

FIDEL CASTRO

SELECTED SPEECHES

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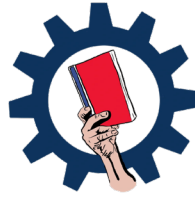
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DEDICATION

We dedicate this book to all cadre who believe with their hearts, minds, and actions in a true Bolshevik Revolution!

For one to be a true Bolshevik, one must desire wholeheartedly, without reservation, to free themselves and their fellow workers from the bonds of class antagonisms. A true Bolshevik is one who understands the foundations of Marxist-Leninist teachings; one who understands that their sole purpose in life is to crush capitalism.

We dedicate this collection of works to you in the hopes that the truths expounded in this book and others will inspire you, the reader, to work to help build Communism.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

History Will Absolve Me	1
On Marxism-Leninism	88
Why is the United Party of the Socialist Revolution a necessity?	88
Resisting with Limited Resources.....	86
The Fight Against the Army	87
The Political Struggle Developed Revolutionary Values	90
The Various Revolutionary Forces.....	90
They Were Going to Squeeze You Dry.....	92
Playing Politics with Arms.....	94
Fooling The People.....	95
When We Decided to Start Organizing a Revolutionary Movement.....	95
Our People Were Eager For a Revolutionary Change	99
Terror of the Army	103
They Wanted to Evict the Peasants.....	104
A Heroic Worker	106
Misery and Illiteracy.....	108

The Revolutionary Movement is Invincible.....	109
All of the Military Science of the Pentagon is Going to Clash with Reality	110
The Spark That Kindles the Fire	111
The Conquest of Revolutionary Power.....	113
Rómulo Serves Imperialism.....	114
Down with One and Up with Another.....	116
Imperialism and the Bourgeoisie are Trying to Keep the Military Machine Intact	116
The First Interview I Had with Bonsal.....	121
We Stood Alone.....	127
We Reject the Miami Pact.....	128
The Power of the People.....	129
I Never Wanted to be a Dictator.....	130
The First Stage of Revolutionary Government.....	132
What Did Miró Cardona & Company Represent?	134
The P.S.P. Represented the Working Class	135
They Defended the Bourgeoisie.....	137
The Force Lenin Spoke About	138
Revolutionary Unity	139
The Working Class	140
The Revolution in the Escambray Mountains	142
In the Escambray a Revolutionary Tradition Was Not Awakened, as in the Sierra Maestra.....	143
The Working Class Is With The Revolution	145

We All Have Much To Learn	150
I Believe Absolutely in Marxism!.....	152
Engels Carries on The Work of Marx.....	155
The Value of Lenin.....	156
The Building of Communism.....	157
Primitive Communism and Its Mode of Production.....	158
Slavery	159
The Bourgeoisie	160
The Proletariat	162
Scientific Socialism	163
Sacrifices by the USSR.....	166
Advantages Over Capitalism	168
Revolution at the Crossroads	170
There Are No Middle Roads.....	172
Treason or Revolution.....	174
No Sacrifice in Vain.....	176
The Anti-Imperialist Struggle	177
There Is Only One Revolution	179
I Am a Marxist-Leninist.....	180
The Merit in Being Communist.....	181
Unity Follows Discussion.....	183
A Marxist-Leninist Program	184
All of the Members of the Revolutionary Organizations	185
Formation of the ORI.....	186

The Revolution Has Cadres.....	190
A Party of Selected Members.....	191
It Is Better to be Selective	193
The Merit of the Future.....	195
There Will Be No Special Privileges.....	197
Study is Necessary	198
Teaching, Not Indoctrination	199
Revolution as a Career.....	201
Fundamental Tasks of the Party: to Lead and to Organize..	202
The Idiot Kings	204
The Ideal System of Government is the Party System	205
People Write History	207
There Are Many Camilos	209
The Party Must Be the Great Instrument of Merit.....	209
Socialism or Death	211

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

On July 26, 1953, Fidel Castro, a lawyer, and a member of the Orthodox Party, led a group of Cuban revolutionaries on an attack of the Moncada military barracks in Santiago de Cuba. The action was an attempt to secure weapons to support the movement to overthrow the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Arrested and sentenced to fifteen years in prison, Fidel Castro offered this four-hour speech on October 16, 1953, in the defense of the movement he led. It later was published as a manifesto of the July 26th Movement that successfully overthrew the Batista government and took power in 1959. It is considered an early declaration of the goals of the Cuban Revolution.

HONORABLE JUDGES:

Never has a lawyer had to practice his profession under such difficult conditions; never has such a number of overwhelming irregularities been committed against an accused man. In this case, counsel and defendant are one and the same. As attorney he has not even been able to take a look at the indictment. As accused, for the past seventy-six days he has been locked away in solitary confinement, held totally and absolutely incommunicado, in violation of every human and legal right.

FIDEL CASTRO

He who speaks to you hates vanity with all his being, nor are his temperament or frame of mind inclined towards courtroom poses or sensationalism of any kind. If I have had to assume my own defense before this Court, it is for two reasons. First: because I have been denied legal aid almost entirely, and second: only one who has been so deeply wounded, who has seen his country so forsaken and its justice trampled so, can speak at a moment like this with words that spring from the blood of his heart and the truth of his very gut.

There was no lack of generous comrades who wished to defend me, and the Havana Bar Association appointed a courageous and competent jurist. Dr. Jorge Pagliery, Dean of the Bar in this city, to represent me in this case. However, he was not permitted to carry out his task. As often as he tried to see me, the prison gates were closed before him. Only after a month and a half, and through the intervention of the Court, was he finally granted a ten-minute interview with me in the presence of a sergeant from the Military Intelligence Agency (SIM). One supposes that a lawyer has the right to speak with his defendant in private, and this right is respected throughout the world, except in the case of a Cuban prisoner of war in the hands of an implacable tyranny that abides by no code of law, be it legal or humane. Neither Dr. Pagliery nor I were willing to tolerate such dirty spying upon our means of defense for the oral trial. Did they want to know, perhaps, beforehand, the methods we would use in order to reduce to dust the incredible fabric of lies they had woven around the Moncada Barracks events? How were we going to expose the terrible truth they would go to such great lengths to conceal? It was then that we

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

decided that, taking advantage of my professional rights as a lawyer, I would assume my own defense.

This decision, overheard by the sergeant and reported by him to his superior, provoked a real panic. It looked like some mocking little imp was telling them that I was going to ruin all their plans. You know very well. Honorable Judges, how much pressure has been brought to bear on me in order to strip me as well of this right that is ratified by long Cuban tradition. The Court could not give in to such machination, for that would have left the accused in a state of total indefensiveness. The accused, who is now exercising this right to plead his own case, will under no circumstances refrain from saying what he must say. I consider it essential that I explain, at the onset, the reason for the terrible isolation in which I have been kept; what was the purpose of keeping me silent; what was behind the plots to kill me, plots which the Court is familiar with; what grave events are being hidden from the people; and the truth behind all the strange things which have taken place during this trial. I propose to do all this with utmost clarity.

You have publicly called this case the most significant in the history of the Republic. If you sincerely believed this, you should not have allowed your authority to be stained and degraded. The first court session was September 21st. Among one hundred machine guns and bayonets, scandalously invading the hall of justice, more than a hundred people were seated in the prisoner's dock. The great majority had nothing to do with what had happened. They had been under preventive arrest for many days, suffering all kinds of insults and abuses in the chambers of the repressive units. But the rest of the accused, the minority, were brave and determined, ready to proudly

FIDEL CASTRO

confirm their part in the battle for freedom, ready to offer an example of unprecedented self-sacrifice and to wrench from the jail's claws those who in deliberate bad faith had been included in the trial. Those who had met in combat confronted one another again. Once again, with the cause of justice on our side, we would wage the terrible battle of truth against infamy! Surely the regime was not prepared for the moral catastrophe in store for it!

How to maintain all its false accusations? How to keep secret what had really happened, when so many young men were willing to risk everything—prison, torture, and death, if necessary—in order that the truth be told before this Court?

I was called as a witness at that first session. For two hours I was questioned by the Prosecutor as well as by twenty defense attorneys. I was able to prove with exact facts and figures the sums of money that had been spent, the way this money was collected and the arms we had been able to round up. I had nothing to hide, for the truth was: all this was accomplished through sacrifices without precedent in the history of our Republic. I spoke of the goals that inspired us in our struggle and of the humane and generous treatment that we had at all times accorded our adversaries. If I accomplished my purpose of demonstrating that those who were falsely implicated in this trial were neither directly nor indirectly involved, I owe it to the complete support and backing of my heroic comrades. For, as I said, the consequences they might be forced to suffer at no time caused them to repent of their condition of revolutionaries and patriots. I was never once allowed to speak with these comrades of mine during the time we were in prison, and yet we planned to do exactly the same. The

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

fact is, when men carry the same ideals in their hearts, nothing can isolate them—neither prison walls nor the sod of cemeteries. For a single memory, a single spirit, a single idea, a single conscience, a single dignity will sustain them all.

From that moment on, the structure of lies the regime had erected about the events at Moncada Barracks began to collapse like a house of cards. As a result, the Prosecutor realized that keeping all those persons named as instigators in prison was completely absurd, and he requested their provisional release.

