourgeois democracy – such as legislative chambers, for example – into the society in formation.

Some experiments aimed at the gradual institutionalization of the revolution have been made, but without undue haste. The greatest brake has been our fear lest any appearance of formality might separate us from the masses and from the individual, which might make us lose sight of the ultimate and most important revolutionary aspiration: to see human beings liberated from their alienation.

Despite the lack of institutions, which must be overcome gradually, the masses are now making history as a conscious collective of individuals fighting for the same cause. The individual under socialism, despite apparent standardization, is more complete. Despite the lack of a perfect mechanism for it, the opportunities for self expression and making oneself felt in the social organism are infinitely greater.

It is still necessary to deepen conscious participation, individual and collective, in all the structures of management and production, and to link this to the idea of the need for technical and ideological education, so that the individual will realize that these processes are closely interdependent and their advancement is parallel. In this way the individual will reach total consciousness as a social being, which is equivalent to the full realization as a human creature, once the chains of alienation are broken. This will be translated concretely into the reconquering of one's true nature through liberated labor, and the expression of one's own human condition through culture and art.

New status of work

In order to develop a new culture, work must acquire a new status.⁴⁵ Human beings-as-commodities cease to exist, and a system is installed that establishes a quota for the fulfillment of one's social duty. The means of production belong to society, and the machine is merely the trench where duty is performed. A person begins to become free from thinking of the annoying fact that one needs to work to satisfy one's animal needs. Individuals start to see

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themselves reflected in their work and to understand their full stature as human beings through the object created, through the work accomplished. Work no longer entails surrendering a part of one's being in the form of labor power sold, which no longer belongs to the individual, but becomes an expression of oneself, a contribution to the common life in which one is reflected, the fulfillment of one's social duty.

We are doing everything possible to give work this new status as a social duty and to link it on the one hand with the development of technology, which will create the conditions for greater freedom, and on the other hand with voluntary work based on the Marxist appreciation that one truly reaches a full human condition when no longer compelled to produce by the physical necessity to sell oneself as a commodity. Of course, there are still coercive aspects to work, even when it is voluntary. We have not transformed all the coercion that surrounds us into conditioned reflexes of a social character and, in many cases, is still produced under the pressures of one's environment. (Fidel calls this moral compulsion.) There is still a need to undergo a complete spiritual rebirth in one's attitude toward one's own work, freed from the direct pressure of the social environment, though linked to it by new habits. That will be communism. The change in consciousness does not take place automatically, just as change in the economy does not take place automatically. The alterations are slow and not rhythmic; there are periods of acceleration, periods that are slower, and even retrogressions.

Furthermore, we must take into account, as I pointed out before, that we are not dealing with a period of pure transition, as Marx envisaged in his *Critique of the Gotha Program*, but rather with a new phase unforeseen by him: an initial period of the transition to communism, or of the construction of socialism. This transition is taking place in the midst of violent class struggles, and with elements of capitalism within it that obscure a complete understanding of its essence.⁴⁶

If we add to this the scholasticism that has held back the development of Marxist philosophy and impeded a systematic treatment of the transition period, whose political economy has not yet been developed, we must agree that we are still in diapers and that it is necessary to devote ourselves to investigating all the principal characteristics of this period before elaborating an economic and political theory of greater scope.

The resulting theory will, no doubt, put great stress on the two pillars of the construction of socialism: the education of the new man and woman and the development of technology. Much remains to be done in regard to both, but delay is least excusable in regard to the concept of technology as a basic foundation, since this is not a question of going forward blindly but

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of following a long stretch of road already opened up by the world's more advanced countries. This is why Fidel pounds away with such insistence on the need for the technological and scientific training of our people and especially of its vanguard.

Individualism

In the field of ideas that do not lead to activities involving production, it is easier to see the division between material and spiritual necessity. For a long time individuals have been trying to free themselves from alienation through culture and art. While a person dies every day during the eight or more hours in which he or she functions as a commodity, individuals come to life afterward in their spiritual creations. But this remedy bears the germs of the same sickness: that of a solitary being seeking harmony with the world. One defends one's individuality, which is oppressed by the environment, and reacts to aesthetic ideas as a unique being whose aspiration is to remain immaculate. It is nothing more than an attempt to escape. The law of value is no longer simply a reflection of the relations of production; the monopoly capitalists — even while employing purely empirical methods — surround that law with a complicated scaffolding that turns it into a docile servant. The superstructure imposes a kind of art in which the artist must be educated. Rebels are subdued by the machine, and only exceptional talents may create their own work. The rest become shamefaced hirelings or are crushed.

A school of artistic experimentation is invented, which is said to be the definition of freedom; but this "experimentation" has its limits, imperceptible until there is a clash, that is, until the real problems of individual alienation arise. Meaningless anguish or vulgar amusement thus become convenient safety valves for human anxiety. The idea of using art as a weapon of protest is combated.

Those who play by the rules of the game are showered with honors — such honors as a monkey might get for performing pirouettes. The condition is that one does not try to escape from the invisible cage.

New impulse for artistic experimentation

When the revolution took power there was an exodus of those who had been completely housebroken. The rest — whether they were revolutionaries or not — saw a new road. Artistic inquiry experienced a new impulse. The paths, however, had already been more or less laid out, and the escapist concept hid itself behind the word "freedom." This attitude was often found even among the revolutionaries themselves, a reflection in their consciousness of bourgeois idealism.

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In countries that have gone through a similar process, attempts have been made to combat such tendencies with an exaggerated dogmatism. General culture became virtually taboo, and the acme of cultural aspiration was declared to be the formally exact representation of nature. This was later transformed into a mechanical representation of the social reality they wanted to show: the ideal society, almost without conflicts or contradictions, that they sought to create.

Socialism is young and has its mistakes. We revolutionaries often lack the knowledge and intellectual audacity needed to meet the task of developing the new man and woman with methods different from the conventional ones; conventional methods suffer from the influences of the society that created them. (Once again the theme of the relationship between form and content is posed.) Disorientation is widespread, and the problems of material construction absorb us. There are no artists of great authority who also have great revolutionary authority. The members of the party must take this task in hand and seek the achievement of the main goal: to educate the people.

What is sought then is simplification, something everyone can understand, something functionaries understand. True artistic experimentation ends, and the problem of general culture is reduced to assimilating the socialist present and the dead (therefore, not dangerous) past. Thus socialist realism arises upon the foundations of the art of the last century.⁴⁷ The realistic art of the 19th century, however, also has a class character, more purely capitalist perhaps than the decadent art of the 20th century that reveals the anguish of the alienated individual. In the field of culture, capitalism has given all that it had to give, and nothing remains but the stench of a corpse, today's decadence in art.

But why try to find the only valid prescription in the frozen forms of socialist realism? We cannot counterpose "freedom" to socialist realism, because the former does not yet exist and will not exist until the complete development of the new society. We must not, from the pontifical throne of realism-at-all-costs, condemn all art forms since the first half of the 19th century, for we would then fall into the Proudhonian mistake of going back to the past, of putting a strait-jacket on the artistic expression of the people who are being born and are in the process of making themselves. What is needed is the development of an ideological-cultural mechanism that permits both free inquiry and the uprooting of the weeds that multiply so easily in the fertilized soil of state subsidies.

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In our country the error of mechanical realism has not appeared, but rather its opposite. This is because the need for the creation of a new individual has not been understood, a new human being who would represent neither the ideas of the 19th century nor those of our own decadent and morbid century.

What we must create is the human being of the 21st century, although this is still a subjective aspiration, not yet systematized. This is precisely one of the fundamental objectives of our study and our work. To the extent that we achieve concrete success on a theoretical plane — or, vice versa, to the extent that we draw theoretical conclusions of a broad character on the basis of our concrete research — we will have made a valuable contribution to Marxism-Leninism, to the cause of humanity.

By reacting against the human being of the 19th century we have relapsed into the decadence of the 20th century. It is not a very grave error, but we must overcome it lest we leave open the door for revisionism. The great multitudes continue to develop. The new ideas are gaining a good momentum within society. The material possibilities for the integrated development of absolutely all members of society make the task much more fruitful. The present is a time of struggle; the future is ours.

New revolutionary generation

To sum up, the fault of many of our artists and intellectuals lies in their original sin: they are not true revolutionaries. We can try to graft the elm tree so that it will bear pears, but at the same time we must plant pear trees. New generations will come that will be free of original sin. The probability that great artists will appear will be greater to the degree that the field of culture and the possibilities for expression are broadened.

Our task is to prevent the current generation, torn asunder by its conflicts, from becoming perverted and from perverting new generations. We must not create either docile servants of official thought, or “scholarship students” who live at the expense of the state — practicing freedom in quotation marks. Revolutionaries will come who will sing the song of the new man and woman in the true voice of the people. This is a process that takes time. In our society the youth and the party play a big part.⁴⁸ The former is especially important because it is the malleable clay from which the new person can be built with none of the old defects. The youth are treated in accordance with our aspirations. Their education is every day more complete, and we do not neglect their incorporation into work from the outset. Our scholarship students do physical work during their vacations or along

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with their studies. Work is a reward in some cases, a means of education in others, but it is never a punishment. A new generation is being born. The party is a vanguard organization. It is made up of the best workers, who are proposed for membership by their fellow workers. It is a minority, but it has great authority because of the quality of its cadres. Our aspiration is for the party to become a mass party, but only when the masses have reached the level of the vanguard, that is, when they are educated for communism. Our work constantly strives toward this education. The party is the living example; its cadres must teach hard work and sacrifice. By their action, they must lead the masses to the completion of the revolutionary task, which involves years of hard struggle against the difficulties of construction, class enemies, the maladies of the past, imperialism.

Role of the individual

Now, I would like to explain the role played by the personality, by men and women as individuals leading the masses that make history. This is our experience; it is not a prescription.

Fidel gave the revolution its impulse in the first years, and also its leadership.⁴⁹ He always set its tone; but there is a good group of revolutionaries who are developing along the same road as the central leader. And there is a great mass that follows its leaders because it has faith in them. It has faith in those leaders because they have known how to interpret its aspirations.

It is not a matter of how many kilograms of meat one has to eat, or of how many times a year someone can go to the beach, or how many pretty things from abroad you might be able to buy with present-day wages. It is a matter of making the individual feel more complete, with much more inner wealth and much more responsibility.

People in our country know that the glorious period in which they happen to live is one of sacrifice; they are familiar with sacrifice. The first ones came to know it in the Sierra Maestra and wherever they fought; later, everyone in Cuba came to know it. Cuba is the vanguard of America and must make sacrifices because it occupies the post of advance guard, because it shows the masses of Latin America the road to full freedom. Within the country the leadership has to carry out its vanguard role. It must be said with all sincerity that in a real revolution, to which one gives his or her all and from which one expects no material reward, the task of the vanguard revolutionary is both magnificent and agonizing.

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Love of living humanity

At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality. Perhaps it is one of the great dramas of the leader that he or she must combine a passionate spirit with a cold intelligence and make painful decisions without flinching. Our vanguard revolutionaries must idealize this love of the people, of the most sacred causes, and make it one and indivisible. They cannot descend, with small doses of daily affection, to the level where ordinary people put their love into practice.

The leaders of the revolution have children just beginning to talk, who are not learning to say "daddy"; their wives, too, must be part of the general sacrifice of their lives in order to take the revolution to its destiny. The circle of their friends is limited strictly to the circle of comrades in the revolution. There is no life outside of it.

In these circumstances one must have a large dose of humanity, a large dose of a sense of justice and truth in order to avoid dogmatic extremes, cold scholasticism, or an isolation from the masses. We must strive every day so that this love of living humanity is transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force.

The revolutionary, the ideological motor force of the revolution within the party, is consumed by this uninterrupted activity that comes to an end only with death, unless the construction of socialism is accomplished on a world scale. If one's revolutionary zeal is blunted when the most urgent tasks have been accomplished on a local scale and one forgets about proletarian internationalism, the revolution one leads will cease to be a driving force and sink into a comfortable drowsiness that imperialism, our irreconcilable enemy, will utilize to gain ground. Proletarian internationalism is a duty, but it is also a revolutionary necessity. This is the way we educate our people.

Danger of dogmatism

Of course there are dangers in the present situation, and not only that of dogmatism, not only that of freezing the ties with the masses midway in the great task. There is also the danger of the weaknesses we can fall into. The way is open to infection by the germs of future corruption if a person thinks that dedicating his or her entire life to the revolution means that, in return, one should not be distracted by such worries as that one's child lacks certain things, that one's children's shoes are worn out, that one's family lacks some necessity.

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In our case we have maintained that our children must have, or lack, those things that the children of the ordinary citizen have or lack; our families should understand this and struggle for it to be that way. The revolution is made through human beings, but individuals must forge their revolutionary spirit day by day.

Thus we march on. At the head of the immense column — we are neither ashamed nor afraid to say it — is Fidel. After him come the best cadres of the party, and immediately behind them, so close that we feel its tremendous force, comes the people in its entirety, a solid structure of individual beings moving toward a common goal, men and women who have attained consciousness of what must be done, people who fight to escape from the realm of necessity and to enter that of freedom.

This great throng organizes itself; its organization results from its consciousness of the necessity of this organization. It is no longer a dispersed force, divisible into thousands of fragments thrown into the air like splinters from a hand grenade, trying by any means to achieve some protection from an uncertain future, in desperate struggle with their fellows.

We know that sacrifices lie ahead and that we must pay a price for the heroic fact that we are, as a nation, a vanguard. We, as leaders, know that we must pay a price for the right to say that we are at the head of a people that is at the head of America.⁵⁰ Each and every one of us readily pays his or her quota of sacrifice, conscious of being rewarded with the satisfaction of fulfilling a duty, conscious of advancing with everyone toward the new man and woman glimpsed on the horizon.

Allow me to draw some conclusions:⁵¹

We socialists are freer because we are more fulfilled; we are more fulfilled because we are freer.

The skeleton of our complete freedom is already formed. The flesh and the clothing are lacking; we will create them.

Our freedom and its daily sustenance are paid for in blood and sacrifice. Our sacrifice is a conscious one: an installment paid on the freedom that we are building.

The road is long and, in part, unknown. We recognize our limitations.

We will make the human being of the 21st century — we, ourselves.

We will forge ourselves in daily action, creating a new man and woman with a new technology.

Individuals play a role in mobilizing and leading the masses insofar as they embody the highest virtues and aspirations of the people and do not wander from the path.

Clearing the way is the vanguard group, the best among the good, the party.

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The basic clay of our work is the youth; we place our hope in it and prepare it to take the banner from our hands.
If this inarticulate letter clarifies anything, it has accomplished the objective that motivated it. Accept our ritual greeting – which is like a handshake or an “Ave Maria Puríssima”:

Patria o muerte! [Homeland or death!]

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Speech to the First Latin American Youth Congress

(July 28, 1960)

Compañeros of the Americas and the entire world:

It would take a long time to extend individual greetings on behalf of our country to each of you, and to each of the countries represented here. We nevertheless want to draw attention to some of those who represent countries afflicted by natural catastrophes or catastrophes caused by imperialism.

We would like to extend special greetings to the representative of the Chilean people, Clotario Blest, whose youthful voice you heard a moment ago. His maturity can serve as an example and a guide to our fellow working people from that unfortunate land, which has been devastated by one of the most terrible earthquakes in history.

We would also like to extend special greetings to Jacobo Arbenz, [former] president of the first Latin American nation [Guatemala] to raise its voice fearlessly against colonialism, and to express the cherished desires of its peasant masses, through a deep and courageous agrarian reform. We would like to express our gratitude to him and to the democracy that fell in that country for the example it gave us, and for enabling us to make a correct appreciation of all the weaknesses his government was unable to overcome. In this way, it has been possible for us [here in Cuba] to get at the roots of the matter, and to decapitate with one strike those who held power, as well as the henchmen serving them.

We would also like to greet two of the delegations representing countries that perhaps have suffered the most in the Americas. First of all, Puerto Rico, which today, 150 years after freedom was first proclaimed in the Americas, continues to fight to take the first, and perhaps most difficult step of achieving, at least in formal terms, a free government. I ask Puerto Rico's delegates to convey my greetings, and those of all Cuba, to Pedro Albizu Campos. We would like to convey to him our heart-felt respect, our recognition of the example he has shown with his valor, and our fraternal feelings as free men toward a man who, despite being in the dungeons of so-called U.S. democracy, is still free.

Although it may seem paradoxical, I would also like to greet today the delegation representing the purest of the U.S. people. I would like to salute them because the U.S. people are not to blame for the barbarity and injustice of their rulers, and because they are innocent victims of the rage of all the peoples of the world, who sometimes confuse a social system with a people. All of Cuba, myself included, open our arms to the individuals and the delegations, to show you what is good here and what is bad, what has been achieved and what has yet to be achieved, the road traveled and the road ahead. Because even though all of you come to deliberate at this Latin American Youth Congress on behalf of your respective countries, I am sure

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each of you also comes here full of curiosity to find out exactly what is this phenomenon of the Cuban Revolution, born on a Caribbean island. Many of you, from diverse political tendencies, will ask yourselves, as you did yesterday and as perhaps you will do tomorrow: What is the Cuban Revolution? What is its ideology? Immediately the question will arise, as it always does, among both adherents and adversaries: Is the Cuban Revolution communist? Some say yes, hoping the answer is yes, or that the revolution is heading in that direction. Others, disappointed perhaps, will also think the answer is yes. There will be disappointed people who believe the answer is no, as well as those who hope the answer is no.

I might be asked whether this revolution before you is a communist revolution. After the usual explanations about communism (leaving aside the hackneyed accusations by imperialism and the colonial powers, who confuse everything), I would answer that if this revolution is Marxist – and listen well that I say Marxist – it is because the revolution discovered, by its own methods, the road pointed out by Marx. In saluting the Cuban Revolution recently, Vice Premier [Anastas] Mikoyan, one of the leading figures of the Soviet Union and a lifelong Marxist, said that the revolution was a phenomenon Marx had not foreseen. He noted that life teaches more than the wisest books and the most profound thinkers.

The Cuban Revolution was moving forward, without worrying about labels, without checking what others were saying about it, but constantly scrutinizing what the Cuban people wanted of it. The revolution quickly found that it had achieved, or was on the way to achieving, the happiness of its people; and that it had also become the object of inquisitive looks from friend and foe alike – hopeful looks from an entire continent, and furious looks from the king of monopolies.

This did not come about overnight. Permit me to relate some of my own experience – an experience that could help many people in similar circumstances gain an understanding of how our current revolutionary thinking came about. Even though there is certainly continuity, the Cuban Revolution you see today is not the Cuban Revolution of yesterday, even after the victory. Much less is it the Cuban insurrection prior to our victory, when those 82 youths made the difficult crossing of the Gulf of Mexico [in November–December 1956] in a leaky boat to reach the shores of the Sierra Maestra. Between those young people and the representatives of Cuba today there is a distance that cannot be accurately measured in years, with 24-hour days and 60-minute hours. All the members of the Cuban Government – young in age, young in character, and young in the illusions they held – have nevertheless matured in an extraordinary school of experience; in living contact with the people and with their needs and aspirations.

Our collective hope had been to arrive one day somewhere in Cuba, and after a few shouts, a few heroic actions, a few deaths and a few radio broadcasts, to take power and drive out the dictator Batista. History showed us it

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was far more difficult to overthrow a government backed and partnered by an army of murderers, and backed by the greatest colonial power on earth. Little by little, each of our ideas changed. We, the children of the cities, learned to respect the peasants. We learned to respect their sense of independence, their loyalty; we learned to recognize their age-old yearning for the land that had been snatched from them; and to recognize their experience in the thousand paths across the hills. From us, the peasants learned how valuable someone is when they have a rifle in their hand, and when they are prepared to fire that rifle at another person, regardless of how many rifles that other person has. The peasants taught us their know-how and we taught the peasants our sense of rebellion. From that moment until now, and forever, the peasants of Cuba and the rebel forces of Cuba — today the Cuban revolutionary government — have united as one. The revolution continued to progress, and we drove the troops of the dictatorship from the steep slopes of the Sierra Maestra. We came face-to-face with another reality of Cuba: the workers — both in agricultural and industrial centers. We learned from them too, while we taught them that at the right moment, a well-aimed shot fired at the right person is much more powerful and effective than the most powerful and effective peaceful demonstration. We learned the value of organization, while again we taught the value of rebellion. Out of this, organized rebellion arose throughout the entire territory of Cuba.

By then much time had passed. Many deaths marked the road of our victory — many in combat, others innocent victims. The imperialist forces began to see there was something more than a group of bandits in the heights of the Sierra Maestra, something more than a group of ambitious assailants arrayed against the ruling power. The imperialists generously offered their bombs, bullets, planes and tanks to the dictatorship. With those tanks in the lead, the government's forces again attempted, for the last time, to ascend the Sierra Maestra.

By then, columns of our forces had already left the Sierra to invade other regions of Cuba and had formed the "Frank País" Second Eastern Front under Commander Raúl Castro. Our strength within public opinion was growing — we were now headline material in the international pages of newspapers from every corner of the world. Yet despite all this, the Cuban Revolution at that time possessed only 200 rifles — not 200 men, but 200 rifles — to stop the regime's last offensive, in which the dictatorship amassed 10,000 soldiers and every type of instrument of death. Each one those 200 rifles carries a history of sacrifice and blood. They were rifles of imperialism that the blood and determination of our martyrs dignified and transformed into rifles of the people.

In this way, the last stage of the army's great offensive unfolded, under the name of "encirclement and annihilation."

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What I am saying to you, young people from throughout the Americas who are diligent and eager to learn, is that if today we are putting into practice what is known as Marxism, it is because we discovered it here. In those days, after defeating the dictatorship's troops and inflicting 1,000 casualties on their ranks — five times as many casualties as the sum total of our combat forces, and after seizing more than 600 weapons — a small pamphlet written by Mao Tse-tung fell into our hands. The pamphlet dealt with strategic problems of the revolutionary war in China and described the campaigns that the dictator Chiang Kai-shek carried out against the popular forces, which just like here were called "campaigns of encirclement and annihilation."

Not only had the same words been used on opposite sides of the globe to describe their campaigns, but both dictators had resorted to the same types of campaigns to try to destroy the popular forces. The popular forces here, without knowing of the manuals already written about the strategy and tactics of guerrilla warfare, used the same methods as those used on the opposite side of the world to combat the dictatorship's forces. Naturally, when somebody lives through an experience, that experience can be utilized by somebody else. But it is also possible to go through the same experience without knowing of the earlier one.

We were unaware of the experiences the Chinese troops accumulated during 20 years of struggle in their territory. But we knew our own territory, we knew our enemy, and we used something every person has on their shoulders — which is worth a lot if they know how to use it — we used our heads to guide our fight against the enemy. As a result, we defeated it. The westward invasions came later, and the breaking of Batista's communication lines, and the crushing fall of the dictatorship when no-one expected it. Then came January 1 [1959] and the revolution, without thinking about what it had read, but hearing what it needed to from the lips of the people, decided first and foremost to punish the guilty, and it did so. Immediately the colonial powers splashed the story all over the front pages, calling it murder, immediately trying to do what imperialists always try to do: sow division. "Communist murderers are killing people," they said. "There is, however, a naive patriot Fidel Castro, who had nothing to do with it and can be saved." In this way they tried to sow divisions among those who had fought for the same cause. They maintained this hope for some time.

One day they happened upon the Agrarian Reform Law, and saw that it was much more violent and profound than the law their very intellectual, self-appointed advisers had counselled. All of those advisers, by the way, are today in Miami or some other U.S. city, like Pepin Rivero of *Diario de la Marina*, or Medrano of *Prensa Libre*. Others, including a prime minister in our government, also counseled great moderation, being that "one must handle such things with moderation."

"Moderation" is one of those words colonial agents like to use. Those who are afraid, or who think of betraying in one way or another, are moderates.

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In no sense, however, are the people moderates.

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The advice given was to divide up marabú land — marabú is a wild shrub that plagues our fields — and have the peasants cut marabú with machetes, or settle in swamps, or grab pieces of public land that might somehow have escaped the voraciousness of the large landowners. To touch the holdings of the large landowners was a sin greater than anything they imagined to be possible. But it *was* possible.

I recall a conversation I had in those days with a gentleman who said he had no problems at all with the revolutionary government because he owned only 900 *caballerías*. Nine hundred *caballerías* comes to more than 10,000 hectares [25,000 acres]. This gentleman, of course, did eventually have problems with the revolutionary government; his lands were seized, divided up, and turned over to individual peasants. In addition, cooperatives were created on lands where agricultural workers were already beginning to work collectively for a wage.

This is one of the peculiar features of the Cuban Revolution that must be studied. For the first time in Latin America, a revolution carried out an agrarian reform that attacked property relations other than feudal ones. There were feudal remnants in the tobacco and coffee industries, and in these areas land was turned over to individuals who had been working small plots and wanted their land. But given how sugarcane, rice and cattle were cultivated and worked in Cuba, that land was seized as a unit and worked by workers who were granted joint ownership. Those workers are not owners of single parcels of land, but of the whole great joint enterprise called a cooperative. This has enabled our far-reaching agrarian reform to move rapidly. Each of you should let it sink in, as an incontrovertible truth, that no government here in Latin America can call itself revolutionary unless its first measure is agrarian reform.

A government that says it will implement timid agrarian reform cannot call itself revolutionary. A revolutionary government carries out agrarian reform that transforms the system of property relations — that doesn't just give peasants unused land, but primarily gives peasants land that *was* in use, land that belonged to large landowners, the best land with the greatest yield, land that moreover had been stolen from the peasants in past epochs. That is agrarian reform, and that is how all revolutionary governments must begin. On the basis of agrarian reform the great battle for the industrialization of a country can be waged, a battle that is very complicated, in which one must fight against very big things.

We could very easily fail, as in the past, if it weren't for the existence of very great forces in the world today that are friends of small nations like ours. I must note here for everyone's benefit — for those who like it and those who hate it — that at the present time countries like Cuba, revolutionary, non-moderate countries, cannot respond half-heartedly as to whether the Soviet Union or People's China are our friends. They must answer with all their might that the Soviet Union, China and all the socialist countries are our friends, as are many colonial or semicolonial countries

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These friendships with governments throughout the world is why it is possible to carry out a revolution in Latin America. When the imperialists carried out aggression against us using sugar and petroleum, the Soviet Union was there to give us petroleum and to buy sugar from us. Without that, we would have needed all our strength, all our faith, and the devotion of the people, which is enormous, to withstand the blow this would have signified. These measures taken by "U.S. democracy" against this "threat to the free world" would have had huge effects on the living standards of the Cuban people, and the forces of disunity would have done their work, viciously playing on the effects.

There are government leaders in Latin America who still advise us to lick the hand that wants to hit us; to spit on the one who wants to help us. We answer these government leaders who, in the middle of the 20th century, recommend bowing our heads: We say, first of all, that Cuba does not bow down before anyone. Secondly, we say that Cuba, from its own experience, knows the weaknesses and defects of the governments advising this approach – and the rulers of these countries know them too; they know them very well. Nevertheless, Cuba has not deigned or allowed itself, or thought it permissible, to advise the rulers of these countries to shoot every traitorous official or nationalize all the monopoly holdings in their countries. The people of Cuba shot their murderers and dissolved the army of the dictatorship. Yet they have not been telling governments in Latin America to put the murderers of the people before the firing squads or to stop propping up dictatorships. Cuba knows there are murderers in each one of these nations. We can attest to that fact because a Cuban belonging to our own movement [Andrés Bonaer] was killed, in a friendly country [Venezuela], by henchmen left over from the previous dictatorship.

We do not ask that they put the person who assassinated one of our members before a firing squad, although we would have done so in this country. What we ask, simply, is that if it is not possible to act with solidarity in the Americas, at least don't be a traitor to the Americas. Let no-one in the Americas parrot the notion that we are bound to a continental alliance that includes our great enslaver. That is the most cowardly and denigrating lie a ruler in Latin America can utter.

We, the entire people of Cuba who belong to the Cuban Revolution, call our friends friends, and our enemies enemies. We do not allow for halfway terms: one is either a friend or an enemy. We, the people of Cuba, don't tell any nation on earth what they should do with, for example, the International Monetary Fund. But we will not tolerate them coming to tell us what to do. We know what has to be done. If they want to do what we would do, good; if not, that's up to them. We will not tolerate anyone telling us what to do. We were here on our own until the last moment, awaiting the direct aggression of the mightiest power in the capitalist world, and we did not ask for help from anyone. We were prepared, together with our people, to resist through to the final consequences of our rebel spirit.

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We can speak with our heads held high, and with very clear voices, in all the congresses and councils where our brothers of the world meet. When the Cuban Revolution speaks, it may make mistakes, but it will never tell a lie. In every place where it speaks, the Cuban Revolution expresses the truths that its sons and daughters have learned, and it does so openly to its friends and its enemies alike. It never throws stones from behind corners; it never gives advice containing daggers cloaked in velvet.

We are subject to attacks. We are attacked a great deal because of what we are. But we are attacked much, much more because we show to each nation of the Americas what is possible. What is important for imperialism — more than Cuba's nickel mines or sugar mills, Venezuela's oil, Mexico's cotton, Chile's copper, Argentina's cattle, Paraguay's grasslands or Brazil's coffee — is the totality of these raw materials upon which the monopolies feed.