At the close of my testimony in that first session, I asked the Court to allow me to leave the dock and sit among the counsel for the defense. This permission was granted to me. At that point what I consider my most important mission in this trial began: to totally discredit the cowardly, miserable, and treacherous lies which the regime had hurled against our fighters; to reveal with irrefutable evidence the horrible, repulsive crimes they had practiced on the prisoners; and to show the nation and the world the infinite misfortune of the Cuban people who are suffering the cruelest, the most inhuman oppression of their history.

The second session convened on Tuesday, September 22nd. By that time only ten witnesses had testified, and they had already cleared up the murders in the Manzanillo area, specifically establishing and placing on record the direct responsibility of the captain commanding that post. There were three hundred more witnesses to testify. What would happen if, with a staggering mass of facts and evidence, I should proceed to cross-examine the very Army men who were directly responsible for those crimes? Could the regime permit me to go ahead before the large audience

FIDEL CASTRO

attending the trial? Before journalists and jurists from all over the Island? And before the party leaders of the opposition, who they had stupidly seated right in the prisoner's dock where they could hear so well all that might be brought out here? They would rather have blown up the courthouse with all its judges, than allow that!

And so, they devised a plan by which they could eliminate me from the trial, and they proceeded to do just that, *manu militari*. On Friday night, September 25th, on the eve of the third session of the trial, two prison doctors visited me in my cell. They were visibly embarrassed. 'We have come to examine you,' they said. I asked them, 'Who is so worried about my health?' Actually, from the moment I saw them I realized what they had come for. They could not have treated me with greater respect, and they explained their predicament to me. That afternoon Colonel Chaviano had appeared at the prison and had told them I 'was doing the Government terrible damage with this trial.' He had told them they must sign a certificate declaring that I was ill and was, therefore, unable to appear in court. The doctors told me that for their part they were prepared to resign from their posts and risk persecution. They put the matter in my hands, for me to decide. I found it hard to ask those men to unhesitatingly destroy themselves. But neither could I, under any circumstances, consent that those orders be carried out. Leaving the matter to their own consciences, I told them only: 'You must know your duty; I certainly know mine.'

After leaving my cell they signed the certificate. I know they did so, believing in good faith that this was the only way they could save my life, which they considered to be in grave danger. I was not obliged to keep our conversation

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

secret, for I am bound only by the truth. Telling the truth in this instance may jeopardize those good doctors in their material interests, but I am removing all doubt about their honor which is worth much more. That same night, I wrote the Court a letter denouncing the plot; requesting that two Court physicians be sent to certify my excellent state of health, and to inform you that if to save my life I must take part in such deception, I would a thousand times prefer to lose it. To show my determination to fight alone against this whole degenerate frameup, I added to my own words one of the Master's lines: 'A just cause even from the depths of a cave can do more than an army.' As the Court knows, this was the letter Dr. Melba Hernández submitted at the third session of the trial on September 26th. I managed to get it to her in spite of the heavy guard I was under. That letter, of course, provoked immediate reprisals. Dr. Hernández was subjected to solitary confinement and I—since I was already incommunicado—was sent to the most inaccessible reaches of the prison. From that moment on, all the accused were thoroughly searched from head to foot, before they were brought into the courtroom.

Two Court physicians certified on September 27th that I was, in fact, in perfect health. Yet in spite of the repeated orders from the Court, I was never again brought to the hearings. What's more, anonymous persons daily circulated hundreds of apocryphal pamphlets which announced my rescue from jail. This stupid alibi was invented so they could physically eliminate me and pretend I had tried to escape. Since the scheme failed as a result of timely exposure by ever alert friends, and after the first affidavit was shown to be false, the regime could only keep me away from the trial by open and shameless contempt of Court.

FIDEL CASTRO

This was an incredible situation, Honorable Judges; Here was a regime literally afraid to bring an accused man to Court; a regime of blood and terror that shrank in fear of the moral conviction of a defenseless man—unarmed, slandered, and isolated. And so, after depriving me of everything else, they finally deprived me even of the trial in which I was the main accused. Remember that this was during a period in which individual rights were suspended and the Public Order Act as well as censorship of radio and press were in full force. What unbelievable crimes this regime must have committed to so fear the voice of one accused man!

I must dwell upon the insolence and disrespect which the Army leaders have at all times shown toward you. As often as this Court has ordered an end to the inhuman isolation in which I was held; as often as it has ordered my most elementary rights to be respected; as often as it has demanded that I be brought before it, this Court has never been obeyed! Worse yet; in the very presence of the Court, during the first and second hearings, a praetorian guard was stationed beside me to totally prevent me from speaking to anyone, even during the brief recesses. In other words, not only in prison, but also in the courtroom and in your presence, they ignored your decrees. I had intended to mention this matter in the following session, as a question of elementary respect for the Court, but—I was never brought back. And if, in exchange for so much disrespect, they bring us before you, to be jailed in the name of a legality which they and they alone have been violating since March 10th, sad indeed is the role they would force upon you. The Latin maxim *Cedant arma togae* has certainly not been

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

fulfilled on a single occasion during this trial. I beg you to keep that circumstance well in mind.

What is more, these devices were in any case quite useless; my brave comrades, with unprecedented patriotism, did their duty to the utmost.

'Yes, we set out to fight for Cuba's freedom and we are not ashamed of having done so,' they declared, one by one, on the witness stand. Then, addressing the Court with impressive courage, they denounced the hideous crimes committed upon the bodies of our brothers. Although absent from Court, I was able, in my prison cell, to follow the trial in all its details. And I have the convicts at Boniato Prison to thank for this. In spite of all threats, these men found ingenious means of getting newspaper clippings and all kinds of information to me. In this way they avenged the abuses and immoralities perpetrated against them both by Taboada, the warden, and the supervisor. Lieutenant Rozabal, who drove them from sun up to sun down building private mansions and starved them by embezzling the prison food budget.

As the trial went on, the roles were reversed: those who came to accuse found themselves accused, and the accused became the accusers! It was not the revolutionaries who were judged there; judged once and forever was a man named Batista—*monstrum horrendum!*—and it matters little that these worthy and valiant young men have been condemned, if tomorrow the people will condemn the Dictator and his henchmen! Our men were consigned to the Isle of Pines Prison, in whose circular galleries Castells' ghost still lingers and where the cries of countless victims still echo; there our young men have been sent to expiate their love of liberty, in bitter confinement, banished from

FIDEL CASTRO

society, torn from their homes, and exiled from their country. Is it not clear to you, as I have said before, that in such circumstances it is difficult and disagreeable for this lawyer to fulfill his duty?

As a result of so many turbid and illegal machinations, due to the will of those who govern and the weakness of those who judge, I find myself here in this little room at the Civilian Hospital, where I have been brought to be tried in secret, so that I may not be heard and my voice may be stifled, and so that no one may learn of the things I am going to say. Why, then, do we need that imposing Palace of Justice which the Honorable Judges would without doubt find much more comfortable? I must warn you: it is unwise to administer justice from a hospital room, surrounded by sentinels with fixed bayonets; the citizens might suppose that our justice is sick—and that it is captive.

Let me remind you, your laws of procedure provide that trials shall be 'public hearings;' however, the people have been barred altogether from this session of Court. The only civilians admitted here have been two attorneys and six reporters, in whose newspapers the censorship of the press will prevent printing a word I say. I see, as my sole audience in this chamber and in the corridors, nearly a hundred soldiers and officers. I am grateful for the polite and serious attention they give me. I only wish I could have the whole Army before me! I know, one day this Army will seethe with rage to wash away the terrible, the shameful bloodstains splattered across the military uniform by the present ruthless clique in its lust for power. On that day, oh what a fall awaits those mounted in arrogance on their noble steeds!—provided that the people have not dismounted them long before that!

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

Finally, I should like to add that no treatise on penal law was to me in my cell. I have at my disposal only this tiny code of law lent to me by my learned counsel. Dr. Baudilio Castellanos, the courageous defender of my comrades. In the same way they prevented me from receiving the books of Martí; it seems the prison censorship considered them too subversive. Or is it because I said Martí was the inspirer of the 26th of July? Reference books on any other subject were also denied to me during this trial. But it makes no difference! I carry the teachings of the Master in my heart, and in my mind the noble ideas of all men who have defended people's freedom everywhere!

I am going to make only one request of this court; I trust it will be granted as a compensation for the many abuses and outrages the accused has had to tolerate without protection of the law. I ask that my right to express myself be respected without restraint. Otherwise, even the merest semblance of justice cannot be maintained, and the final episode of this trial would be, more than all the others, one of ignominy and cowardice.

I must admit that I am somewhat disappointed. I had expected that the Honorable Prosecutor would come forward with a grave accusation. I thought he would be ready to justify to the limit his contention, and his reasons why I should be condemned in the name of Law and Justice—what law and what justice?—to 26 years in prison. But no. He has limited himself to reading Article 148 of the Social Defense Code. On the basis of this, plus aggravating circumstances, he requests that I be imprisoned for the lengthy term of 26 years! Two minutes seems a very short time in which to demand and justify that a man be put behind bars for more than a quarter of a century. Can it be

FIDEL CASTRO

that the Honorable Prosecutor is, perhaps, annoyed with the Court? Because as I see it, his laconic attitude in this case clashes with the solemnity with which the Honorable Judges declared, rather proudly, that this was a trial of the greatest importance! I have heard prosecutors speak ten times longer in a simple narcotics case asking a sentence of just six months. The Honorable Prosecutor has supplied not a word in support of his petition. I am a just man. I realize that for a prosecuting attorney under oath of loyalty to the Constitution of the Republic, it is difficult to come here in the name of an unconstitutional, statutory, *de facto* government, lacking any legal much less moral basis, to ask that a young Cuban, a lawyer like himself—perhaps as honorable as he, be sent to jail for 26 years. But the Honorable Prosecutor is a gifted man and I have seen much less talented persons write lengthy diatribes in defense of this regime. How then can I suppose that he lacks reason with which to defend it, at least for fifteen minutes, however contemptible that might be to any decent person? It is clear that there is a great conspiracy behind all this.

HONORABLE JUDGES:

Why such interest in silencing me? Why is every type of argument foregone in order to avoid presenting any target whatsoever against which I might direct my own brief? Is it that they lack any legal, moral, or political basis on which to put forth a serious formulation of the question? Are they that afraid of the truth? Do they hope that I, too, will speak for only two minutes and that I will not touch upon the points which have caused certain people sleepless nights since July 26th? Since the prosecutor's petition was restricted to the mere reading of five lines of an article of the

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

Social Defense Code, might they suppose that I too would limit myself to these same lines and circle round them like some slave turning a millstone? I shall by no means accept such a gag, for in this trial there is much more than the freedom of a single individual at stake. Fundamental matters of principle are being debated here, the right of men to be free is on trial, the very foundations of our existence as a civilized and democratic nation are in the balance. When this trial is over, I do not want to have to reproach myself for any principle left undefended, for any truth unsaid, for any crime not denounced.

The Honorable Prosecutor's famous little article hardly deserves a minute of my time. I shall limit myself for the moment to a brief legal skirmish against it because I want to clear the field for an assault against all the endless lies and deceits, the hypocrisy, conventionalism, and moral cowardice that have set the stage for the crude comedy which since the 10th of March—and even before then—has been called Justice in Cuba.

It is a fundamental principle of criminal law that an imputed offense must correspond exactly to the type of crime described by law. If no law applies exactly to the point in question, then there is no offense.

The article in question reads textually: 'A penalty of imprisonment of from three to ten years shall be imposed upon the perpetrator of any act aimed at bringing about an armed uprising against the Constitutional Powers of the State. The penalty shall be imprisonment for from five to twenty years, in the event that insurrection actually be carried into effect.'

In what country is the Honorable Prosecutor living? Who has told him that we have sought to bring about an

FIDEL CASTRO

uprising against the Constitutional Powers of the State? Two things are self-evident. First of all, the dictatorship that oppresses the nation is not a constitutional power, but an unconstitutional one: it was established against the Constitution, over the head of the Constitution, violating the legitimate Constitution of the Republic. The legitimate Constitution is that which emanates directly from a sovereign people. I shall demonstrate this point fully later on, notwithstanding all the subterfuges contrived by cowards and traitors to justify the unjustifiable. Secondly, the article refers to Powers, in the plural, as in the case of a republic governed by a Legislative Power, an Executive Power, and a Judicial Power which balance and counterbalance one another. We have fomented a rebellion against one single power, an illegal one, which has usurped and merged into a single whole both the Legislative and Executive Powers of the nation and has so destroyed the entire system that was specifically safeguarded by the Code now under our analysis. As to the independence of the Judiciary after the 10th of March, I shall not allude to that for I am in no mood for joking... No matter how Article 148 may be stretched, shrunk, or amended, not a single comma applies to the events of July 26th. Let us leave this statute alone and await the opportunity to apply it to those who really did foment an uprising against the Constitutional Powers of the State. Later I shall come back to the Code to refresh the Honorable Prosecutor's memory about certain circumstances he has unfortunately overlooked.

I warn you; I am just beginning! If there is in your hearts a vestige of love for your country, love for humanity, love for justice, listen carefully. I know that I will be silenced for many years; I know that the regime will try to suppress the

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

truth by all possible means; I know that there will be a conspiracy to bury me in oblivion. But my voice will not be stilled—it will rise from my breast even when I feel most alone, and my heart will give it all the fire that callous cowards deny it.

From a shack in the mountains on Monday, July 27th, I listened to the dictator's voice on the air while there were still 18 of our men in arms against the government. Those who have never experienced similar moments will never know that kind of bitterness and indignation. While the long-cherished hopes of freeing our people lay in ruins about us we heard those crushed hopes gloated over by a tyrant more vicious, more arrogant than ever. The endless stream of lies and slanders, poured forth in his crude, odious, repulsive language, may only be compared to the endless stream of clean young blood which had flowed since the previous night—with his knowledge, consent, complicity, and approval—being spilled by the most inhuman gang of assassins it is possible to imagine. To have believed him for a single moment would have sufficed to fill a man of conscience with remorse and shame for the rest of his life. At that time, I could not even hope to brand his miserable forehead with the mark of truth which condemns him for the rest of his days and for all time to come. Already a circle of more than a thousand men, armed with weapons more powerful than ours and with peremptory orders to bring in our bodies, was closing in around us. Now that the truth is coming out, now that speaking before you, I am carrying out the mission I set for myself, I may die peacefully and content. So, I shall not mince any words about those savage murderers.

FIDEL CASTRO

I must pause to consider the facts for a moment. The government itself said the attack showed such precision and perfection that it must have been planned by military strategists. Nothing could have been farther from the truth! The plan was drawn up by a group of young men, none of whom had any military experience at all. I will reveal their names, omitting two who are neither dead nor in prison: Abel Santamaria, Jose Luis Tasende, Renato Guitart Rosell, Pedro Miret, Jesús Montané, and myself. Half of them are dead, and in tribute to their memory I can say that although they were not military experts, they had enough patriotism to have given, had we not been at such a great disadvantage, a good beating to that entire lot of generals together, those generals of the 10th of March who are neither soldiers nor patriots. Much more difficult than the planning of the attack was our organizing, training, mobilizing and arming men under this repressive regime with its millions of dollars spent on espionage, bribery, and information services. Nevertheless, all this was carried out by those men and many others like them with incredible seriousness, discretion, and discipline. Still more praiseworthy is the fact that they gave this task everything they had; ultimately, their very lives.

The final mobilization of men who came to this province from the most remote towns of the entire island was accomplished with admirable precision and in absolute secrecy. It is equally true that the attack was carried out with magnificent coordination. It began simultaneously at 5:15 a.m. in both Bayamo and Santiago de Cuba; and one by one, with an exactitude of minutes and seconds prepared in advance, the buildings surrounding the barracks fell to our forces. Nevertheless, in the interest of truth and even

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

though it may detract from our merit, I am also going to reveal for the first time a fact that was fatal: due to a most unfortunate error, half of our forces, and the better armed half at that, went astray at the entrance to the city and were not on hand to help us at the decisive moment. Abel Santamaría, with 21 men, had occupied the Civilian Hospital; with him went a doctor and two of our women comrades, to attend to the wounded. Raul Castro, with ten men, occupied the Palace of Justice, and it was my responsibility to attack the barracks with the rest, 95 men. Preceded by an advance group of eight who had forced Gate Three, I arrived with the first group of 45 men. It was precisely here that the battle began, when my car ran into an outside patrol armed with machine guns. The reserve group which had almost all the heavy weapons (the light arms were with the advance group), turned up the wrong street and lost its way in an unfamiliar city. I must clarify the fact that I not for a moment doubt the courage of those men; they experienced great anguish and desperation when they realized they were lost. Because of the type of action, it was and because the contending forces were wearing identically colored uniforms, it was not easy for these men to re-establish contact with us. Many of them, captured later on, met death with true heroism.

Everyone had instructions, first of all, to be humane in the struggle. Never was a group of armed men more generous to the adversary. From the beginning we took numerous prisoners—nearly twenty—and there was one moment when three of our men—Ramiro Valdés, José Suárez, and Jesús Montané—managed to enter a barrack and hold nearly fifty soldiers prisoners for a short time. Those soldiers testified before the Court, and without

FIDEL CASTRO

exception they all acknowledged that we treated them with absolute respect, that we didn't even subject them to one scoffing remark. In line with this, I want to give my heartfelt thanks to the Prosecutor for one thing in the trial of my comrades: when he made his report, he was fair enough to acknowledge as an incontestable fact that we maintained a high spirit of chivalry throughout the struggle.

Discipline among the soldiers was very poor. They finally defeated us because of their superior numbers—fifteen to one—and because of the protection afforded them by the defense of the fortress. Our men were much better marksmen, as our enemies themselves conceded. There was a high degree of courage on both sides.

In analyzing the reasons for our tactical failure, apart from the regrettable error already mentioned, I believe we made a mistake by dividing the commando unit we had so carefully trained. Of our best trained men and boldest leaders, there were 27 in Bayamo, 21 at the Civilian Hospital and 10 at the Palace of Justice. If our forces had been distributed differently the outcome of the battle might have been different. The clash with the patrol (purely accidental, since the unit might have been at that point twenty seconds earlier or twenty seconds later) alerted the camp and gave it time to mobilize. Otherwise, it would have fallen into our hands without a shot fired, since we already controlled the guard post. On the other hand, except for the .22 caliber rifles, for which there were plenty of bullets, our side was very short of ammunition. Had we had hand grenades, the Army would not have been able to resist us for fifteen minutes.