They place obstacles in our path every chance they get, and when they themselves are unable to erect obstacles, others in Latin America are unfortunately willing to do so. Names are not important, because no single individual is to blame. We cannot say that [Venezuelan] President Betancourt is to blame for the death of our compatriot and co-thinker [Andrés Caba]. President Betancourt is not to blame; he is simply a prisoner of a regime that calls itself democratic. That democratic regime could have set another example in Latin America, but it nevertheless committed the great mistake of not using the firing squad in a timely way. Today the democratic government of Venezuela is again a prisoner of the henchmen Venezuela was familiar with a short while ago — and with whom Cuba was familiar, and with whom the majority of Latin America remains familiar.

We cannot blame President Betancourt for this death. We can only say the following, supported by our record as revolutionaries and by our conviction as revolutionaries: the day President Betancourt, elected by his people, feels himself a prisoner to such a degree that he cannot go forward and decides to ask the help of a fraternal people, Cuba is here to show Venezuela some of our experiences in the field of revolution.

President Betancourt should know that it was not — and could not have been — our diplomatic representative who started the affair that ended in a death. It was the North Americans, or in the final analysis the U.S. Government. A bit closer to the events, it was Batista's men, and closer still, it was those dressed up in anti-Batista clothing, the U.S. Government's reserve forces in this country, who wanted to defeat Batista yet maintain the system: people like [José] Miró Cardona, [Miguel Angel] Quevedo, [Pedro Luis] Díaz Lanz and Huber Matos. In direct line of sight it was the reactionary forces operating in Venezuela. It is very sad to say, but the leader of Venezuela is at the mercy of his own troops, who may at any moment try to assassinate him, as happened a while ago in the case of the car packed with dynamite. The Venezuelan President, at this moment, is a prisoner of his repressive forces.

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This hurts, because the Cuban people received from Venezuela the greatest amount of solidarity and support when we were in the Sierra Maestra. It hurts, because much earlier than us Venezuela was able to rid itself of the hateful and oppressive system represented by [Marcos] Pérez Jiménez. It hurts, because when our delegations went to Venezuela — first Fidel Castro, and later our president Dorticós — they received great demonstrations of support and affection.

A people who have achieved the high degree of political consciousness, who have the high fighting spirit of the Venezuelan people, will not remain prisoners of a few bayonets or bullets for long. Bullets and bayonets can change hands, and the murderers themselves can wind up dead. But it is not my mission to list here all the stabs in the back we have received from Latin American governments in recent days and to add fuel to the fire of rebellion. That is not my task because, in the first place, Cuba is still not free of danger. Today Cuba is still the focus of the imperialists' attention in this part of the world. Cuba needs your solidarity, the solidarity of those from the Democratic Action Party in Venezuela, the URD [Democratic Republican Union], or the Communists, or COPEI [Independent Political Electoral Committee], or any other party. It needs the solidarity of the Mexican people, the Colombian people, the Brazilian people and the people of every nation in Latin America.

The colonialists are scared. They, like everyone else, are afraid of missiles, they too are afraid of bombs. Today they see, for the first time in their history, that bombs of destruction can also fall on their families, on everything they have built with so much love — as far as anyone can love wealth and riches. They began to make estimates; they put their electronic calculators to work, and they saw this set-up would be self-defeating. This in no way means that they have renounced the suppression of Cuban democracy. Once again they are making laborious estimates on their calculating machines as to which of the available methods is best for attacking the Cuban Revolution. They have the methods of Ydígoras, Nicaragua, Haiti. For the moment, they do not have the Dominican method. They also have the mercenaries in Florida, the OAS [Organization of American States] and many other methods. And they have power to continue improving these methods.

[Former] President Arbenz and his people know they had many methods and a great deal of might. Unfortunately for Guatemala, President Arbenz had an army of the old style, and was not fully aware of the solidarity of the peoples and their capacity to repel any type of aggression. One of our greatest strengths is being exerted throughout the world — regardless of partisan differences in any country — the strength to defend the Cuban Revolution at any given moment. Permit me to say this is a duty of Latin America's youth. What we have here in Cuba is something new and it's worth studying. You will have to assess what is good here for yourselves.

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There are many bad things, I know. There is a lot disorganization, I know. If you have been to the Sierra Maestra, then you already know this. We still use guerrilla methods, I know. We lack technicians in necessary quantities commensurate to our aspirations, I know. Our army has still not reached the necessary degree of maturity and the militia members have not achieved sufficient coordination to constitute themselves as an army, I know.

But what I also know, and I want all of you to know, is that this revolution has always acted with the will of the entire people of Cuba. Every peasant and worker who handles a rifle poorly is working every day to handle it better, to defend *their* revolution. And if at this moment they can't understand the complicated workings of a machine whose technician fled to the United States, then they are studying every day to learn it, so *their* factory runs better. The peasants are studying *their* tractor, to fix its mechanical problems, so the fields of *their* cooperative yield more. All Cubans, from both the city and country, share the same sentiments and are marching toward the future, totally united in their thinking, with a leader they have absolute confidence in because he has shown in a thousand battles and on a thousand different occasions his capacity for sacrifice and the power and foresight of his thought.

The nation before you today might disappear from the face of the earth because an atomic conflict may be unleashed on its account, and it might be the first target. Even if this entire island were to disappear along with its inhabitants, Cuba's people would consider themselves satisfied and fulfilled if each of you, upon returning to your countries, would say: Here we are. Our words come from the humid air of the Cuban forests. We have climbed the Sierra Maestra and seen the dawn, and our minds and our hands are filled with the seeds of that dawn. We are prepared to plant them in this land, and defend them so they can grow.

From all the sister countries of the Americas, and from our own land, if it should still remain standing as an example, from such a moment on and forever, the voice of the peoples will answer: "Thus it shall be: Let freedom triumph in every corner of the Americas!"

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At the United Nations

(December 11, 1964)

This address was delivered to the 19th General Assembly of the United Nations in New York.

Mr. President;

Distinguished delegates:

The delegation of Cuba to this Assembly, first of all, is pleased to fulfill the agreeable duty of welcoming the addition of three new nations to the important number of those that discuss the problems of the world here. We therefore greet, in the persons of their presidents and prime ministers, the peoples of Zambia, Malawi and Malta, and express the hope that from the outset these countries will be added to the group of Nonaligned countries that struggle against imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism.

We also wish to convey our congratulations to the president of this Assembly [Alex Quaison-Sackey of Ghana], whose elevation to so high a post is of special significance since it reflects this new historic stage of resounding triumphs for the peoples of Africa, who up until recently were subject to the colonial system of imperialism. Today, in their immense majority these peoples have become sovereign states through the legitimate exercise of their self-determination. 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.

We wish you, Mr. President, the greatest success in the tasks entrusted to you by the member states.

Cuba comes here to state its position on the most important points of controversy and will do so with the full sense of responsibility that the use of this rostrum implies, while at the same time fulfilling the unavoidable duty of speaking clearly and frankly.

We would like to see this Assembly shake itself out of complacency and move forward. We would like to see the committees begin their work and not stop at the first confrontation. Imperialism wants to turn this meeting into a pointless oratorical tournament, instead of solving the serious problems of the world. We must prevent it from doing so. This session of the Assembly should not be remembered in the future solely by the number 19 that identifies it. Our efforts are directed to that end.

We feel that we have the right and the obligation to do so, because our country is one of the most constant points of friction. It is one of the places where the principles upholding the right of small countries to sovereignty

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are put to the test day by day, minute by minute. At the same time our 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.

Of course, there now exists a socialist camp that becomes stronger day by day and has more powerful weapons of struggle. But additional conditions are required for survival: the maintenance of internal unity, faith in one's own destiny, and the irrevocable decision to fight to the death for the defense of one's country and revolution. These conditions, distinguished delegates, exist in Cuba.

Of all the burning problems to be dealt with by this Assembly, one of special significance for us, and one whose solution we feel must be found first — so as to leave no doubt in the minds of anyone — is that of peaceful coexistence among states with different economic and social systems. Much progress has been made in the world in this field. But imperialism, particularly U.S. imperialism, has attempted to make the world believe that peaceful coexistence is the exclusive right of the earth's great powers. We say here what our president said in Cairo, and what later was expressed in the declaration of the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Nonaligned Countries: that peaceful coexistence cannot be limited to the powerful countries if we want to ensure world peace.¹³ Peaceful coexistence must be exercised among all states, regardless of size, regardless of the previous historical relations that linked them, and regardless of the problems that may arise among some of them at a given moment.

At present, the type of peaceful coexistence to which we aspire is often violated. Merely because the Kingdom of Cambodia maintained a neutral attitude and did not bow to the machinations of U.S. imperialism, it has been subjected to all kinds of treacherous and brutal attacks from the Yankee bases in South Vietnam.

Laos, a divided country, has also been the object of imperialist aggression of every kind. Its people have been massacred from the air. The conventions concluded at Geneva have been violated, and part of its territory is in constant danger of cowardly attacks by imperialist forces.

The Democratic Republic of Vietnam knows all these histories of aggression as do few nations on earth. It has once again seen its frontier violated, has seen enemy bombers and fighter planes attack its installations and U.S. warships, violating territorial waters, attack its naval posts. At this time, the threat hangs over the Democratic Republic of Vietnam that the

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U.S. war makers may openly extend into its territory the war that for many years they have been waging against the people of South Vietnam. The Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China have given serious warnings to the United States. We are faced with a case in which world peace is in danger and, moreover, the lives of millions of human beings in this part of Asia are constantly threatened and subjected to the whim of the U.S. invader.

Peaceful coexistence has also been brutally put to the test in Cyprus, due to pressures from the Turkish Government and NATO, compelling the people and the government of Cyprus to make a heroic and firm stand in defense of their sovereignty.

In all these parts of the world, imperialism attempts to impose its version of what coexistence should be. It is the oppressed peoples in alliance with the socialist camp that must show them what true coexistence is, and it is the obligation of the United Nations to support them.

We must also state that it is not only in relations among sovereign states that the concept of peaceful coexistence needs to be precisely defined. As Marxists we have maintained that peaceful coexistence among nations does not encompass coexistence between the exploiters and the exploited, between the oppressors and the oppressed. Furthermore, 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 in accordance with the Cairo declaration.

We express our solidarity with the people of Puerto Rico and their great leader, Pedro Albizu Campos, who, in another act of hypocrisy, has been set free at the age of 72, almost unable to speak, paralyzed, after spending a lifetime in jail. Albizu Campos is a symbol of the as yet unfree but indomitable Latin America. Years and years of prison, almost unbearable pressures in jail, mental torture, solitude, total isolation from his people and his family, the insolence of the conqueror and its lackeys in the land of his birth – nothing broke his will. The delegation of Cuba, on behalf of its people, pays a tribute of admiration and gratitude to a patriot who confers honor upon our America.

The United States for many years has tried to convert Puerto Rico into a model of hybrid culture: the Spanish language with English inflections, the Spanish language with hinges on its backbone – the better to bow

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down before the Yankee soldier. Puerto Rican soldiers have been used as cannon fodder in imperialist wars, as in Korea, and have even been made to fire at their own brothers, as in the massacre perpetrated by the U.S. Army a few months ago against the unarmed people of Panama — one of the most recent crimes carried out by Yankee imperialism.¹⁴ And yet, despite this assault on their will and their historical destiny, the people of Puerto Rico have preserved their culture, their Latin character, their national feelings, which in themselves give proof of the implacable desire for independence lying within the masses on that Latin American island.

We must also warn that the principle of peaceful coexistence does not encompass the right to mock the will of the peoples, as is happening in the case of so-called British Guiana. There the government of Prime Minister Cheddi Jagan has been the victim of every kind of pressure and maneuver, and independence has been delayed to gain time to find ways to flout the people's will and guarantee the docility of a new government, placed in power by covert means, in order to grant a castrated freedom to this country of the Americas. Whatever roads Guiana may be compelled to follow to obtain independence, the moral and militant support of Cuba goes to its people.¹⁵

Furthermore, we must point out that the islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique have been fighting for a long time for self-government without obtaining it. This state of affairs must not continue.

Once again we speak out to put the world on guard against what is happening in South Africa. The brutal policy of apartheid is applied before the eyes of the nations of the world. The peoples of Africa are compelled to endure the fact that on the African continent the superiority of one race over another remains official policy, and that in the name of this racial superiority murder is committed with impunity. Can the United Nations do nothing to stop this?

I would like to refer specifically to the painful case of the Congo, unique in the history of the modern world, which shows how, with absolute impunity, with the most insolent cynicism, the rights of peoples can be flouted. The direct reason for all this is the enormous wealth of the Congo, which the imperialist countries want to keep under their control. In the speech he made during his first visit to the United Nations, *compañero* Fidel Castro observed that the whole problem of coexistence among peoples boils down to the wrongful appropriation of other peoples' wealth. He made the following statement: "End the philosophy of plunder and the philosophy of war will be ended as well."

But the philosophy of plunder has not only not been ended, it is stronger than ever. And that is why those who used the name of the United Nations to commit the murder of Lumumba are today, in the name of the defense of

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the white race, murdering thousands of Congolese. How can we forget the betrayal of the hope that Patrice Lumumba placed in the United Nations? How can we forget the machinations and maneuvers that followed in the wake of the occupation of that country by UN troops, under whose auspices the assassins of this great African patriot acted with impunity? How can we forget, distinguished delegates, that the one who flouted the authority of the UN in the Congo — and not exactly for patriotic reasons, but rather by virtue of conflicts between imperialists — was Moïse Tshombe, who initiated the secession of Katanga with Belgian support? And how can one justify, how can one explain, that at the end of all the United Nations' activities there, Tshombe, dislodged from Katanga, should return as lord and master of the Congo? Who can deny the sad role that the imperialists compelled the United Nations to play?¹⁶

To sum up: dramatic mobilizations were carried out to avoid the secession of Katanga, but today Tshombe is in power, the wealth of the Congo is in imperialist hands — and the expenses have to be paid by the honorable nations. The merchants of war certainly do good business! That is why the government of Cuba supports the just stance of the Soviet Union in refusing to pay the expenses for this crime.

And as if this were not enough, we now have flung in our faces these latest acts that have filled the world with indignation. Who are the perpetrators? Belgian paratroopers, carried by U.S. planes, who took off from British bases. We remember as if it were yesterday that we saw a small country in Europe, a civilized and industrious country, the Kingdom of Belgium, invaded by Hitler's hordes. We were embittered by the knowledge that this small nation was massacred by German imperialism, and we felt affection for its people. But this other side of the imperialist coin was the one that many of us did not see. Perhaps the sons of Belgian patriots who died defending their country's liberty are now murdering in cold blood thousands of Congolese in the name of the white race, just as they suffered under the German heel because their blood was not sufficiently Aryan. Our free eyes open now on new horizons and can see what yesterday, in our condition as colonial slaves, we could not observe: that "Western Civilization" disguises behind its showy facade a picture of hyenas and jackals. That is the only name that can be applied to those who have gone to fulfill such "humanitarian" tasks in the Congo. A carnivorous animal that feeds on unarmed peoples. That is what imperialism does to men. That is what distinguishes the imperial "white man."