When I became convinced that all efforts to take the barracks were now useless, I began to withdraw our men in

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

groups of eight and ten. Our retreat was covered by six expert marksmen under the command of Pedro Miret and Fidel Labrador; heroically they held off the Army's advance. Our losses in the battle had been insignificant; 95% of our casualties came from the Army's inhumanity after the struggle. The group at the Civilian Hospital only had one casualty; the rest of that group was trapped when the troops blocked the only exit; but our youths did not lay down their arms until their very last bullet was gone. With them was Abel Santamaría, the most generous, beloved, and intrepid of our young men, whose glorious resistance immortalizes him in Cuban history. We shall see the fate they met and how Batista sought to punish the heroism of our youth.

We planned to continue the struggle in the mountains in case the attack on the regiment failed. In Siboney I was able to gather a third of our forces; but many of these men were now discouraged. About twenty of them decided to surrender; later we shall see what became of them. The rest, 18 men, with what arms and ammunition were left, followed me into the mountains. The terrain was completely unknown to us. For a week we held the heights of the Gran Piedra range, and the Army occupied the foothills. We could not come down; they didn't risk coming up. It was not force of arms, but hunger and thirst that ultimately overcame our resistance. I had to divide the men into smaller groups. Some of them managed to slip through the Army lines; others were surrendered by Monsignor Pérez Serantes. Finally, only two comrades remained with me—José Suárez and Oscar Alcalde. While the three of us were totally exhausted, a force led by Lieutenant Sarria surprised us in our sleep at dawn. This was Saturday, August 1st. By that time the slaughter of prisoners had ceased, as a result

FIDEL CASTRO

of tremendous people's protest. This officer, a man of honor, saved us from being murdered on the spot with our hands tied behind us.

I need not deny here the stupid statements by Ugalde Carrillo and company, who tried to stain my name in an effort to mask their own cowardice, incompetence, and criminality. The facts are clear enough.

My purpose is not to bore the court with epic narratives. All that I have said is essential for a more precise understanding of what is yet to come.

Let me mention two important facts that facilitate an objective judgement of our attitude. First: we could have taken over the regiment simply by seizing all the high-ranking officers in their homes. This possibility was rejected for the very humane reason that we wished to avoid scenes of tragedy and struggle in the presence of their families. Second: we decided not to take any radio station over until the Army camp was in our power. This attitude, unusually magnanimous and considerate, spared the citizens a great deal of bloodshed. With only ten men I could have seized a radio station and called the people to revolt. There is no questioning the people's will to fight. I had a recording of Eduardo Chibás last message over the CMO radio network, and patriotic poems and battle hymns capable of moving the least sensitive, especially with the sounds of live battle in their ears. But I did not want to use them although our situation was desperate.

The regime has emphatically repeated that our Movement did not have popular support. I have never heard an assertion so naive, and at the same time so full of bad faith. The regime seeks to show submission and cowardice on the part of them people. They all but claim that the people

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

support the dictatorship; they do not know how offensive this is to the brave *Orientales*. Santiago thought our attack was only a local disturbance between two factions of soldiers; not until many hours later, did they realize what had really happened. Who can doubt the courage, civic pride and limitless courage of the rebel and patriotic people of Santiago de Cuba? If Moncada had fallen into our hands, even the women of Santiago de Cuba would have risen in arms. Many were the rifles loaded for our fighters by the nurses at the Civilian Hospital. They fought alongside us. That is something we will never forget.

It was never our intention to engage the soldiers of the regiment in combat. We wanted to seize control of them and their weapons in a surprise attack, arouse the people and call the soldiers to abandon the odious flag of the tyranny and to embrace the banner of freedom; to defend the supreme interests of the nation and not the petty interests of a small clique; to turn their guns around and fire on the people's enemies and not on the people, among whom are their own sons and fathers; to unite with the people as the brothers that they are instead of opposing the people as the enemies the government tries to make of them; to march behind the only beautiful ideal worthy of sacrificing one's life—the greatness and happiness of one's country. To those who doubt that many soldiers would have followed us, I ask: What Cuban does not cherish glory? What heart is not set aflame by the promise of freedom?

The Navy did not fight against us, and it would undoubtedly have come over to our side later on. It is well known that that branch of the Armed Forces is the least dominated by the Dictatorship and that there is a very intense civic conscience among its members. But, as to the rest of the

FIDEL CASTRO

national armed forces, would they have fought against a people in revolt? I declare that they would not! A soldier is made of flesh and blood; he thinks, observes, feels. He is susceptible to the opinions, beliefs, sympathies, and antipathies of the people. If you ask his opinion, he may tell you he cannot express it; but that does not mean he has no opinion. He is affected by exactly the same problems that affect other citizens—subsistence, rent, the education of his children, their future, etc. Everything of this kind is an inevitable point of contact between him and the people and everything of this kind relates him to the present and future situation of the society in which he lives. It is foolish to imagine that the salary a soldier receives from the State—& modest enough salary, at that—should solve the vital problems imposed on him by his needs, duties, and feelings as a member of his family and as a member of his community.

This brief explanation has been necessary because it is basic to a consideration to which few people, until now, have paid any attention—soldiers have a deep respect for the feelings of the majority of the people! During the Machado regime, in the same proportion as popular antipathy increased, the loyalty of the Army visibly decreased. This was so true that a group of women almost succeeded in subverting Camp Columbia. But this is proved even more clearly by a recent development. While Grau San Martín's regime was able to preserve its maximum popularity among the people, unscrupulous ex-officers and power-hungry civilians attempted innumerable conspiracies in the Army, but none of them found a following in the rank and file.

The March 10th coup took place at the moment when the civil government's prestige had dwindled to its lowest ebb, a circumstance of which Batista and his clique took

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

advantage. Why did they not strike their blow after the first of June? Simply because, had they waited for the majority of the nation to express its will at the polls, the troops would not have responded to the conspiracy!

Consequently, a second assertion can be made: the Army has never revolted against a regime with a popular majority behind it. These are historic truths, and if Batista insists on remaining in power at all costs against the will of the majority of Cubans, his end will be more tragic than that of Gerardo Machado.

I have a right to express an opinion about the Armed Forces because I defended them when everyone else was silent. And I did this neither as a conspirator, nor from any kind of personal interest—for we then enjoyed full constitutional prerogatives. I was prompted only by humane instincts and civic duty. In those days, the newspaper *Alerta* was one of the most widely read because of its position on national political matters. In its pages, I campaigned against the forced labor to which the soldiers were subjected on the private estates of high civil personages and military officers. On March 3rd, 1952, I supplied the Courts with data, photographs, films, and other proof denouncing this state of affairs. I also pointed out in those articles that it was elementary decency to increase army salaries. I should like to know who else raised his voice on that occasion to protest against all this injustice done the soldiers. Certainly not Batista and company, living 26 well protected on their luxurious estates, surrounded by all kinds of security measures, while I ran a thousand risks with neither bodyguards nor arms.

Just as I defended the soldiers then, now—when all others are once more silent—I tell them that they allowed

FIDEL CASTRO

themselves to be miserably deceived; and to the deception and shame of March 10th, they have added the disgrace, the thousand times greater disgrace of the fearful and unjustifiable crimes of Santiago de Cuba. From that time since, the uniform of the Army is spattered with blood. And as last year I told the people and cried out before the Courts, that soldiers were working as slaves on private estates, today I make the bitter charge that there are soldiers stained from head to toe with the blood of the Cuban youths they have tortured and slain. And I say as well that if the Army serves the Republic, defends the nation, respects the people, and protects the citizenry then it is only fair that the soldier should earn at least a hundred pesos a month. But if the soldiers slay and oppress the people, betray the nation, and defend only the interests of one small group, then the Army deserves not a cent of the Republic's money and Camp Columbia should be converted into a school with ten thousand orphans living there instead of soldiers.

I want to be just above everything else, so I can't blame all the soldiers for the shameful crimes that stain a few evil and treacherous Army men. But every honorable and upstanding soldier who loves his career and his uniform is dutybound to demand and to fight for the cleansing of this guilt, to avenge this betrayal and to see the guilty punished. Otherwise, the soldier's uniform will forever be a mark of infamy instead of a source of pride.

Of course, the March 10th regime had no choice but to remove the soldiers from the private estates. But it did so only to put them to work as doormen, chauffeurs, servants, and bodyguards for the whole rabble of petty politicians who make up the party of the Dictatorship. Every fourth or fifth rank official considers himself entitled to the services

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

of a soldier to drive his car and to watch over him as if he were constantly afraid of receiving the kick in the pants he so justly deserves.

If they had been at all interested in promoting real reforms, why did the regime not confiscate the estates and the millions of men like Genovevo Pérez Damera, who acquired their fortunes by exploiting soldiers, driving them like slaves and misappropriating the funds of the Armed Forces? But no: Genovevo Pérez and others like him no doubt still have soldiers protecting them on their estates because the March 10th generals, deep in their hearts, aspire to the same future and can't allow that kind of precedent to be set.

The 10th of March was a miserable deception, yes... After Batista and his band of corrupt and disreputable politicians had failed in their electoral plan, they took advantage of the Army's discontent and used it to climb to power on the backs of the soldiers. And I know there are many Army men who are disgusted because they have been disappointed. At first their pay was raised, but later, through deductions and reductions of every kind, it was lowered again. Many of the old elements, who had drifted away from the Armed Forces, returned to the ranks, and blocked the way of young, capable, and valuable men who might otherwise have advanced. Good soldiers have been neglected while the most scandalous nepotism prevails. Many decent military men are now asking themselves what need the Armed Forces had to assume the tremendous historical responsibility of destroying our Constitution merely to put a group of immoral men in power, men of bad reputation, corrupt, politically degenerate beyond redemption, who could never again have occupied a

FIDEL CASTRO

political post had it not been at bayonet-point; and they weren't even the ones with the bayonets in their hands...

On the other hand, the soldiers endure a worse tyranny than the civilians. They are under constant surveillance and not one of them enjoys the slightest Security in his job. Any unjustified suspicion, any gossip, any intrigue, or denunciation, is sufficient to bring transfer, dishonorable discharge, or imprisonment. Did not Tabernilla, in a memorandum, forbid them to talk with anyone opposed to the government, that is to say, with ninety-nine percent of the people?... What a lack of confidence!... Not even the vestal virgins of Rome had to abide by such a rule! As for the much-publicized little houses for enlisted men, there aren't 300 on the whole Island; yet with what has been spent on tanks, guns, and other weaponry every soldier might have a place to live.

Batista isn't concerned with taking care of the Army, but that the Army take care of him! He increases the Army's power of oppression and killing but does not improve the living conditions for the soldiers. Triple guard duty, constant confinement to the barracks, continuous anxiety, the enmity of the people, uncertainty about the future — this is what has been given to the soldier. In other words: Die for the regime, soldier, give it your sweat and blood. We shall dedicate a speech to you and award you a posthumous promotion (when it no longer matters) and afterwards... we shall go on living luxuriously, making ourselves rich. Kill, abuse, oppress the people. When the people get tired and all this comes to an end, you can pay for our crimes while we go abroad and live like kings. And if one day we return, don't you or your children knock on the doors of our mansions, for we shall be millionaires and millionaires do

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

not mingle with the poor. Kill, soldier, oppress the people, die for the regime, give your sweat and blood...'

But if blind to this sad truth, a minority of soldiers had decided to fight the people, the people who were going to liberate them from tyranny, victory still would have gone to the people. The Honorable Prosecutor was very interested in knowing our chances for success. These chances were based on considerations of technical, military, and social order. They have tried to establish the myth that modern arms render the people helpless in overthrowing tyrants. Military parades and the pompous display of the machines of war are used to perpetuate this myth and to create a complex of absolute impotence in the people. But no weaponry, no violence can vanquish the people once they are determined to win back their rights. Both past and present are full of examples. The most recent is the revolt in Bolivia, where miners with dynamite sticks smashed and defeated regular army regiments.

Fortunately, we Cubans need not look for examples abroad. No example is as inspiring as that of our own land. During the war of 1895 there were nearly half a million armed Spanish soldiers in Cuba, many more than the Dictator counts upon today to hold back a population five times greater. The arms of the Spaniards were, incomparably, both more up to date and more powerful than those of our *mambises*. Often the Spaniards were equipped with field artillery and the infantry used breechloaders similar to those still in use by the infantry of today. The Cubans were usually armed with no more than their *machetes*, for their cartridge belts were almost always empty. There is an unforgettable passage in the history of our War of Independence, narrated by General Miró Argenter, Chief of Antonio

FIDEL CASTRO

Maceo's General Staff. I managed to bring it copied on this scrap of paper so I wouldn't have to depend upon my memory:

'Untrained men under the command of Pedro Delgado, most of them equipped only with *machetes*, were virtually annihilated as they threw themselves on the solid rank of Spaniards. It is not an exaggeration to assert that of every fifty men, 25 were killed. Some even attacked the Spaniards with their bare fists, without *machetes*, without even knives. Searching through the reeds by the Hondo River, we found fifteen more dead from the Cuban party, and it was not immediately clear what group they belonged to. They did not appear to have shouldered arms, their clothes were intact and only tin drinking cups hung from their waists; a few steps farther on lay the dead horse, all its equipment in order. We reconstructed the climax of the tragedy. These men, following their daring chief. Lieutenant Colonel Pedro Delgado had earned heroes' laurels: they had thrown themselves against bayonets with bare hands, the clash of metal which was heard around them was the sound of their drinking cups banging against the saddle horn. Maceo was deeply moved. This man so used to seeing death in all its forms murmured this praise: "I had never seen anything like this, untrained and unarmed men attacking the Spaniards with only drinking cups for weapons. And I called it impedimenta!" '

This is how peoples fight when they want to win their freedom; they throw stones at airplanes and overturn tanks!

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

As soon as Santiago de Cuba was in our hands, we would immediately have readied the people of Oriente for war. Bayamo was attacked precisely to locate our advance forces along the Cauto River. Never forget that this province, which has a million and a half inhabitants today, is the most rebellious and patriotic in Cuba. It was this province that sparked the fight for independence for thirty years and paid the highest price in blood, sacrifice and heroism. In Oriente you can still breathe the air of that glorious epic. At dawn, when the cocks crow as if they were bugles calling soldiers to reveille, and when the sun rises radiant over the rugged mountains, it seems that once again we will live the days of Yara or Baire!

I stated that the second consideration on which we based our chances for success was one of social order. Why were we sure of the people's support? When we speak of the people, we are not talking about those who live in comfort, the conservative elements of the nation, who welcome any oppressive regime, any dictatorship, any despotism, prostrating themselves before the masters of the moment until they grind their foreheads into the ground. When we speak of struggle and we mention the people we mean the vast unredeemed masses, those to whom everyone makes pro-mises and who are deceived by all; we mean the people who yearn for a better, more dignified and more just nation; who are moved by ancestral aspirations of justice, for they have suffered injustice and mockery generation after generation; those who long for great and wise changes in all aspects of their life; people who, to attain those changes, are ready to give even the very last breath they have, when they believe in something or in someone, especially when they believe in themselves. The first

FIDEL CASTRO

condition of sincerity and good faith in any endeavor is to do precisely what nobody else ever does, that is, to speak with absolute clarity, without fear. The demagogues and professional politicians who manage to perform the miracle of being right about everything and of pleasing everyone are, necessarily, deceiving everyone about everything. The revolutionaries must proclaim their ideas courageously, define their principles and express their intentions so that no one is deceived, neither friend nor foe.

In terms of struggle, when we talk about people we're talking about the *six hundred thousand* Cubans without work, who want to earn their daily bread honestly without having to emigrate from their homeland in search of a livelihood; the *five hundred thousand* farm laborers who live in miserable shacks, who work four months of the year and starve the rest, sharing their misery with their children, who don't have an inch of land to till and whose existence would move any heart not made of stone; the *four hundred thousand* industrial workers and laborers whose retirement funds have been embezzled, whose benefits are being taken away, whose homes are wretched quarters, whose salaries pass from the hands of the boss to those of the moneylender, whose future is a pay reduction and dismissal, whose life is endless work and whose only rest is the tomb; the *one hundred thousand* small farmers who live and die working land that is not theirs, looking at it with the sadness of Moses gazing at the promised land, to die without ever owning it, who like feudal serfs have to pay for the use of their parcel of land by giving up a portion of its produce, who cannot love it, improve it, beautify it nor plant a cedar or an orange tree on it because they never know when a sheriff will come with the rural guard to evict them from it; the *thirty thousand*

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

teachers and professors who are so devoted, dedicated and so necessary to the better destiny of future generations and who are so badly treated and paid; the *twenty thousand* small business men weighed down by debts, ruined by the crisis and harangued by a plague of grafting and venal officials; the *ten thousand* young professional people: doctors, engineers, lawyers, veterinarians, school teachers, dentists, pharmacists, newspapermen, painters, sculptors, etc., who finish school with their degrees anxious to work and full of hope, only to find themselves at a dead end, all doors closed to them, and where no ear hears their clamor or supplication. These are the people, the ones who know misfortune and, therefore, are capable of fighting with limitless courage! To these people whose desperate roads through life have been paved with the bricks of betrayal and false promises, we were not going to say: 'We will give you...' but rather: 'Here it is, now fight for it with everything you have, so that liberty and happiness may be yours!'

The five revolutionary laws that would have been proclaimed immediately after the capture of the Moncada Barracks and would have been broadcast to the nation by radio must be included in the indictment. It is possible that Colonel Chaviano may deliberately have destroyed these documents, but even if he has I remember them.

The first revolutionary law would have returned the power to the people and proclaimed the 1940 Constitution the Supreme Law of the State until such time as the people should decide to modify or change it. And in order to affect its implementation and punish those who violated it—there being no electoral organization to carry this out—the revolutionary movement, as the circumstantial incarnation of this sovereignty, the only source of legitimate power, would

have assumed all the faculties inherent therein, except that of modifying the Constitution itself: in other words, it would have assumed the legislative, executive, and judicial powers.

This attitude could not be clearer nor more free of vacillation and sterile charlatanry. A government acclaimed by the mass of rebel people would be vested with every power, everything necessary in order to proceed with the effective implementation of popular will and real justice. From that moment, the Judicial Power—which since March 10th had placed itself against and outside the Constitution—would cease to exist and we would proceed to its immediate and total reform before it would once again assume the power granted it by the Supreme Law of the Republic. Without these previous measures, a return to legality by putting its custody back into the hands that have crippled the system so dishonorably would constitute a fraud, a deceit, one more betrayal.