All free men of the world must be prepared to avenge the crime of the Congo. Perhaps many of those soldiers, who were turned into sub-humans by imperialist machinery, believe in good faith that they are defending the rights of a superior race. In this Assembly, however, those peoples whose

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skins are darkened by a different sun, colored by different pigments, constitute the majority. And they fully and clearly understand that the difference between men does not lie in the color of their skin, but in the forms of ownership of the means of production, in the relations of production.

The Cuban delegation extends greetings to the peoples of Southern Rhodesia and South-West Africa, oppressed by white colonialist minorities; to the peoples of Basutoland, Bechuanaland, Swaziland, French Somaliland, the Arabs of Palestine, Aden and the Protectorates, Oman; and to all peoples in conflict with imperialism and colonialism. We reaffirm our support to them.

I express also the hope that there will be a just solution to the conflict facing our sister republic of Indonesia in its relations with Malaysia.

Mr. President: One of the fundamental themes of this conference is general and complete disarmament. We express our support for general and complete disarmament. Furthermore, we advocate the complete destruction of all thermonuclear devices and we support the holding of a conference of all the nations of the world to make this aspiration of all people a reality. In his statement before this assembly, our prime minister warned that arms races have always led to war. There are new nuclear powers in the world, and the possibilities of a confrontation are growing.

We believe that such a conference is necessary to obtain the total destruction of thermonuclear weapons and, as a first step, the total prohibition of tests. At the same time, we have to establish clearly the duty of all countries to respect the present borders of other states and to refrain from engaging in any aggression, even with conventional weapons.

In adding our voice to that of all the peoples of the world who ask for general and complete disarmament, the destruction of all nuclear arsenals, the complete halt to the building of new thermonuclear devices and of nuclear tests of any kind, we believe it necessary to also stress that the territorial integrity of nations must be respected and the armed hand of imperialism held back, for it is no less dangerous when it uses only conventional weapons. Those who murdered thousands of defenseless citizens of the Congo did not use the atomic bomb. They used conventional weapons. Conventional weapons have also been used by imperialism, causing so many deaths.

Even if the measures advocated here were to become effective and make it unnecessary to mention it, we must point out that we cannot adhere to any regional pact for denuclearization so long as the United States maintains aggressive bases on our own territory, in Puerto Rico, Panama and in other Latin American states where it feels it has the right to place both conventional and nuclear weapons without any restrictions. We feel that

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we must be able to provide for our own defense in the light of the recent resolution of the Organization of American States against Cuba, on the basis of which an attack may be carried out invoking the Rio Treaty.¹⁷ If the conference to which we have just referred were to achieve all these objectives – which, unfortunately, would be difficult – we believe it would be the most important one in the history of humanity. To ensure this it would be necessary for the People's Republic of China to be represented, and that is why a conference of this type must be held. But it would be much simpler for the peoples of the world to recognize the undeniable truth of the existence of the People's Republic of China, whose government is the sole representative of its people, and to give it the seat it deserves, which is, at present, usurped by the gang that controls the province of Taiwan, with U.S. support.

The problem of the representation of China in the United Nations cannot in any way be considered as a case of a new admission to the organization, but rather as the restoration of the legitimate rights of the People's Republic of China.

We must repudiate energetically the "two Chinas" plot. The Chiang Kai-shek gang of Taiwan cannot remain in the United Nations. What we are dealing with, we repeat, is the expulsion of the usurper and the installation of the legitimate representative of the Chinese people.

We also warn against the U.S. Government's insistence on presenting the problem of the legitimate representation of China in the UN as an "important question," in order to impose a requirement of a two-thirds majority of members present and voting. The admission of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations is, in fact, an important question for the entire world, but not for the machinery of the United Nations, where it must constitute a mere question of procedure. In this way justice will be done. Almost as important as attaining justice, however, would be the demonstration, once and for all, that this august Assembly has eyes to see, ears to hear, tongues to speak with and sound criteria for making its decisions. The proliferation of nuclear weapons among the member states of NATO, and especially the possession of these devices of mass destruction by the Federal Republic of Germany, would make the possibility of an agreement on disarmament even more remote, and linked to such an agreement is the problem of the peaceful reunification of Germany. So long as there is no clear understanding, the existence of two Germanys must be recognized: that of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic. The German problem can be solved only with the direct participation in negotiations of the German Democratic Republic with full rights. We shall only touch on the questions of economic development and international trade that are broadly represented in the agenda. In this very

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year of 1964 the Geneva conference was held at which a multitude of matters related to these aspects of international relations were dealt with. The warnings and forecasts of our delegation were fully confirmed, to the misfortune of the economically dependent countries.

We wish only to point out that insofar as Cuba is concerned, the United States of America has not implemented the explicit recommendations of that conference, and recently the U.S. Government also prohibited the sale of medicines to Cuba. By doing so it divested itself, once and for all, of the mask of humanitarianism with which it attempted to disguise the aggressive nature of its blockade against the people of Cuba.

Furthermore, we state once more that the scars left by colonialism that impede the development of the peoples are expressed not only in political relations. The so-called deterioration of the terms of trade is nothing but the result of the unequal exchange between countries producing raw materials and industrial countries, which dominate markets and impose the illusory justice of equal exchange of values.

So long as the economically dependent peoples do not free themselves from the capitalist markets and, in a firm bloc with the socialist countries, impose new relations between the exploited and the exploiters, there will be no solid economic development. In certain cases there will be retrogression, in which the weak countries will fall under the political domination of the imperialists and colonialists.

Finally, distinguished delegates, it must be made clear that in the area of the Caribbean, maneuvers and preparations for aggression against Cuba are taking place, on the coasts of Nicaragua above all, in Costa Rica as well, in the Panama Canal Zone, on Vieques Island in Puerto Rico, in Florida and possibly in other parts of U.S. territory and perhaps also in Honduras. In these places Cuban mercenaries are training, as well as mercenaries of other nationalities, with a purpose that cannot be the most peaceful one. After a big scandal, the government of Costa Rica — it is said — has ordered the elimination of all training camps of Cuban exiles in that country.

No-one knows whether this position is sincere, or whether it is a simple alibi because the mercenaries training there were about to commit some misdeed. We hope that full cognizance will be taken of the real existence of bases for aggression, which we denounced long ago, and that the world will ponder the international responsibility of the government of a country that authorizes and facilitates the training of mercenaries to attack Cuba. We should note that news of the training of mercenaries in different parts in the Caribbean and the participation of the U.S. Government in

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such acts is presented as completely natural in the newspapers in the United States. We know of no Latin American voice that has officially protested this. This shows the cynicism with which the U.S. Government moves its pawns.

The sharp foreign ministers of the OAS had eyes to see Cuban emblems and to find "irrefutable" proof in the weapons that the Yankees exhibited in Venezuela, but they do not see the preparations for aggression in the United States, just as they did not hear the voice of President Kennedy, who explicitly declared himself the aggressor against Cuba at Playa Girón [Bay of Pigs invasion of April 1961]. In some cases, it is a blindness provoked by the hatred against our revolution by the ruling classes of the Latin American countries. In others — and these are sadder and more deplorable — it is the product of the dazzling glitter of mammon.

As is well known, after the tremendous commotion of the so-called Caribbean crisis, the United States undertook certain commitments with the Soviet Union. These culminated in the withdrawal of certain types of weapons that the continued acts of aggression of the United States — such as the mercenary attack at Playa Girón and threats of invasion against our homeland — had compelled us to install in Cuba as an act of legitimate and essential defense.

The United States, furthermore, tried to get the UN to inspect our territory. But we emphatically refuse, since Cuba does not recognize the right of the United States, or of anyone else in the world, to determine the type of weapons Cuba may have within its borders.

In this connection, we would abide only by multilateral agreements, with equal obligations for all the parties concerned. As Fidel Castro has said: "So long as the concept of sovereignty exists as the prerogative of nations and of independent peoples, as a right of all peoples, we will not accept the exclusion of our people from that right. So long as the world is governed by these principles, so long as the world is governed by those concepts that have universal validity because they are universally accepted and recognized by the peoples, we will not accept the attempt to deprive us of any of those rights, and we will renounce none of those rights." The Secretary-General of the United Nations, U Thant, understood our reasons. Nevertheless, the United States attempted to establish a new prerogative, an arbitrary and illegal one: that of violating the airspace of a small country. Thus, we see flying over our country U-2 aircraft and other types of spy planes that, with complete impunity, fly over our airspace. We have made all the necessary warnings for the violations of our airspace to cease,

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as well as for a halt to the provocations of the U.S. Navy against our sentry posts in the zone of Guantánamo, the buzzing by aircraft of our ships or the ships of other nationalities in international waters, the pirate attacks against ships sailing under different flags, and the infiltration of spies, saboteurs and weapons onto our island.

We want to build socialism. We have declared that we are supporters of those who strive for peace. We have declared ourselves to be within the group of Nonaligned countries, although we are Marxist-Leninists, because the Nonaligned 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.

And Cuba reaffirms once again the right to maintain on its territory the weapons it deems appropriate, and its refusal to recognize the right of any power on earth — no matter how powerful — to violate our soil, our territorial waters, or our airspace.

If in any assembly Cuba assumes obligations of a collective nature, it will fulfill them to the letter. So long as this does not happen, Cuba maintains all its rights, just as any other nation. In the face of the demands of imperialism, our prime minister laid out the five points necessary for the existence of a secure peace in the Caribbean. They are:

1. A halt to the economic blockade and all economic and trade pressures by the United States, in all parts of the world, against our country.
2. A halt to all subversive activities, launching and landing of weapons and explosives by air and sea, organization of mercenary invasions, infiltration of spies and saboteurs, acts all carried out from the territory of the United States and some accomplice countries.
3. A halt to pirate attacks carried out from existing bases in the United States and Puerto Rico.
4. A halt to all the violations of our airspace and our territorial waters by U.S. aircraft and warships.
5. Withdrawal from the Guantánamo naval base and return of the Cuban territory occupied by the United States."

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None of these elementary demands has been met, and our forces are still being provoked from the naval base at Guantánamo. That base has become a nest of thieves and a launching pad for them into our territory. We would tire this Assembly were we to give a detailed account of the large number of provocations of all kinds. Suffice it to say that including the first days of December, the number amounts to 1,323 in 1964 alone. The list covers minor provocations such as violation of the boundary line, launching of objects from the territory controlled by the United States, the commission of acts of sexual exhibitionism by U.S. personnel of both sexes, and verbal insults. It includes others that are more serious, such as shooting off small caliber weapons, aiming weapons at our territory, and offenses against our national flag. Extremely serious provocations include those of crossing the boundary line and starting fires in installations on the Cuban side, as well as rifle fire. There have been 78 rifle shots this year, with the sorrowful toll of one death: that of Ramón López Peña, a soldier, killed by two shots fired from the U.S. post three and a half kilometers from the coast on the northern boundary. This extremely grave provocation took place at 7:07 p.m. on July 19, 1964, and the prime minister of our government publicly stated on July 26 that if the event were to recur he would give orders for our troops to repel the aggression. At the same time orders were given for the withdrawal of the forward line of Cuban forces to positions farther away from the boundary line and construction of the necessary fortified positions.

One thousand three hundred and twenty-three provocations in 340 days amount to approximately four per day. Only a perfectly disciplined army with a morale such as ours could resist so many hostile acts without losing its self-control.

Forty-seven countries meeting at the Second Conference of Heads of State or Government of Nonaligned Countries in Cairo unanimously agreed: Noting with concern that foreign military bases are in practice a means of bringing pressure on nations and retarding their emancipation and development, based on their own ideological, political, economic and cultural ideas, the conference declares its unreserved support to the countries that are seeking to secure the elimination of foreign bases from their territory and calls upon all states maintaining troops and bases in other countries to remove them immediately. The conference considers that the maintenance at Guantánamo (Cuba) of a military base of the United States of America, in defiance of the will of the government and people of Cuba and in defiance of the provisions embodied in the declaration of the Belgrade conference, constitutes a violation of Cuba's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

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Noting that the Cuban Government expresses its readiness to settle its dispute over the base at Guantánamo with the United States of America on an equal footing, the conference urges the U.S. Government to open negotiations with the Cuban Government to evacuate their base.

The government of the United States has not responded to this request of the Cairo conference and is attempting to maintain indefinitely by force its occupation of a piece of our territory, from which it carries out acts of aggression such as those detailed earlier.

The Organization of American States – which the people also call the U.S. Ministry of Colonies – condemned us “energetically,” even though it had just excluded us from its midst, ordering its members to break off diplomatic and trade relations with Cuba. The OAS authorized aggression against our country at any time and under any pretext, violating the most fundamental international laws, completely disregarding the United Nations. Uruguay, Bolivia, Chile and Mexico opposed that measure, and the government of the United States of Mexico refused to comply with the sanctions that had been approved. Since then we have had no relations with any Latin American countries except Mexico, and this fulfills one of the necessary conditions for direct aggression by imperialism.

We want to make clear once again that our concern for Latin America is based on the ties that unite us: the language we speak, the culture we maintain, and the common master we had. We have no other reason for desiring the liberation of Latin America from the U.S. colonial yoke. If any of the Latin American countries here decide to reestablish relations with Cuba, we would be willing to do so on the basis of equality, and without viewing that recognition of Cuba as a free country in the world to be a gift to our government. We won that recognition with our blood in the days of the liberation struggle. We acquired it with our blood in the defense of our shores against the Yankee invasion.

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.

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It is the United States that intervenes. It has done so historically in Latin America. Since the end of the last century Cuba has experienced this truth; but it has been experienced, too, by Venezuela, Nicaragua, Central America in general, Mexico, Haiti and the Dominican Republic. In recent years, apart from our people, Panama has experienced direct aggression, where the marines in the Canal Zone opened fire in cold blood against the defenseless people; the Dominican Republic, whose coast was violated by the Yankee fleet to avoid an outbreak of the just fury of the people after the death of Trujillo; and Colombia, whose capital was taken by assault as a result of a rebellion provoked by the assassination of Gaitán.¹⁸ 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. Concretely, U.S. forces intervened in the repression of the peoples of Venezuela, Colombia and Guatemala, who fought with weapons for their freedom. In Venezuela, not only do U.S. forces advise the army and the police, but they also direct acts of genocide carried out from the air against the peasant population in vast insurgent areas. And the Yankee companies operating there exert pressures of every kind to increase direct interference. The imperialists are preparing to repress the peoples of the Americas and are establishing an International of Crime.