The second revolutionary law would give non-mortgageable and non-transferable ownership of the land to all tenant and subtenant farmers, lessees, sharecroppers and squatters who hold parcels of five *caballerias* of land or less, and the State would indemnify the former owners on the basis of the rental which they would have received for these parcels over a period of ten years.

The third revolutionary law would have granted workers and employees the right to share 30% of the profits of all the large industrial, mercantile, and mining enterprises, including the sugar mills. The strictly agricultural enterprises would be exempt in consideration of other agrarian laws which would be put into effect.

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

The fourth revolutionary law would have granted all sugar planters the right to share 55% of the sugar production and a minimum quota of forty thousand *arrobas* for all small tenant farmers who have been established for three years or more.

The fifth revolutionary law would have ordered the confiscation of all holdings, all ill-gotten gains of those who had committed frauds during previous regimes, as well as the holdings and ill-gotten gains of all their legates and heirs. To implement this, special courts with full powers would gain access to all records of all corporations registered concealed funds of illegal origin, and to request or operating in this country, in order to investigate that foreign governments, extradite persons and attach holdings rightfully belonging to the Cuban people. Half of the property recovered would be used to subsidize retirement funds for workers and the other half would be used for hospitals, asylums, and charitable organizations.

Furthermore, it was to be declared that the Cuban policy in the Americas would be one of close solidarity with the democratic peoples of this continent, and that all those politically persecuted by bloody tyrannies oppressing our sister nations would find generous asylum, brotherhood, and bread in the land of Martí; not the persecution, hunger, and treason they find today. Cuba should be the bulwark of liberty and not a shameful link in the chain of despotism.

These laws would have been proclaimed immediately. As soon as the upheaval ended and prior to a detailed and far-reaching study, they would have been followed by another series of laws, and fundamental measures, such as the Agrarian Reform, the integral Educational Reform, nationalization of the electric power trust and the telephone

FIDEL CASTRO

trust, refund to the people of the illegal excessive rates these companies have charged, and payment to the Treasury of all taxes brazenly evaded in the past.

All these laws and others would be based on the exact compliance of two essential articles of our Constitution: one of them orders the outlawing of large estates, indicating the maximum area of land any one person or entity may own for each type of agricultural enterprise, by adopting measures which would tend to revert the land to the Cubans. The other categorically orders the State to use all means at its disposal to provide employment to all those who lack it and to insure a decent livelihood to each manual or intellectual laborer. None of these laws can be called unconstitutional. The first popularly elected government would have to respect them, not only because of moral obligations to the nation, but because when people achieve something they have yearned for throughout generations, no force in the world is capable of taking it away again.

The problem of the land, the problem of industrialization, the problem of housing, the problem of unemployment, the problem of education and the problem of the people's health: these are the six problems we would take immediate steps to solve, along with restoration of civil liberties and political democracy.

This exposition may seem cold and theoretical if one does not know the shocking and tragic conditions of the country with regard to these six problems, along with the most humiliating political oppression.

Eighty-five percent of the small farmers in Cuba pay rent and live under the constant threat of being evicted from the land they till. More than half of our most productive land is in the hands of foreigners. In Oriente, the largest province,

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

the lands of the United Fruit Company and the West Indian Company link the northern and southern coasts. There are *two hundred thousand peasant families* who do not have a single acre of land to till to provide food for their starving children. On the other hand, nearly *three hundred thousand caballerías* of cultivable land owned by powerful interests remain uncultivated. If Cuba is above all an agricultural State, if its population is largely rural, if the city depends on these rural areas, if the people from our countryside won our war of independence, if our nation's greatness and prosperity depend on a healthy and vigorous rural population that loves the land and knows how to work it, if this population depends on a State that protects and guides it, then how can the present state of affairs be allowed to continue?

Except for a few food, lumber, and textile industries, Cuba continues to be primarily a producer of raw materials. We export sugar to import candy, we export hides to import shoes, we export iron to import plows... Everyone agrees with the urgent need to industrialize the nation, that we need steel industries, paper, and chemical industries, that we must improve our cattle and grain production, the technique, and the processing in our food industry in order to defend ourselves against the ruinous competition of the Europeans in cheese products, condensed milk, liquors and edible oils, and the United States in canned goods; that we need cargo ships; that tourism should be an enormous source of revenue. But the capitalists insist that the workers remain under the yoke. The State sits back with its arms crossed and industrialization can wait forever.

Just as serious or even worse is the housing problem. There are *two hundred thousand* huts and hovels in Cuba; *four*

FIDEL CASTRO

hundred thousand families in the countryside and in the cities live cramped in huts and tenements without even the minimum sanitary requirements; *two million two hundred thousand* of our urban population pay rents which absorb between one fifth and one third of their incomes; and *two million eight hundred thousand* of our rural and suburban population if the State proposes the lowering of rents, landlords threaten to freeze all construction; if the State does not interfere, construction goes on some long as the landlords get high rents; otherwise they would not lay a single brick oven though the rest of the population had to live totally exposed to the elements. The utilities monopoly is no better; they extend lines as far as it is profitable and beyond that point they don't care if people have to live in darkness for the rest of their lives. The State sits back with its arms crossed and the people have neither homes nor electricity.

Our educational system is perfectly compatible with everything I've just mentioned. Where the peasant doesn't own the land, what need is there for agricultural schools? Where there is no industry, what need is there for technological or vocational schools? Everything follows the same absurd logic; if we don't have one thing, we can't have the other. In any small European country lack electricity. We have the same situation here: there are more than 200 technological and vocational schools; in Cuba only six such schools exist, and the graduates have no jobs for their skills. The little rural schoolhouses are attended by a mere half of the school age children—barefooted, half-naked and undernourished—and frequently the teacher must buy necessary school materials from his own salary. Is this the way to make a nation great?

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

Only death can liberate one from so much misery. In this respect, however, the State is most helpful—in providing early death for the people. *Ninety percent* of the children in the countryside are consumed by parasites which filter through their bare feet from the ground they walk on. Society is moved to compassion when it hears of the kidnapping or murder of one child, but it is criminally indifferent to the mass murder of so many thousands of children who die every year from lack of facilities, agonizing with pain. Their innocent eyes, death already shining in them, seem to look into some vague infinity as if entreating forgiveness for human selfishness, as if asking God to stay wrath. And when the head of a family works only four months a year, with what can he purchase clothing and medicine for his children? They will grow up with rickets, with not a single good tooth in their mouths by the time they reach thirty; they will have heard ten million speeches and will finally die of misery and deception. Public hospitals, which are always full, accept only patients recommended by some powerful politician who, in turn, demands the electoral votes of the unfortunate one and his family so that Cuba may continue forever in the same or worse condition.

With this background, is not understandable that from May to December over a million persons are jobless and that Cuba, with a population of five and a half million, has a greater number of unemployed than France or Italy with a population of forty million each?

When you try a defendant for robbery. Honorable Judges, do you ask him how long he has been unemployed? Do you ask him how many children he has, which days of the week he ate and which he didn't, do you investigate his social context at all? You just send him to jail without further

FIDEL CASTRO

thought. But those who bum warehouses and stores to collect insurance do not go to jail, even though a few human beings may have gone up in flames. The insured have money to hire lawyers and bribe judges. You imprison the poor wretch who steals because he is hungry; but none of the hundreds who steal millions from the Government has ever spent a night in jail. You dine with them at the end of the year in some elegant club and they enjoy your respect. In Cuba, when a government official becomes a millionaire overnight and enters the fraternity of the rich, he could very well be greeted with the words of that opulent character out of Balzac—Taillefer—who in his toast to the young heir to an enormous fortune, said: 'Gentlemen, let us drink to the power of gold! Mr. Valentine, a millionaire six times over, has just ascended the throne. He is king, can do everything, is above everyone, as all the rich are. Henceforth, equality before the law, established by the Constitution, will be a myth for him; for he will not be subject to laws: the laws will be subject to him. There are no courts nor are there sentences for millionaires.'

The nation's future, the solutions to its problems, cannot continue to depend on the selfish interests of a dozen big businessmen nor on the cold calculations of profits that ten or twelve magnates draw up in their air-conditioned offices. The country cannot continue begging on its knees for miracles from a few golden calves, like the Biblical one destroyed by the prophet's fury. Golden calves cannot perform miracles of any kind. The problems of the Republic can be solved only if we dedicate ourselves to fight for it with the same energy, honesty, and patriotism our liberators had when they founded it. Statesmen like Carlos Saladrigas, whose statesmanship consists of preserving the *status quo*

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

and mouthing phrases like 'absolute freedom of enterprise,' 'guarantees to investment capital' and 'the law of supply and demand,' will not solve these problems. Those ministers can chat away in a Fifth Avenue mansion until not even the dust of the bones of those whose problems require immediate solution remains. In this present-day world, social problems are not solved by spontaneous generation.

A revolutionary government backed by the people and with the respect of the nation, after cleansing the different institutions of all venal and corrupt officials, would proceed immediately to the country's industrialization, mobilizing all inactive capital, currently estimated at about 1.5 billion *pesos*, through the National Bank and the Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank, and submitting this mammoth task to experts and men of absolute competence totally removed from all political machines, for study, direction, planning and realization.

After settling the one hundred thousand small farmers as owners on the land which they previously rented, a revolutionary government would immediately proceed to settle the land problem. First, as set forth in the Constitution, it would establish the maximum amount of land to be held by each type of agricultural enterprise and would acquire the excess acreage by expropriation, recovery of the lands stolen from the State, improvement of swampland, planting of large nurseries, and reserving of zones for reforestation. Secondly, it would distribute the remaining land among peasant families with priority given to the larger ones and would promote agricultural cooperatives for communal use of expensive equipment, freezing plants and single technical, professional guidelines in farming and cattle raising.

FIDEL CASTRO

Finally, it would provide resources, equipment, protection, and useful guidance to the peasants.

A revolutionary government would solve the housing problem by cutting all rents in half, by providing tax exemptions on homes inhabited by the owners; by tripling taxes on rented homes; by tearing down hovels and replacing them with modern apartment buildings; and by financing housing all over the island on a scale heretofore unheard of, with the criterion that, just as each rural family should possess its own tract of land, each city family should own its own home or apartment. There is plenty of building material and more than enough manpower to make a decent home for every Cuban. But if we continue to wait for the golden calf, a thousand years will have gone by, and the problem will remain the same. On the other hand, today possibilities of taking electricity to the most isolated areas on the island are greater than ever. The use of nuclear energy in this field is now a reality and will greatly reduce the cost of producing electricity.

With these three projects and reforms, the problem of unemployment would automatically disappear and the task of improving public health and fighting against disease would become much less difficult.

Finally, a revolutionary government would undertake the integral reform of the educational system, bringing it into line with the projects just mentioned with the idea of educating those generations which will have the privilege of living in a happier land. Do not forget the words of the Apostle: 'A grave mistake is being made in Latin America: in countries that live almost completely from the produce of the land, men are being educated exclusively for urban life and are not trained for farm life.' 'The happiest country is

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

the one which has best educated its sons, both in the instruction of thought and the direction of their feelings.' 'An educated country will always be strong and free.'

The soul of education, however, is the teacher and in Cuba the teaching profession is miserably underpaid. Despite this, no one is more dedicated than the Cuban teacher. Who among us has not learned his ABC's in the little public schoolhouse? It is time we stopped paying pittances to these young men and women who are entrusted with the sacred task of teaching our youth. No teacher should earn less than 200 *pesos*, no secondary teacher should make less than 350 *pesos*, if they are to devote themselves exclusively to their high calling without suffering want. What is more, all rural teachers should have free use of the various systems of transportation; and, at least once every five years, all teachers should enjoy a sabbatical leave of six months with pay so they may attend special refresher courses at home or abroad to keep abreast of the latest developments in their field. In this way, the curriculum and the teaching system can be constantly improved. Where will the money be found for all this? When there is an end to the embezzlement of government funds, when public officials stop taking graft from the large companies that owe taxes to the State, when the enormous resources of the country are brought into full use, when we no longer buy tanks, bombers, and guns for this country (which has no frontiers to defend and where these instruments of war, now being purchased, are used against the people), when there is more interest in educating the people than in killing them there will be more than enough money.

Cuba could easily provide for a population three times as great as it has now, so there is no excuse for the abject

FIDEL CASTRO

poverty of a single one of its present inhabitants. The markets should be overflowing with produce, pantries should be full, all hands should be working. This is not an inconceivable thought. What is inconceivable is that anyone should go to bed hungry while there is a single inch of unproductive land; that children should die for lack of medical attention; what is inconceivable is that 30% of our farm people cannot write their names and that 99% of them know nothing of Cuba's history. What is inconceivable is that the majority of our rural people are now living in worse circumstances than the Indians Columbus discovered in the fairest land that human eyes had ever seen.

To those who would call me a dreamer, I quote the words of Martí: 'A true man does not seek the path where advantage lies, but rather the path where duty lies, and this is the only practical man, whose dream of today will be the law of tomorrow, because he who has looked back on the essential course of history and has seen flaming and bleeding peoples seethe in the cauldron of the ages, knows that, without a single exception, the future lies on the side of duty.'

Only when we understand that such a high ideal inspired them, can we conceive of the heroism of the young men who fell in Santiago. The meager material means at our disposal was all that prevented sure success. When the soldiers were told that Prio had given us a million *pesos*, they were told this in the regime's attempt to distort the most important fact: the fact that our Movement had no link with past politicians: that this Movement is a new Cuban generation with its own ideas, rising up against tyranny; that this Movement is made up of young who were barely seven years old when Batista perpetrated the first of his

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

crimes in 1934. The lie about the million *pesos* could not have been more absurd. If, with less than 20,000 *pesos*, we armed 165 men and attacked a regiment and a squadron, then with a million *pesos* we could have armed 8,000 men, to attack 50 regiments and 50 squadrons—and Ugalde Carrillo still would not have found out until Sunday, July 26th, at 5:15 a.m. I assure you that for every man who fought, twenty well trained men were unable to fight for lack of weapons. When these young men marched along the streets of Havana in the student demonstration of the Martí Centennial, they solidly packed six blocks. If even 200 more men had been able to fight, or we had possessed 20 more hand-grenades, perhaps this Honorable Court wouldn't have been spared all this inconvenience. The politicians spend millions buying off consciences, whereas a handful of Cubans who wanted to save their country's honor had to face death barehanded for lack of funds. This shows how the country, to this very day, has been governed not by generous and dedicated men, but by political racketeers, the scum of our public life.

With the greatest pride I tell you that in accordance with our principles we have never asked a politician, past or present, for a penny. Our means were assembled with incomparable sacrifice. For example, Elpidio Sosa, who sold his job and came to me one day with 300 *pesos* 'for the cause;' Fernando Chenard, who sold the photographic equipment with which he earned his living; Pedro Marrero, who contributed several months' salary and who had to be stopped from actually selling the very furniture in his house; Oscar Alcalde, who sold his pharmaceutical laboratory; Jesus Montané, who gave his five years savings, and so on with many others, each giving the little he had.

FIDEL CASTRO

One must have great faith in one's country to do such a thing. The memory of these acts of idealism bring me straight to the most bitter chapter of this defense—the price the tyranny made them pay for wanting to free Cuba from oppression and injustice.

*Beloved corpses, you that once
Were the hope of my Homeland,
Cast upon my forehead
The dust of your decaying bones!
Touch my heart with your cold hands!
Groan at my ears!
Each of my moans will
Turn into the tears of one more tyrant!
Gather around me! Roam about,
That my soul may receive your spirits
And give me the horror of the tomb
For tears are not enough
When one lives in infamous bondage!*

Multiply the crimes of November 27th, 1871, by ten and you will have the monstrous and repulsive crimes of July 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th, 1953, in the province of Oriente. These are still fresh in our memory, but someday when years have passed, when the skies of the nation have cleared once more, when tempers have calmed and fear no longer have tormented our spirits, then we will begin to see the magnitude of this massacre in all its shocking dimension, and future generations will be struck with horror when they look back on these acts of barbarity unprecedented in our history. But I do not want to become enraged. I need clearness of mind and peace in my heavy heart, in order to relate the fact as simply as possible, in no sense dramatizing them,

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

but just as they took place. As a Cuban I am ashamed that heartless men should have perpetrated such unthinkable crimes, dishonoring our nation before the rest of the world.

The tyrant Batista was never a man of scruples. He has never hesitated to tell his people the most outrageous lies. To justify his treacherous coup of March 10th, he concocted stories about a fictitious uprising in the Army, supposedly scheduled to take place in April, and which he 'wanted to avert so that the Republic might not be drenched in blood.' A ridiculous little tale nobody ever believed! And when he himself did want to drench the Republic in blood, when he wanted to smother in terror and torture the just rebellion of Cuba's youth, who were not willing to be his slaves, then he contrived still more fantastic lies. How little respect one must have for a people when one tries to deceive them so miserably! On the very day of my arrest, I publicly assumed the responsibility for our armed movement of July 26th. If there had been an iota of truth in even one of the many statements the Dictator made against our fighters in his speech of July 27th, it would have been enough to undermine the moral impact of my case. Why then, was I not brought to trial? Why were medical certificates forged? Why did they violate all procedural laws and ignore so scandalously the rulings of the Court? Why were so many things done, things never before seen in a Court of Law, in order to prevent my appearance at all costs? In contrast, I could not begin to tell you all I went through in order to appear. I asked the Court to bring me to trial in accordance with all established principles, and I denounced the underhanded schemes that were afoot to prevent it. I wanted to argue with them face to face. But they did not

FIDEL CASTRO

wish to face me. Who was afraid of the truth, and who was not?

The statements made by the Dictator at Camp Columbia might be considered amusing if they were not so drenched in blood. He claimed we were a group of hirelings and that there were many foreigners among us. He said that the central part of our plan was an attempt to kill him—him, always him. As if the men who attacked the Moncada Barracks could not have killed him and twenty like him if they had approved of such methods. He stated that our attack had been planned by ex-President Prio, and that it had been financed with Prio's money. It has been irrefutably proven that no link whatsoever existed between our Movement and the last regime. He claimed that we had machine guns and hand-grenades. Yet the military technicians have stated right here in this Court that we only had one machine gun and not a single hand-grenade. He said that we had beheaded the sentries. Yet death certificates and medical reports of all the Army's casualties show not one death caused by the blade. But above all and most important, he said that we stabbed patients at the Military Hospital. Yet the doctors from that hospital—Army doctors—have testified that we never even occupied the building, that no patient was either wounded or killed by us, and that the hospital lost only one employee, a janitor, who imprudently stuck his head out of an open window.