The United States intervenes in Latin America invoking the defense of free institutions. The time will come when this Assembly will acquire greater maturity and demand of the U.S. Government guarantees for the life of the blacks and Latin Americans who live in that country, most of them U.S. citizens by origin or adoption.

Those who kill their own children and discriminate daily against them because of the color of their skin; those who let the murderers of blacks remain free, protecting them, and furthermore punishing the black population because they demand their legitimate rights as free men – how can those who do this consider themselves guardians of freedom? We understand that today the Assembly is not in a position to ask for explanations of these acts. It must be clearly established, however, that the government of the United States is not the champion of freedom, but rather the perpetrator of exploitation and oppression against the peoples of the world and against a large part of its own population.

To the ambiguous language with which some delegates have described the case of Cuba and the OAS, we reply with clear-cut words and we proclaim that the peoples of Latin America will make those servile, sell-out governments pay for their treason.

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Cuba, distinguished delegates, a free and sovereign state with no chains binding it to anyone, with no foreign investments on its territory, with no proconsuls directing its policy, can speak with its head held high in this Assembly and can demonstrate the justice of the phrase by which it has been baptized: "Free Territory of the Americas."

Our example will bear fruit in the continent, as it is already doing to a certain extent in Guatemala, Colombia and Venezuela.

There is no small enemy nor insignificant force, because no longer are there isolated peoples. As the Second Declaration of Havana states: No nation in Latin America is weak – because each forms part of a family of 200 million brothers, who suffer the same miseries, who harbor the same sentiments, who have the same enemy, who dream about the same better future, and who count upon the solidarity of all honest men and women throughout the world...

This epic before us is going to be written by the hungry Indian masses, the peasants without land, the exploited workers. It is going to be written by the progressive masses, the honest and brilliant intellectuals, who so greatly abound in our suffering Latin American lands. Struggles of masses and ideas. An epic that will be carried forward by our peoples, mistreated and scorned by imperialism; our people, unreckoned with until today, who are now beginning to shake off their slumber. 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...

But now from one end of the continent to the other they are signaling with clarity that the hour has come – the hour of their vindication. Now this anonymous mass, this America of color, somber, taciturn America, which all over the continent sings with the same sadness and disillusionment, now this mass is beginning to enter definitively into its own history, is beginning to write it with its own blood, is beginning to suffer and die for it.

Because now in the mountains and fields of America, on its flatlands and in its jungles, in the wilderness or in the traffic of cities, on the banks of its great oceans or rivers, this world is beginning to tremble. Anxious hands are stretched forth, ready to die for what is theirs, to win those rights that were laughed at by one and all for 500 years. Yes, now history will have to take the poor of America into account, the exploited and spurned of America, who have decided to begin writing their history for themselves for all time. Already they can be seen on the roads, on foot, day after day, in endless march of hundreds of kilometers to the governmental "eminences," there to obtain their rights.

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Already they can be seen armed with stones, sticks, machetes, in one direction and another, each day, occupying lands, sinking hooks into the land that belongs to them and defending it with their lives. They can be seen carrying signs, slogans, flags; letting them flap in the mountain or prairie winds. And the wave of anger, of demands for justice, of claims for rights trampled underfoot, which is beginning to sweep the lands of Latin America, will not stop. That wave will swell with every passing day. For that wave is composed of the greatest number, the majorities in every respect, those whose labor amasses the wealth and turns the wheels of history. Now they are awakening from the long, brutalizing sleep to which they had been subjected.

For this great mass of humanity has said, "Enough!" and has begun to march. And their march of giants will not be halted until they conquer true independence – for which they have vainly died more than once. Today, however, those who die will die like the Cubans at Playa Girón. They will die for their own true and never-to-be-surrendered independence.

All this, distinguished delegates, this new will of a whole continent, of Latin America, is made manifest in the cry proclaimed daily by our masses as the irrefutable expression of their decision to fight and to paralyze the armed hand of the invader. It is a cry that has the understanding and support of all the peoples of the world and especially of the socialist camp, headed by the Soviet Union.

That cry is: *Patria o muerte!* [Homeland or death]

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At the Afro-Asian Conference in Algeria

(February 24, 1965)

This speech was delivered at the Second Economic Seminar of Afro-Asian Solidarity. The conference, held in Algiers, Algeria, was attended by representatives from 63 African and Asian governments, as well as 19 national liberation movements. The meeting was opened by Algerian President Ahmed Ben Bella. Cuba was invited as an observer to the conference, and Guevara served on its presiding committee.

Cuba is here at this conference to speak on behalf of the peoples of Latin America.¹⁹ As we have emphasized on other occasions, Cuba also speaks as an underdeveloped country as well as one that is building socialism.

It is not by accident that our delegation is permitted to give its opinion here, in the circle of the peoples of Asia and Africa.²⁰ A common aspiration unites us in our march toward the future: the defeat of imperialism. A common past of struggle against the same enemy has united us along the road.

This is an assembly of peoples in struggle, and the struggle is developing on two equally important fronts that require all our efforts. The struggle against imperialism, for liberation from colonial or neocolonial shackles, which is being carried out by means of political weapons, arms, or a combination of the two, is not separate from the struggle against backwardness and poverty. Both are stages on the same road leading toward the creation of a new society of justice and plenty.

It is imperative to take political power and to get rid of the oppressor classes. But then the second stage of the struggle, which may be even more difficult than the first, must be faced.

Ever since monopoly capital took over the world, it has kept the greater part of humanity in poverty, dividing all the profits among the group of the most powerful countries. The standard of living in those countries is based on the extreme poverty of our countries. To raise the living standards of the underdeveloped nations, therefore, we must fight against imperialism. And each time a country is torn away from the imperialist tree, it is not only a partial battle won against the main enemy but it also contributes to the real weakening of that enemy, and is one more step toward the final victory. There are no borders in this struggle to the death. We cannot be indifferent to what happens anywhere in the world, because a victory by any country over imperialism is our victory, just as any country's defeat is a defeat for all of us. The practice of proletarian internationalism is not only a duty for the peoples struggling for a better future, it is also an inescapable necessity.

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If the imperialist enemy, the United States or any other, carries out its attack against the underdeveloped peoples and the socialist countries, elementary logic determines the need for an alliance between the underdeveloped peoples and the socialist countries. If there were no other uniting factor, the common enemy should be enough.²¹

Of course, these alliances cannot be made spontaneously, without discussions, without birth pangs, which sometimes can be painful.

We said that each time a country is liberated it is a defeat for the world imperialist system. But we must agree that the break is not achieved by the mere act of proclaiming independence or winning an armed victory in a revolution. It is achieved when imperialist economic domination over a people is brought to an end. Therefore, it is a matter of vital interest to the socialist countries for a real break to take place. And it is our international duty, a duty determined by our guiding ideology, to contribute our efforts to make this liberation as rapid and deep-going as possible.

A conclusion must be drawn from all this: the socialist countries must help pay for the development of countries now starting out on the road to liberation. We state it this way with no intention whatsoever of blackmail or dramatics, nor are we looking for an easy way to get closer to the Afro-Asian peoples; it is our profound conviction. Socialism cannot exist without a change in consciousness resulting in a new fraternal attitude toward humanity, both at an individual level, within the societies where socialism is being built or has been built, and on a world scale, with regard to all peoples suffering from imperialist oppression.

We believe the responsibility of aiding dependent countries must be approached in such a spirit. There should be no more talk about developing mutually beneficial trade based on prices forced on the backward countries by the law of value and the international relations of unequal exchange that result from the law of value.²²

How can it be “mutually beneficial” to sell at world market prices the raw materials that cost the underdeveloped countries immeasurable sweat and suffering, and to buy at world market prices the machinery produced in today’s big automated factories?

If we establish that kind of relation between the two groups of nations, we must agree that the socialist countries are, in a certain way, accomplices of imperialist exploitation. It can be argued that the amount of exchange with the underdeveloped countries is an insignificant part of the foreign trade of the socialist countries. That is very true, but it does not eliminate the immoral character of that exchange.

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The socialist countries have the moral duty to put an end to their tacit complicity with the exploiting countries of the West. The fact that the trade today is small means nothing. In 1959 Cuba only occasionally sold sugar to some socialist bloc countries, usually through English brokers or brokers of other nationalities. Today 80 percent of Cuba's trade is with that area. All its vital supplies come from the socialist camp, and in fact it has joined that camp. We cannot say that this entrance into the socialist camp was brought about merely by the increase in trade. Nor was the increase in trade brought about by the destruction of the old structures and the adoption of the socialist form of development. Both sides of the question intersect and are interrelated.

We did not start out on the road that ends in communism foreseeing all steps as logically predetermined by an ideology advancing toward a fixed goal. The truths of socialism, plus the raw truths of imperialism, forged our people and showed them the path that we have now taken consciously. To advance toward their own complete liberation, the peoples of Asia and Africa must take the same path. They will follow it sooner or later, regardless of what modifying adjective their socialism may take today.

For us there is no valid definition of socialism other than the abolition of the exploitation of one human being by another. As long as this has not been achieved, if we think we are in the stage of building socialism but instead of ending exploitation the work of suppressing it comes to a halt — or worse, is reversed — then we cannot even speak of building socialism.²³ We have to prepare conditions so that our brothers and sisters can directly and consciously take the path of the complete abolition of exploitation, but we cannot ask them to take that path if we ourselves are accomplices in that exploitation. If we were asked what methods are used to establish fair prices, we could not answer because we do not know the full scope of the practical problems involved. All we know is that, after political discussions, the Soviet Union and Cuba have signed agreements advantageous to us, by means of which we will sell five million tons of sugar at prices set above those of the so-called free world sugar market. The People's Republic of China also pays those prices in buying from us.

This is only a beginning. The real task consists of setting prices that will permit development. A great shift in ideas will be involved in changing the order of international relations. Foreign trade should not determine policy, but should, on the contrary, be subordinated to a fraternal policy toward the peoples.

Let us briefly analyze the problem of long-term credits for developing basic industries. Frequently we find that beneficiary countries attempt to

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establish an industrial base disproportionate to their present capacity. The products will not be consumed domestically and the country's reserves will be risked in the undertaking.

Our thinking is as follows: The investments of the socialist states in their own territory come directly out of the state budget, and are recovered only by use of the products throughout the entire manufacturing process, down to the finished goods. We propose that some thought be given to the possibility of making these kinds of investments in the underdeveloped countries. In this way we could unleash an immense force, hidden in our continents, which have been exploited miserably but never aided in their development. We could begin a new stage of a real international division of labor, based not on the history of what has been done up to now but rather on the future history of what can be done.

The states in whose territories the new investments are to be made would have all the inherent rights of sovereign property over them with no payment or credit involved. But they would be obligated to supply agreed-upon quantities of products to the investor countries for a certain number of years at set prices.

The method for financing the local portion of expenses incurred by a country receiving investments of this kind also deserves study. The supply of marketable goods on long-term credits to the governments of underdeveloped countries could be one form of aid not requiring the contribution of freely convertible hard currency.

Another difficult problem that must be solved is the mastering of technology. ²⁴The shortage of technicians in underdeveloped countries is well known to us all. Educational institutions and teachers are lacking. Sometimes we lack a real understanding of our needs and have not made the decision to carry out a top-priority policy of technical, cultural and ideological development.

The socialist countries should supply the aid to organize institutions for technical education. They should insist on the great importance of this and should supply technical cadres to fill the present need. It is necessary to further emphasize this last point. The technicians who come to our countries must be exemplary. They are comrades who will face a strange environment, often one hostile to technology, with a different language and totally different customs. The technicians who take on this difficult task must be, first of all, communists in the most profound and noble sense of the word. With this single quality, plus a modicum of flexibility and organization, wonders can be achieved.

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We know this can be done. Fraternal countries have sent us a certain number of technicians who have done more for the development of our country than 10 institutes, and have contributed more to our friendship than 10 ambassadors or 100 diplomatic receptions.

If we could achieve the above-listed points – and if all the technology of the advanced countries could be placed within reach of the underdeveloped countries, unhampered by the present system of patents, which prevents the spread of inventions of different countries – we would progress a great deal in our common task.

Imperialism has been defeated in many partial battles. But it remains a considerable force in the world. We cannot expect its final defeat save through effort and sacrifice on the part of us all.

The proposed set of measures, however, cannot be implemented unilaterally. The socialist countries should help pay for the development of the underdeveloped countries, we agree. But the underdeveloped countries must also steel their forces to embark resolutely on the road of building a new society – whatever name one gives it – where the machine, an instrument of labor, is no longer an instrument for the exploitation of one human being by another. Nor can the confidence of the socialist countries be expected by those who play at balancing between capitalism and socialism, trying to use each force as a counterweight in order to derive certain advantages from such competition. A new policy of absolute seriousness should govern the relations between the two groups of societies. It is worth emphasizing once again that the means of production should preferably be in the hands of the state, so that the marks of exploitation may gradually disappear. Furthermore, development cannot be left to complete improvisation. It is necessary to plan the construction of the new society. Planning is one of the laws of socialism, and without it, socialism would not exist. Without correct planning there can be no adequate guarantee that all the various sectors of a country's economy will combine harmoniously to take the leaps forward that our epoch demands.

Planning cannot be left as an isolated problem of each of our small countries, distorted in their development, possessors of some raw materials or producers of some manufactured or semimanufactured goods, but lacking in most others.²⁵ From the outset, planning should take on a certain regional dimension in order to intermix the various national economies, and thus bring about integration on a basis that is truly of mutual benefit. We believe the road ahead is full of dangers, not dangers conjured up or foreseen in the distant future by some superior mind but palpable dangers

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deriving from the realities besetting us. The fight against colonialism has reached its final stages, but in the present era colonial status is only a consequence of imperialist domination. As long as imperialism exists it will, by definition, exert its domination over other countries. Today that domination is called neocolonialism.

Neocolonialism developed first in South America, throughout a whole continent, and today it begins to be felt with increasing intensity in Africa and Asia. Its forms of penetration and development have different characteristics. One is the brutal form we have seen in the Congo. Brute force, without any respect or concealment whatsoever, is its extreme weapon. There is another more subtle form: penetration into countries that win political independence, linking up with the nascent local bourgeoisies, development of a parasitic bourgeois class closely allied to the interests of the former colonizers. This development is based on a certain temporary rise in the people's standard of living, because in a very backward country the simple step from feudal to capitalist relations marks a big advance, regardless of the dire consequences for the workers in the long run.

Neocolonialism has bared its claws in the Congo. That is not a sign of strength but of weakness. It had to resort to force, its extreme weapon, as an economic argument, which has generated very intense opposing reactions. But at the same time a much more subtle form of neocolonialism is being practiced in other countries of Africa and Asia. It is rapidly bringing about what some have called the South Americanization of these continents; that is, the development of a parasitic bourgeoisie that adds nothing to the national wealth of their countries but rather deposits its huge ill-gotten profits in capitalist banks abroad, and makes deals with foreign countries to reap more profits with absolute disregard for the welfare of the people. There are also other dangers, such as competition between fraternal countries, which are politically friendly and sometimes neighbors, as both try to develop the same investments simultaneously to produce for markets that often cannot absorb the increased volume. This competition has the disadvantage of wasting energies that could be used to achieve much greater economic coordination; furthermore, it gives the imperialist monopolies room to maneuver.

When it has been impossible to carry out a given investment project with the aid of the socialist camp, there have been occasions when the project has been accomplished by signing agreements with the capitalists. Such capitalist investments have the disadvantage not only of the terms of the loans but other, much more important disadvantages as well, such as the establishment of joint ventures with a dangerous neighbor. Since these investments in general parallel those made in other states, they tend to

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cause divisions between friendly countries by creating economic rivalries. Furthermore, they create the dangers of corruption flowing from the constant presence of capitalism, which is very skillful in conjuring up visions of advancement and well-being to fog the minds of many people. Some time later, prices drop in the market saturated by similar products. The affected countries are obliged to seek new loans, or to permit additional investments in order to compete. The final consequences of such a policy are the fall of the economy into the hands of the monopolies, and a slow but sure return to the past. As we see it, the only safe method for investments is direct participation by the state as the sole purchaser of the goods, limiting imperialist activity to contracts for supplies and not letting them set one foot inside our house. And here it is just and proper to take advantage of interimperialist contradictions in order to secure the least burdensome terms.

We have to watch out for “disinterested” economic, cultural and other aid that imperialism grants directly or through puppet states, which gets a better reception in some parts of the world.

If all of these dangers are not seen in time, some countries that began their task of national liberation with faith and enthusiasm may find themselves on the neocolonial road, as monopoly domination is subtly established step by step so that its effects are difficult to discern until they brutally make themselves felt.

There is a big job to be done. Immense problems confront our two worlds – that of the socialist countries and that called the Third World – problems directly concerning human beings and their welfare, and related to the struggle against the main force that bears the responsibility for our backwardness. In the face of these problems, all countries and peoples conscious of their duties, of the dangers involved in the situation, of the sacrifices required by development, must take concrete steps to cement our friendship in the two fields that can never be separated: the economic and the political. We should organize a great solid bloc that, in its turn, helps new countries to free themselves not only from the political power of imperialism but also from its economic power.

The question of liberation by armed struggle from an oppressor political power should be dealt with in accordance with the rules of proletarian internationalism. In a socialist country at war, it would be absurd to conceive of a factory manager demanding guaranteed payment before shipping to the front the tanks produced by his factory. It ought to seem no less absurd to inquire of a people fighting for liberation, or needing arms to defend its freedom, whether or not they can guarantee payment.

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Arms cannot be commodities in our world. They must be delivered to the peoples asking for them to use against the common enemy, with no charge and in the quantities needed and available. That is the spirit in which the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China have offered us their military aid. We are socialists; we constitute a guarantee of the proper utilization of those arms. But we are not the only ones, and all of us should receive the same treatment.

The reply to the ominous attacks by U.S. imperialism against Vietnam or the Congo should be to supply those sister countries with all the defense equipment they need, and to offer them our full solidarity without any conditions whatsoever.

In the economic field we must conquer the road to development with the most advanced technology possible. We cannot set out to follow the long ascending steps from feudalism to the nuclear and automated era. That would be a road of immense and largely useless sacrifice. We have to start from technology at its current level. We have to make the great technological leap forward that will reduce the current gap between the more developed countries and ourselves. Technology must be applied to the large factories and also to a properly developed agriculture. Above all, its foundation must be technological and ideological education, with a sufficient mass base and strength to sustain the research institutes and organizations that have to be created in each country, as well as the men and women who will use the existing technology and be capable of adapting themselves to the newly mastered technology.

These cadres must have a clear awareness of their duty to the society in which they live. There cannot be adequate technological education if it is not complemented by ideological education; without technological education, in most of our countries, there cannot be an adequate foundation for industrial development, which is what determines the development of a modern society, or the most basic consumer goods and adequate schooling. A good part of the national revenues must be spent on so-called unproductive investment in education. And priority must be given to the development of agricultural productivity. The latter has reached truly incredible levels in many capitalist countries, producing the senseless crisis of overproduction and a surplus of grain and other food products or industrial raw materials in the developed countries. While the rest of the world goes hungry, these countries have enough land and labor to produce several times over what is needed to feed the entire world. Agriculture must be considered a fundamental pillar of our development. Therefore, a fundamental aspect of our work should be changes in the agrarian structure, and adaptation to the new technological possibilities and to the new obligations of eliminating the exploitation of human beings.

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Before making costly decisions that could cause irreparable damage, a careful survey of the national territory is needed. This is one of the preliminary steps in economic research and a basic prerequisite for correct planning. We warmly support Algeria's proposal for institutionalizing our relations. We would just like to make some supplementary suggestions: First: in order for the union to be an instrument in the struggle against imperialism, the cooperation of Latin American countries and an alliance with the socialist countries is necessary.

Second: we should be vigilant in preserving the revolutionary character of the union, preventing the admission into it of governments or movements not identified with the general aspirations of the people, and creating mechanisms that would permit the separation from it of any government or popular movement diverging from the just road.

Third: we must advocate the establishment of new relations on an equal footing between our countries and the capitalist ones, creating a revolutionary jurisprudence to defend ourselves in case of conflict, and to give new meaning to the relations between ourselves and the rest of the world. We speak a revolutionary language and we fight honestly for the victory of that cause. But frequently we entangle ourselves in the nets of an international law created as the result of confrontations between the imperialist powers, and not by the free peoples, the just peoples, in the course of their struggles.

For example, our peoples suffer the painful pressure of foreign bases established on their territories, or they have to carry the heavy burden of massive foreign debts. The story of these throwbacks is well known to all of us. Puppet governments, governments weakened by long struggles for liberation or the operation of the laws of the capitalist market, have allowed treaties that threaten our internal stability and jeopardize our future. Now is the time to throw off the yoke, to force renegotiation of oppressive foreign debts, and to force the imperialists to abandon their bases of aggression. I would not want to conclude these remarks, this recitation of concepts you all know, without calling the attention of this gathering to the fact that Cuba is not the only Latin American country; it is simply the only one that has the opportunity of speaking before you today. Other peoples are shedding their blood to win the rights we have. When we send our greetings from here, and from all the conferences and the places where they may be held, to the heroic peoples of Vietnam, Laos, so-called Portuguese Guinea, South Africa, or Palestine – to all exploited countries fighting for their emancipation – we must simultaneously extend our voice of friendship, our hand and our encouragement, to our fraternal peoples in Venezuela, Guatemala and Colombia, who today, arms in hand, are resolutely saying "No!" to the imperialist enemy.

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Few settings from which to make this declaration are as symbolic as Algiers, one of the most heroic capitals of freedom. May the magnificent Algerian people – schooled as few others in sufferings for independence, under the decisive leadership of its party, headed by our dear *compañero* Ahmed Ben Bella – serve as an inspiration to us in this fight without quarter against world imperialism.

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To José E. Martí Leyva

Havana, February 5, 1959

Sr. José E. Martí Leyva
Mártires No. 180
Holguín, Oriente

Dear Friend,

I read with real pleasure your generous offer to fight for the freedom of our neighbors, the people of Santo Domingo.

Having taken into account the full value of this disinterested and noble offer, I urge you to keep alive your enthusiasm for the future, when an opportunity will arise. Meanwhile, take advantage of your years in school and make of yourself a useful man, something we have great need of in Cuba. I am sure that you will be one of them. Devote yourself to drawing. Promise me.

My cordial greetings,

Dr. Ernesto Che Guevara

Commander in Chief,
Military Dept. of La Cabaña

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To José Tiquet

Havana, May 17, 1960

Sr. José Tiquet
Publicaciones Continente, S.A.
Pasco de la Reforma 95
México, D.F.

Dear Friend,

I implore you to forgive me for the delay in answering your letter. It was due not so much to negligence on my part but to lack of time. It would give me great pleasure to bear the cost of your trip to Cuba but I do not possess the means to do it. My income is limited to my salary as major of the Rebel Army which, in accordance with the austerity policy of our revolutionary government, consists only of the amount necessary to maintain a decent standard of living.

Your letter was no bother at all; on the contrary I was glad to receive it.
Affectionately,

Commander Ernesto Che Guevara

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To Dr. Fernando Barral

Havana, February 15, 1961

“Year of Education”
Dr. Fernando Barral
Ujpest, Hungary

Dear Fernando,

It is truly a pity that we have not been able to see each other for even a few minutes. I write with the haste and brevity imposed by my many diverse pursuits. I hope you will understand. To come to the point, though you did not speak of it in your last letter as you had in the one before that, I assume that you want to come to work in these parts. I can tell you now that there is work here for you and your wife; that the salary will be adequate but will not suffice for luxuries; that the experience of the Cuban Revolution is something I deem to be highly interesting for people such as you, who must someday begin to work again in their native land. Of course you could bring your mother; all necessary personal facilities for your work would be available. The University is being reorganized and there is room for you there if you are interested.

Naturally you will find more irrational things here than there, since a revolution upsets and disarranges everything; little by little everybody must be placed in the job he is best suited to. The only important thing is not to hamper anyone's work.

To sum up, *aquí está tu casa*. If you want to come, let me know in the way you consider advisable, and explain to me the steps that would have to be taken, if any, in order to bring your wife.

Since we have followed such different paths for many years, I can tell you as a matter of personal information that I am married and have two daughters. I had some news of old friends from Mamá who visited me a few months ago.

A fraternal embrace from your friend,

Commander Ernesto Che Guevara

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To Carlos Franqui

This letter was written in response to the publication by *Revolución* of a special photo supplement entitled "Che in the Escambray: Diary of an Invasion" in its December 24, 1962, issue. This letter was published in the December 29, 1962, *Revolución*.

Compañero Carlos Franqui
Editor, *Revolución*
Havana

Compañero Franqui,

I did not like the photo supplement published the other day. Allow me to tell you this very frankly and to explain why, hoping that these lines will be published as my "outburst."

Leaving aside small things that do not speak well of the newspaper's seriousness, such as those photos with a group of soldiers aiming at a supposed enemy with their eyes turned to the camera, there are fundamental errors:

1. That extract from the diary is not entirely authentic. The thing was like this: I was asked (during the war) if I had kept a diary of the invasion [by Guevara's column from Oriente to Las Villas]. I had, but in the form of very bare notes, for my personal use; and at the time I had no opportunity to develop it. A gentleman from Santa Clara took charge of doing that (I don't remember now under what circumstances); he turned out to be quite "flamboyant" and felt like adding feats by means of adjectives. What little value those four notes might have is destroyed when they lose authenticity.

2. It is false that the war for me took second place to meeting the needs of the peasantry. At that time winning the war was the important thing, and I believe I devoted myself to that task with all the dogged determination I was capable of. After entering the Escambray Mountains I gave two days' rest to a troop that had been on the march for 45 days under extremely difficult conditions, and resumed operations, seizing Güinía de Miranda. If a mistake was made it was in the opposite sense: little attention to the difficult task of dealing with all the "cattle rustlers" who had taken up arms in those cursed hills. Gutiérrez Menoyo and his crew vexed me to no end and I had to put up with it to be able to devote myself to the central task: the war.

3. It is false to say that Ramiro Valdés was a "close collaborator of Che's in organizational matters." I don't know how that could have gotten by you, as editor, knowing him as well as you do.

Ramirito was at Moncada, he was imprisoned on the Isle of Pines, he

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came on the *Granma* as a lieutenant, rose to captain when I was made a commander, he led a column as a commander, he was the second chief of the invasion, and then he led the operations in the eastern sector while I marched toward Santa Clara.

I believe that the historical truth must be respected: to fabricate it at whim does not lead to any good results. For that reason, and because I was an actor in that part of the drama, I made up my mind to write you these critical lines, which try to be constructive. It seems to me that if you had checked the text the errors could have been avoided.

I wish you happy holidays and a coming year without many big headlines (because of what they bring).

Che

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To Guillermo Lorentzen

Havana, May 4, 1963

"Year of Organization"
Compañero Guillermo Lorentzen
Havana

Compañero,

I have received your letters and I thank you for them.
I was born in Argentina, I fought in Cuba, and I began to be a revolutionary in Guatemala.

This autobiographical synthesis will perhaps serve as some justification for my interference in your affairs.

In Guatemala the guerrillas are fighting. The people have to some extent taken up arms. There is only one possibility of slowing the development of a struggle that shows all signs of developing toward a Cuban- or Algeriantype revolution.

Imperialism has that possibility, although I am not sure if they will bother to use it: "free elections" with Arévalo.

That is how we see the matter. Can you think it is otherwise?

A revolutionary greeting,

Patria o Muerte
Venceremos

Commander Ernesto Che Guevara

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To Peter Marucci

Havana, May 4, 1963

“Year of Organization”

Mr. Peter Marucci
Wire Editor
The Daily Mercury
Guelph, Canada

Compañero,

First of all, allow me to confess that in our country bureaucracy is strong and well entrenched; into its immense bosom it absorbs papers, incubates them, and in time sees to it that they reach their destination. That is why I am only now answering your kind letter.

Cuba is a socialist country: tropical, unpolished, ingenuous and gay. It is socialist, without relinquishing even one of its own characteristics while it adds to its people’s maturity. It is worth getting acquainted with. We hope you will come, whenever you like.

Sincerely,

Patria o muerte
Venceremos

Commander Ernesto Che Guevara

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Notes to Part 1

1. In the midst of the 1933 revolutionary upsurge against Cuban dictator Gerardo Machado, Sumner Welles was sent as ambassador by Washington to help install a pro-U.S. regime to replace Machado and thereby forestall a revolutionary triumph.

The Platt Amendment of 1901 was imposed by the U.S. Congress on the Cuban constitution during the U.S. military occupation. It granted Washington the right to intervene in Cuban affairs at any time and gave it the right to establish military bases on Cuban soil. It was abrogated in 1934.

Narciso López, a former Spanish officer, organized an expedition that landed in Cuba in 1850 with the backing of the United States. López was taken prisoner by Spanish forces and executed. He is viewed as a hero of Cuba's fight for independence from Spain.

2. On July 26, 1953, Fidel Castro led an attack on the Moncada army garrison in Santiago de Cuba that marked the beginning of the revolutionary armed struggle against the Batista regime. After the attack's failure, Batista's forces massacred more than 50 of the captured revolutionaries. Castro and others were taken prisoner, tried, and sentenced to prison. They were released in May 1955 after a public defense campaign forced Batista's regime to issue an amnesty.

3. Guevara had been separated from the main column for about a month. Following the Rebel Army victory at El Uvero on May 27–28, 1957, Guevara was assigned to stay back, together with a small troop, and care for the wounded. The El Uvero victory marked a decisive turning point in the war against the Batista dictatorship. In this chapter, he has just rejoined the main troop.

4. The Miami Pact was endorsed on November 30, 1957, by a number of opposition forces, including Felipe Pazos, who signed the agreement in the name of the July 26 Movement without authorization. The document was designed to ensure that a pro-U.S. regime would emerge following Batista's downfall. Castro denounced the agreement in an open letter and publicly disassociated the July 26 Movement from it. The Caracas Pact, broadcast over Radio Rebelde on July 20, 1958, was signed by many of the same forces that had backed the Miami Pact, plus Fidel Castro on behalf of the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army. This document opposed any military coup and called for an end to U.S. support for Batista, reflecting the shift in the relationship of forces within the opposition since the time of the Miami Pact.

5. The July 26 Movement had two wings at the time. These became known as the *Sierra* (mountain) and the *Llano*. Although *Llano* means "plain," it referred to the urban areas, where the July 26 Movement maintained an underground organization. Throughout this period there was an ongoing debate between the two groupings on fundamental questions of strategy.

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6. The "M-26" was an improvised mortar devised by the Rebel Army. It consisted of tin cans (often empty condensed milk cans) filled with explosives and fired from a makeshift spear gun or a rifle, specially rigged for the purpose. The name M-26 was derived from the name of the July 26 Movement, which was often abbreviated "M-26-7."

7. Law No. 3 of the Sierra Maestra was proclaimed by the Rebel Army on October 10, 1958. It granted tenant farmers, squatters and sharecroppers the ownership of the land they worked, providing its total area was less than two *caballerías* (67 acres). The law was a precursor to the even more sweeping agrarian reform proclaimed by the revolutionary government on May 17, 1959.

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Notes to Part 2

1. Mexico nationalized British- and U.S.-owned oil companies in 1938.
2. This is a reference to the “Associated Free State of Puerto Rico,” a U.S. possession.
3. Egypt was attacked in October-November 1956 by British, French, and Israeli troops following its nationalization of the Suez Canal. In July 1958, Washington landed 15,000 marines in Lebanon to bolster the pro-U.S. regime there in the face of popular opposition.
4. On August 12, 1933, dictator Gerardo Machado was deposed in a massive popular revolt. On February 24, 1895, the final Cuban independence war against Spain began. October 10, 1868, was the beginning of the first independence war.
5. The 1809 uprising in Upper Peru (now Bolivia), led by Pedro Domingo Murillo, was one of the first revolts against Spanish rule. It was defeated and Murillo was hanged. In 1810 an autonomous government was established in Buenos Aires by the *Cabildo Abierto* (Open Council).
6. Valeriano Weyler y Nicolau was commander in chief of Spanish forces in Cuba during the 1895-98 independence war. He gained notoriety for torturing and murdering captured independence fighters.
7. The term *mambí* refers to Cuba’s fighters in the independence wars against Spain.
8. The revolutionary upsurge of 1933-35, although successful in ousting dictator Gerardo Machado, was not able to end Cuba’s status as a U.S. semicolony. The person who emerged as Cuba’s strongman following these events was Fulgencio Batista.
9. The Tenth Congress of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC) in November 1959 voted to encourage workers to donate four percent of their wages to a fund to promote Cuba’s industrialization.
10. The agrarian reform law of May 17, 1959, set a limit of 30 *caballerías* (approximately 1,000 acres) on individual landholdings. Implementation of the law resulted in the confiscation of the vast estates in Cuba – many of them owned by U.S. companies. These lands passed into the hands of the new government. The law also granted sharecroppers, tenant farmers and squatters a deed to the land they tilled. Another provision of the law established the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA).
11. Nicolás Guillén was a leading member of the Communist Party, then known as the Popular Socialist Party.
12. V.I. Lenin, “What Is To Be Done,” in Lenin, *Collected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), vol. 5, 369.

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13. "History Will Absolve Me" was Fidel Castro's reconstruction of his 1953 courtroom speech at the trial following the Moncada attack. It subsequently became the program of the July 26 Movement.

14. In November 1959 the revolutionary government approved a law authorizing the Ministry of Labor to "intervene" in an enterprise, assuming control of its management without changing its ownership. The private owners of "intervened" enterprises were still entitled to receive profits. In practice, however, most owners of these companies left the country. This procedure continued to be used by the revolutionary government until late 1960, when it nationalized the major branches of the economy.

15. At the time this article was written, the United Party of the Socialist Revolution (PURS) was in the process of being formed. In March 1962, its predecessor, the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI) – formed through the fusion of the July 26 Movement, the Popular Socialist Party and the Revolutionary Directorate – had begun to undergo a process of reorganization leading, by the latter half of 1963, to the consolidation of the new party. At the heart of this reorganization were assemblies held in thousands of workplaces throughout Cuba. Each meeting discussed and selected who from that workplace should be considered an exemplary worker. Those selected were in turn considered for party membership.

16. Located in the Sierra Maestra, Turquino is the highest mountain in Cuba.

17. On April 17, 1961, 1,500 Cuban-born mercenaries invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on the southern coast in Las Villas Province. The action, organized directly by Washington, aimed to establish a "provisional government" to appeal for direct U.S. intervention. The invaders were defeated within 72 hours by the militia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces. On April 19, the last invaders surrendered at Playa Girón (Girón Beach), which has come to be the name Cubans use to designate the battle.

18. From late 1960 through 1961, the revolutionary government undertook a literacy campaign to teach one million Cubans to read and write. Central to this effort was the mobilization of 100,000 young people to go to the countryside, where they lived with peasants whom they were teaching. As a result of this drive, Cuba virtually eliminated illiteracy.

19. Karl Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 3, 296-97. In the last phrase, the English edition of the *Collected Works* reads "knows itself to be." The word "conscious" has been substituted in accordance with the version Guevara quoted in Spanish and which he elaborates on subsequently.

20. Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program," in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), 17.

21. V.I. Lenin, "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe," in Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 21, 342-43.

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22. Joseph Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism," in Stalin, *Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), vol. 6, 75-76.

23. Lenin, "Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of the World Revolution," in Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 33, 419-22.

24. Oscar Lange (1904-1965) was a Polish economist and government official of the Polish People's Republic. Documents from the Soviet Union and the Eastern European countries were frequently referred to during the 1963-64 discussion in Cuba. Among the others cited in this article by Guevara are the writings of Soviet economist E.G. Liberman (1897-1983), whose views advocating greater financial self-management of industrial enterprises influenced the new management system adopted by the government of the Soviet Union in 1965.

25. Lenin, "Our Revolution," in Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 33, 477-79.

26. Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Program," in Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. 3, 16-17.

27. *The Manual of Political Economy* was issued by the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR.

28. Karl Marx, *Capital*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1977), vol. 1, 899.

29. This letter was sent to Carlos Quijano, director of the Uruguayan weekly publication, *Marcha*. It was published on March 12, 1965, under the title, "From Algiers, for *Marcha*. The Cuban Revolution Today." In the original edition the following editor's note was added: "Che Guevara sent this letter to *Marcha* from Algiers. This document is of the utmost importance, especially in order to understand the aims and goals of the Cuban Revolution as seen by one of the main actors in that process. The thesis presented is intended to provoke debate and, at the same time, give a new perspective on some of the foundations of current socialist thought." On November 5, 1965, the letter was republished and presented as "Exclusive: A Special Note from Che Guevara." A memo explained that *Marcha's* readers in Argentina had not been able to read the original publication, because the week that it was first published the magazine was banned in Buenos Aires. Subheadings are based on those used in the original Cuban edition. They have been added by the publisher.

30. When Che sent the letter to Quijano, he had been touring Africa since December 1964. During this African tour, Che held many meetings with African revolutionary leaders.

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31. Che's concept of the man or woman of the future, as first evident in the consciousness of the combatants in Cuba's revolutionary war, was explored by his article, "Social Ideals of the Rebel Army" (1959). These ideas were further developed in a speech, "The Revolutionary Doctor" (1960), where he described how Cuba was creating "a new type of individual" as a result of the revolution, because "there is nothing that can educate a person... like living through a revolution." These first ideas were deepened as part of Che's concept of the individual as a direct and conscious actor in the process of constructing socialism. This article presents a synthesis of his ideas on this question.

32. These two events in the early years of the revolution seriously tested the valor of the Cuban people in the face of disaster: first, the October [Missile] Crisis of 1962, during which the U.S. actions aimed at overthrowing the Cuban Revolution brought the world to the brink of crisis; and second, Hurricane Flora, which battered the eastern region of Cuba on October 4, 1963, resulting in over a thousand deaths. Nevertheless, Che believed that if, in fact, a new society was to be created, the masses needed to apply the same kind of consciousness in everyday activities as they had heroically displayed in such special circumstances.

33. The revolutionary victory of January 1, 1959, meant that for the first time in their history, the Cuban people attained a genuine level of popular participation in power. At first, the government was made up of figures from traditional political parties that had in one way or another supported the revolution. As measures were adopted that affected the ruling classes, some dissent emerged that became the germ of the future counterrevolution, which was subsequently supported and funded by the U.S. Government. In this early confrontation, President Manuel Urrutia was forced to resign due to public pressure when it became clear that he was presenting obstacles to measures that would benefit the population as a whole. It was at this time, with the full backing of the Cuban people, that Fidel assumed government leadership and became Prime Minister.

34. The Agrarian Reform Law of May 17, 1959, after only four months of taking power, was seen as the decisive step in fulfilling the revolutionary program proposed at Moncada in 1953. Che participated in the drafting of this new law along with other comrades proposed by the revolutionary leadership.

35. On April 17, 1961, mercenary troops that were trained and financed by the U.S. Government, along with exile counterrevolutionary groups, invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. This was part of the U.S. plan to destabilize and ultimately overthrow the revolution. In these circumstances, the Cuban masses, who felt that they were the participants in a genuine process of social transformation, showed they were ready to defend the gains of the revolution and were able to defeat any attempt to destroy it.

36. The manifestations of sectarianism, which emerged in Cuba in the 1960s, forced the revolutionary leadership to take measures that would impede any tendency toward separating the government from the masses. As part

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of that leadership, Che participated in this process and analyzed on many occasions the grave consequences of such a separation. He expressed these views, for example, in the prolog he wrote for the book, *The Marxist-Leninist Party*, published in 1963, where he explained: "Mistakes were made in the leadership; the party lost those essential qualities that linked them with the masses, the exercise of democratic centralism and the spirit of sacrifice... the function of the driving force of ideology is lost... [F]ortunately the old bases for this type of sectarianism have been destroyed."

37. The debate over the role of the law of value within the construction of socialism formed part of Che's outline of an economic framework and his initial ideas for the Budgetary Finance System. Due to his revolutionary humanist perspective, Che rejected any notion that included using capitalist tools or fetishes. These ideas were widely discussed in his article, "On the Concept of Value," published in the magazine *Our Industry* in October 1963. Here we see the beginning of the economic debate that Che initiated in those years and which had international significance. This polemic was conducted in his typically rigorous style. Outlining the guidelines to be followed, Che wrote: "We want to make it clear that the debate we have initiated can be invaluable for our development only if we are capable of conducting it with a strictly scientific approach and with the greatest equanimity."

38. Nelson Rockefeller, who became one of the wealthiest people in the United States, acquired his capital by a "stroke of luck," so the story goes, when his family discovered oil. Rockefeller's economic power brought him great political influence for many years — especially with regard to Latin America policy — irrespective of who was in the White House.

39. For Che, socialism could not exist if economics was not combined with social and political consciousness. Without an awareness of rights and duties, it would be impossible to construct a new society. This attitude would be the mechanism of socialist transition and the essential form of expressing this would be through consciousness. In this work, Che analyzed the decisive role of consciousness as opposed to the distortions produced by "real existing socialism," based on the separation of the material base of society from its superstructure. Unfortunately, historical events proved Che right, when a moral and political crisis brought about the collapse of the socialist system. Among Che's writings on this question are: "Collective Discussion: Decisions and Sole Responsibilities" (1961), "On the Construction of the Party" (1963), "Awarding Certificates for Communist Work" (1964) and "A New Attitude to Work" (1964).

40. From early on Che studied the concept of underdevelopment as he tried to define the realities of the Third World. In his article, "Cuba: Historical Exception or Vanguard in the Anticolonial Struggle?" (1961), Che asked: "What is 'underdevelopment'? A dwarf with an enormous head and swollen chest is 'underdeveloped,' insofar as his fragile legs and short arms do not match the rest of his anatomy. He is the product of an abnormal and distorted development. That is what we are in reality — we, who are politely referred

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to as 'underdeveloped.' In truth, we are colonial, semicolonial or dependent countries, whose economies have been deformed by imperialism, which has peculiarly developed only those branches of industry or agriculture needed to complement its own complex economy."

41. Che argued that the full liberation of humankind is reached when work becomes a social duty carried out with complete satisfaction and sustained by a value system that contributes to the realization of conscious action in performing tasks. This could only be achieved by systematic education, acquired by passing through various stages in which collective action is increased. Che recognized that this would be difficult and would take time. In his desire to speed up this process, however, he developed methods of mobilizing people, bringing together their collective and individual interests. Among the most significant of these instruments were moral and material incentives, while deepening consciousness as a way of developing toward socialism. See Che's speeches: "Homage to Emulation Prize Winners" (1962) and "A New Attitude to Work" (1964).

42. In the process of creating the new man and woman, Che considered that education should be directly related to production and that it should be conducted on a daily basis as the only way for individuals to better themselves. This should also be undertaken in a collective spirit, so that it contributes to the development of consciousness and has a greater impact. On a practical level he developed an education system within the Ministry of Industry that guaranteed a minimum level of training for workers, so that they could meet the new scientific and technological challenges Cuba faced.

43. Che discussed the role of the vanguard at key points. First, he defined the vanguard as a necessary element in leading the struggle and within the first line of defense. After the revolution, Che saw the vanguard as providing the real impulse for the masses to participate actively in the construction of a new society; at the head of the vanguard being the party. For this reason, Che occasionally insisted that the revolution was an accelerated process wherein those who play an active role have the right to become tired but not to become tired of being the vanguard.

44. In the period when Che was a leader, the Cuban Revolution had not yet reached a level of institutionalization so that old power structures had been completely eliminated. Nevertheless, Che argued that such institutionalization was important as a means of formalizing the integration of the masses and the vanguard. Years later in 1976, after the First Congress of the Cuban Communist Party, this task of institutionalization was codified, as an expression of the power structures created by the revolution.

45. It was Che's view that work played a crucial role in the construction of a new society. He analyzed the differences between work undertaken within a capitalist society and that which was free of alienation in a socialist society. He was aware of what was required so that workers would give their utmost and put duty and sacrifice ahead of individual gain. In a speech in 1961, Che referred to daily work as, "the most difficult, constant task that demands neither an instant violent sacrifice nor a single minute in a comrade's life in order to defend the revolution, but demands long hours every day..."

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46. In order to understand the construction of socialism as a process that would eliminate the persistent roots of the previous society, Che examined the inherited relations of production. He insisted that two fundamental changes must occur as the only way to put an end to the exploitation of one human being by another and to achieve a socialist society: an increase in production and a deepening of consciousness.

47. An article such as *Socialism and Man in Cuba* could not avoid a discussion of culture, given the enormous changes that were taking place in Cuban society and power structures at the time. It was not an easy task to reflect on the concept of socialist culture in a country that was just emerging from underdevelopment and was still characterized by a neocolonial culture, imposed by a dominant class. There was a constant struggle between the values of the past and the attempt to construct an all-encompassing culture based on solidarity between people and real social justice. The struggle was made more difficult, not only by the persistence of the past culture but also by dogmatic and authoritarian tendencies of so-called "socialist realism" in socialist countries. The antidote was to defend the best and most unique aspects of Cuban culture, avoiding excesses, and by trying to construct a culture that would express the feelings of the majority without vulgarity and schemas. This is the perspective that has been maintained in the development of revolutionary culture in Cuba, and neither neoliberalism nor globalization has been able to impede the genuine process of popular culture. This is the expression of a truly socialist society.

48. The role of the party and revolutionary youth in the construction of a new society was broadly analyzed by Che: "On the Construction of the Party," "The Marxist-Leninist Party," "To be a Young Communist" and "Youth and Revolution."

49. The harmony established between Fidel and Che from their first meeting in Mexico in 1955 represented a coming together of common ideals and a common approach to the liberation of Latin America and the building of a new society. Che referred to Fidel on many occasions in his writings and speeches, evaluating his qualities as a leader and statesman with sincere admiration and respect. Fidel reciprocated these feelings countless times. Their relationship should be investigated more deeply in order to gain a greater understanding of a transcendental historical era. For further reference see Che's *Episodes of a Revolutionary War, Guerrilla Warfare*, "Cuba: Historical Exception or Vanguard in the Anticolonial Struggle?", "Political Sovereignty and Economic Independence" and "The Marxist-Leninist Party."

50. The study of the different stages of the Cuban Revolution – from guerrilla warfare to the achievement of revolutionary power – is systematically reflected in all Che's writings and speeches. He always highlighted the significance of Cuba's example for the rest of the Third World, as a symbol of freedom and showing the fruits of the initial stages of constructing socialism in an underdeveloped country. Aside from those already cited, see: "Farewell to the International Brigades for Voluntary Work" (1960) and "The Cuban Revolution's Influence in Latin America" (1962).

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51. Che's conclusions here summarized some of the most important concepts permeating his works, which are beautifully synthesized in this volume. These ideas provide a complete spectrum that encompasses philosophy, ethics and politics, spanning a range of complex questions.

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Notes to Part 3

1. José Enrique Rodó was an Uruguayan writer. His work *Ariel* was published in 1900.
2. Guevara is referring to the speech of C. Douglas Dillon.
3. In his address to the Punta del Este conference, Felipe Herrera, President of the Inter-American Development Bank, had referred to the International Monetary Commission meeting held in 1891 in Washington, D.C. That gathering included government representatives from the United States and Latin America.
4. The U.S. State Department White Paper on Cuba was written by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., an adviser to President Kennedy. Schlesinger was part of the U.S. delegation to the Punta del Este conference. The White Paper was released on April 3, 1961, two weeks before the Bay of Pigs invasion.
5. On May 17, 1961, Fidel Castro had proposed that the U.S. exchange 500 tractors for the 1,179 mercenaries captured at the Bay of Pigs as indemnification for the damage Cuba suffered in that invasion. Ultimately Washington agreed to deliver \$53 million in food, medicines, and medical equipment, in exchange for the prisoners.
6. Isla del Cisne (Swan Island) had been Honduran territory since 1861. In 1893, a U.S. sailor "discovered" the island and took possession of it on behalf of the United States. Using this as a legal basis, the U.S. government established a radio station on the island, which after 1961 was used by the Central Intelligence Agency to broadcast to Cuba. In 1974 Washington agreed to recognize Honduran sovereignty over the island, although the U.S. maintained its radio station.
7. Cuba was expelled from the Organization of American States (OAS) in January 1962.
8. A UN Conference on Trade and Employment was held in Havana from November 1947 to March 1948. It adopted the Havana Charter, which was to be the charter of a new international body to be known as the International Trade Organization. This organization never came into being, however, largely as the result of the U.S. government's refusal to become part of it. Instead, many of its anticipated functions were assumed by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which had been established in October 1947 at a conference in Geneva.
9. At the time, China's UN seat was occupied by the government of Taiwan. In 1971, the Taiwan regime was expelled and the People's Republic of China assumed the seat.
10. This is a reference to Namibia (South-West Africa), which had been a South African colony since 1920, under the authorization of the League of Nations. In 1946 the United Nations called for South Africa to submit a new trusteeship

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agreement. This request was rejected by South Africa, which maintained that the UN had no right to challenge its occupation of Namibia. In 1966 the UN General Assembly voted to strip South Africa of its mandate.

11. Shortly after the Congo obtained its independence in June 1960, an uprising broke out in Katanga Province (today Shaba), led by Moïse Tshombe. The government of Congolese Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba appealed to the United Nations for help, and UN troops were sent as a peacekeeping force. The UN forces stood aside while Lumumba's government was toppled in December 1960. Lumumba was taken prisoner by Congolese rightists and murdered.

12. The Inter-American Economic and Social Council, a commission of the Organization of American States, sponsored a meeting in February 1964 in Alta Gracia, Argentina. This gathering issued a charter constituting the Special Committee for Latin American Coordination, an organization designed to facilitate trade negotiations.

13. Cuban President Osvaldo Dorticós attended the October 1964 Nonaligned summit conference in Cairo.

14. In January 1964 U.S. forces opened fire on Panamanian students demonstrating in the U.S.-occupied Canal Zone, sparking several days of street fighting. More than 20 Panamanians were killed and 300 were wounded.

15. Cheddi Jagan had become Prime Minister of British Guiana after the People's Progressive Party won the 1953 elections; shortly thereafter Britain suspended the constitution. Jagan was reelected in 1957 and 1961. In 1964 he was defeated in an election by Forbes Burnham. In 1966 Guiana won its independence.

16. In mid-1964, a revolt broke out in the Congo led by followers of murdered Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. In an effort to crush the uprising, during November U.S. planes ferried Belgian troops and mercenaries to rebel-held territory. These forces carried out a massacre of thousands of Congolese.

17. An OAS conference in July 1964 called on all its members to break diplomatic relations and suspend trade with Cuba. The meeting charged Cuba with following a "policy of aggression" for allegedly smuggling arms to Venezuelan guerrillas. The Rio Treaty, invoked as justification for this action, was the OAS Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance, signed September 2, 1947, in Rio de Janeiro. It declared that aggression against any treaty member state would be considered an attack on all of them.

18. Dominican dictator Rafael Trujillo was assassinated on May 30, 1961. In November 1961, in the context of a growing rebellion by the Dominican people triggered by the return to Santo Domingo of two of Trujillo's brothers, Washington sent warships off the Dominican coast. In April 1948 the assassination of Colombian Liberal Party leader Jorge E. Gaitán sparked a rebellion that became known as the *Bogotazo*.

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19. Che Guevara delivered this speech at the Second Economic Seminar of Afro-Asian Solidarity, February 24, 1965. He had been touring Africa since December, after addressing the United Nations General Assembly on December 11, 1964. At this crucial time Che was preparing for his involvement in the liberation movement in the Congo, which began in April 1965. This edition of the speech incorporates for the first time corrections made by Che Guevara to the original published version of the Algiers speech. The corrections were made available from the personal archive of Che Guevara held at the Che Guevara Studies Center, Havana.

20. Che's participation in the Algiers conference reflects the relationship of Cuba to the Third World. In 1959, following the triumph of the revolution, from June to September, Che embarked on a tour of the countries involved in the Bandung Pact. The Bandung Pact was the precursor to what later became the Movement of Nonaligned Nations. At the First Seminar on Planning in Algeria on July 16, 1963, Che had outlined the experiences of the Cuban Revolution, explaining that he had accepted the invitation to attend "only in order to offer a little history of our economic development, of our mistakes and successes, which might prove useful to you some time in the near future..."

21. In this speech Che defined very precisely his revolutionary thesis for the Third World and the integration of the struggle for national liberation with socialist ideas. Che's call in Algeria on the socialist countries to give unconditional and radical support to the Third World provoked much debate. Nevertheless, history would prove him correct.

22. This definition of unequal exchange was part of Che's profound appeal made in Geneva on March 25, 1964, at the UN World Conference on Economics and Development in the Third World: "It is our duty to... draw to the attention of those present that while the status quo is maintained and justice is determined by powerful interests... it will be difficult to eliminate the prevailing tensions that endanger humankind."

23. For Che, socialism inherently meant overcoming exploitation as an essential step toward a just and humane society. Che was outspoken on this issue in debates and was often misunderstood, as was his emphasis on the need for international unity in the struggle for socialism. Che's idea was that the international socialist forces would contribute to the economic and social development of the peoples that liberated themselves.

24. Che's direct participation from 1959 to 1965 in the construction of a technological and material basis for Cuban society is strongly linked to his idea of creating the new man and woman. This is a question that he constantly returned to, considering it one of the two main pillars on which a new society would be constructed. His strategy was not only to solve immediate problems but to put in place certain structures that would secure Cuba's future scientific and technological development. He was able to advance this strategy during his time as head of the Ministry of Industry. For further reading on this topic, see his speeches: "May the Universities be Filled with Negroes, Mulattos, Workers and Peasants" (1960) and "Youth and Revolution" (1964).

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25. In his efforts to understand fully the tasks in the transition to a socialist economy, Che came to see the vital role of economic planning, especially in the construction of a socialist economy in an underdeveloped country that retained elements of capitalism. Planning is necessary because it represents the first human attempt to control economic forces and characterizes this transitional period. He warned also of the trend within socialism to reform the economic system by strengthening the market, material interests and the law of value. To counter this trend, Che advocated centralized, antibureaucratic planning that enriched consciousness. His idea was to use conscious and organized action as the fundamental driving force of planning. For further reading see his article "The Significance of Socialist Planning" (1964).

26. In January 1966, the Tricontinental Conference of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America took place in Cuba; it was agreed that an organization with a permanent Executive Secretariat would be created. At the time of the conference, Che Guevara was in Tanzania having left the Congo. The Cuban leader Manuel Piñero, in charge of Cuba's relationship with revolutionaries in the Third World at the time, explained in 1997 that the "Message" was written by Che in a training camp in Pinar del Río in Cuba before setting out for Bolivia in 1966. Che's "Message" was published for the first time on April 16, 1967, in a special supplement which later became *Tricontinental* magazine. It was published under the title "Create Two, Three, Many Vietnams, That is the Slogan."

27. Che's first analyses of the wars in Korea and Vietnam were written in 1954 during his stay in Guatemala, which was also invaded by imperialist forces. In very different circumstances, after the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, he again discussed events in Asia. See, for example, "Solidarity with South Vietnam" (1963), the prolog of the book *War of the People, People's Army* (1964) and Che's UN speech (1964).

28. South Vietnamese dictator Ngo Dinh Diem was assassinated on November 1, 1963, at the instigation of Washington, which was dissatisfied at the inability of his regime to counter the military and political successes of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front.

29. For a more detailed understanding of these ideas, see Che's speech at the UN and his Algerian speech in this volume, where he proclaimed: "The ominous attack of U.S. imperialism on Vietnam or in the Congo must be met by a show of unity, gathering all our defenses to give our sister countries our unconditional solidarity."

30. On many occasions, Che referred to the differences that beset the international revolutionary movement — particularly the conflict between China and the Soviet Union — and the need to resolve those differences within the movement itself, in order to avoid damage on a wider scale. Following this line of thought, Che's theses on the Third World tried to avoid dogma and schemas. The works in this volume are an expression of Che's position on this issue.

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31. President Lyndon B. Johnson was Vice-President when John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963. Johnson escalated U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War and increased the level of open aggression against Cuba, providing unconditional support for counterrevolutionary organizations.

32. Che's ideas about tactics and strategy reflect a dialectical development in terms of content and objectives, tracing his experience in the Cuban revolutionary struggle up to the point where he joined the struggles in Africa and Latin America. The following works are key references: *Guerrilla Warfare*, "Guerrilla Warfare: A Method," *Episodes of the Revolutionary War*, "Tactics and Strategy of Latin American Revolution" and *Episodes of the Revolutionary War in the Congo*.

33. The involvement of U.S. capital in Latin America was a major concern for Che throughout his life and was reflected in his writings. In many of his writings and reflections Che made the connection between economics and politics and the way they function in each Latin American country. A very detailed analysis of this is found in his article "Tactics and Strategies..."

34. In April 1965 tens of thousands of U.S. troops invaded the Dominican Republic to crush a popular uprising.

35. Following his experience in the Congo, Che wrote *Episodes of the Revolutionary War in the Congo*, in which he detailed the most important lessons of that struggle. In the epilogue he outlined aspects of the economic, social and political realities of the region, as well as the possibilities for struggle. He described the national bourgeoisie and their dependent position within the power structures; and concluded they were a spent force, politically speaking.

36. Che's analysis about the essential realities of the Third World is fundamental to understanding his participation in the liberation struggles of different peoples. Che's "Message," written before he left for Bolivia, firmly established his political approach and the criteria on which his decision was based, echoing the views he expressed publicly at the United Nations. The content of Che's UN speech, especially his remarks about the crisis in the Middle East and Israel, is surprisingly relevant today.

37. Under President Nixon, the United States began blanket bombing in Cambodia in 1970.

38. On September 30, 1965, Indonesian General Suharto seized power and proceeded to carry out a massacre of members and supporters of the oncepowerful Indonesian Communist Party. In the next several months, nearly one million people were killed.

39. The idea of internationalism on a global scale outlined by Che in his "Message" represents a synthesis of his thought and political praxis. It is this synthesis that brings us closer to the essential revolutionary, who supports the construction of a new order beginning with the taking of power through armed struggle. Che recognized that the world had reached a crossroads

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and that the national bourgeoisie was incapable of standing up to imperialism. Under these circumstances, the only way to liberation would be through prolonged people's war

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Notes to Part 4

1. A saying in Spanish indicating severe poverty.
2. Pastorita's lottery was a national lottery run by a government agency headed by Pastora Núñez.
3. This letter relates to the publication of Guevara's *Episodes of the Revolutionary War*.
4. Pepe the Crocodile is a playful reference to Uncle Sam.

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