Whenever a Chief of State, or anybody pretending to be one, makes declarations to the nation, he speaks not just to hear the sound of his own voice. He always has some specific purpose and expects some specific reaction, or has a given intention. Since our military defeat had already taken place, insofar as we no longer represented any actual

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

threat to the dictatorship, why did they slander us like that? If it is still not clear that this was a blood-drenched speech, that it was simply an attempt to justify the crimes that they were perpetrating since the night before and that they were going to continue to perpetrate, then, let figures speak for me: On July 27th, in his speech from the military headquarters, Batista said that the assailants suffered 32 dead. By the end of the week the number of dead had risen to more than 80 men. In what battles, where, in what clashes, did these young men die? Before Batista spoke, more than 25 prisoners had been murdered. After Batista spoke fifty more were massacred.

What a great sense of honor those modest Army technicians and professionals had, who did not distort the facts before the Court, but gave their reports adhering to the strictest truth! These surely are soldiers who honor their uniform; these, surely, are men! Neither a real soldier nor a true man can degrade his code of honor with lies and crime. I know that many of the soldiers are indignant at the barbaric assassinations perpetrated. I know that they feel repugnance and shame at the smell of homicidal blood that impregnates every stone of Moncada Barracks.

Now that he has been contradicted by men of honor within his own Army, I defy the dictator to repeat his vile slander against us. I defy him to try to justify before the Cuban people his July 27th speech. Let him not remain silent. Let him speak. Let him say who the assassins are, who the ruthless, the inhumane. Let him tell us if the medals of honor, which he went to pin on the breasts of his heroes of that massacre, were rewards for the hideous crimes they had committed. Let him, from this very moment, assume his responsibility before history. Let him not pretend, at a later

FIDEL CASTRO

date, that the soldiers were acting without direct orders from him! Let him offer the nation an explanation for those 70 murders. The bloodshed was great. The nation needs an explanation. The nation seeks it. The nation demands it.

It is common knowledge that in 1933, at the end of the battle at the National Hotel, some of the officers were murdered after they had surrendered. *Bohemia Magazine* protested energetically. It was also known that after the surrender of Fort Atarés, the besiegers' machine guns cut down a row of prisoners. And that one soldier, after asking who Bias Hernandez was, blasted him with a bullet directly in the face, and for this cowardly act was later promoted to the rank of officer. It is well-known in Cuban history that assassination of prisoners was fatally linked with Batista's name. How naive we were not to foresee this! However, unjustifiable as those killings of 1933 were, they took place in a matter of minutes, in no more time than it took for a round of machine gun fire. What is more, they took place while tempers were still on edge.

This was not the case in Santiago de Cuba. Here all forms of ferocious outrages and cruelty were deliberately overdone. Our men were killed not in the course of a minute, an hour, or a day. Throughout an entire week the blows and tortures continued, men were thrown from rooftops and shot. All methods of extermination were incessantly practiced by well-skilled artisans of crime. Moncada Barracks were turned into a workshop of torture and death. Some shameful individuals turned their uniforms into butchers' aprons. The walls were splattered with blood. The bullets imbedded in the walls were encrusted with singed bits of skin, brains and human hair, the grisly reminders of rifle shots fired full in the face. The grass around the

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

barracks was dark and sticky with human blood. The criminal hands that are guiding the destiny of Cuba had written for the prisoners at the entrance of that den of death the very inscription of Hell: 'Forsake all hope.'

They did not even attempt to cover appearances. They did not bother in the least to conceal what they were doing. They thought they had deceived the people with their lies, and they ended up deceiving themselves. They felt themselves lords and masters of the universe, with power over life and death. So, the fear they had experienced upon our attack at daybreak was dissipated in a feast of corpses, in a drunken orgy of blood.

Chronicles of our history, down through four and a half centuries, tell us of many acts of cruelty: the slaughter of defenseless Indians by the Spaniards; the plundering and atrocities of pirates along the coast; the barbarities of the Spanish soldiers during our War of Independence; the shooting of prisoners of the Cuban Army by the forces of Weyler; the horrors of the Machado regime, and so on through the bloody crimes of March 1935. But never has such a sad and bloody page been written in numbers of victims and in the viciousness of the victimizers, as in Santiago de Cuba. Only one man in all these centuries has stained with blood two separate periods of our history and has dug his claws into the flesh of two generations of Cubans. To release this river of blood, he waited for the Centennial of the Apostle, just after the fiftieth anniversary of the Republic, whose people fought for freedom, human rights, and happiness at the cost of so many lives. Even greater is his crime and even more condemnable because the man who perpetrated it had already, for eleven long years, lorded over his people—this people who, by such

FIDEL CASTRO

deep-rooted sentiment and tradition, loves freedom and repudiates evil. This man has furthermore never been sincere, loyal, honest, or chivalrous for a single minute of his public life.

He was not content with the treachery of January 1934, the crimes of March 1935 and the forty-million-dollar fortune that crowned his first regime. He had to add the treason of March 1952, the crimes of July 1953, and all the millions that only time will reveal. Dante divided his *Inferno* into nine circles. He put the criminals in the seventh, the thieves in the eighth and the traitors in the ninth. Difficult dilemma the devils will be faced with, when they try to find an adequate spot for this man's soul—if this man has a soul. The man who instigated the atrocious acts in Santiago de Cuba doesn't even have a heart.

I know many details of the way in which these crimes were carried out, from the lips of some of the soldiers who, filled with shame, told me of the scenes they had witnessed.

When the fighting was over, the soldiers descended like savage beasts on Santiago de Cuba, and they took the first fury of their frustrations out against the defenseless population. In the middle of a street, and far from the site of the fighting, they shot through the chest an innocent child who was playing by his doorstep. When the father approached to pick him up, they shot him through his head. Without a word they shot 'Nino' Cala, who was on his way home with a loaf of bread in his hands. It would be an endless task to relate all the crimes and outrages perpetrated against the civilian population. And if the Army dealt with those who had had no part at all in the action, you can imagine the terrible fate of the prisoners who had taken part or who were believed to have taken part. Just as, in this trial, they

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

accused many people not at all involved in our attack, they also killed many prisoners who had no involvement whatsoever. The latter are not included in the statistics of victims released by the regime; those statistics refer exclusively to our men. Someday the total number of victims will be known.

The first prisoner killed was our doctor, Mario Muñoz, who bore no arms, wore no uniform, and was dressed in the white smock of a physician. He was a generous and competent man who would have given the same devoted care to the wounded adversary as to a friend. On the road from the Civilian Hospital to the barracks they shot him in the back and left him lying there, face down in a pool of blood. But the mass murder of prisoners did not begin until after three o'clock in the afternoon. Until this hour they awaited orders. Then General Martín Díaz Tamayo arrived from Havana and brought specific instructions from a meeting he had attended with Batista, along with the head of the Army, the head of the Military Intelligence Agency, and others. He said: 'It is humiliating and dishonorable for the Army to have lost three times as many men in combat as the insurgents did. Ten prisoners must be killed for each dead soldier.' This was the order!

In every society there are men of base instincts. The sadists, brutes, conveyors of all the ancestral atavisms go about in the guise of human beings, but they are monsters, only more or less restrained by discipline and social habit. If they are offered a drink from a river of blood, they will not be satisfied until they drink the river dry. All these men needed was the order. At their hands, the best and noblest Cubans perished; the most valiant, the most honest, the most idealistic. The tyrant called them mercenaries. There

FIDEL CASTRO

they were dying as heroes at the hands of men who collect a salary from the Republic and who, with the arms the Republic gave them to defend her, serve the interests of a clique and murder her best citizens.

Throughout their torturing of our comrades, the Army offered them the chance to save their lives by betraying their ideology and falsely declaring that Prío had given them money. When they indignantly rejected that proposition, the Army continued with its horrible tortures. They crushed their testicles, and they tore out their eyes. But no one yielded. No complaint was heard, nor a favor asked. Even when they had been deprived of their virile organs, our men were still a thousand times more men than all their tormentors together. Photographs, which do not lie, show the bodies torn to pieces. Other methods were used. Frustrated by the valor of the men, they tried to break the spirit of our women. With a bleeding human eye in their hands, a sergeant and several other men went to the cell where our comrades Melba Hernandez and Haydee Santamaria were held. Addressing the latter, and showing her the eye, they said: 'This eye belonged to your brother. If you will not tell us what he refused to say, we will tear out the other.' She, who loved her valiant brother above all things, replied full of dignity: 'If you tore out an eye and he did not speak, much less will I.' Later they came back and burned their arms with lit cigarettes until at last, filled with spite, they told the young Haydee Santamaria: 'You no longer have a fiancé because we have killed him too.' But, still imperturbable, she answered: 'He is not dead, because to die for one's country is to live forever.' Never had the heroism and the dignity of Cuban womanhood reached such heights.

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

There wasn't even any respect for the combat wounded in the various city hospitals. There they were hunted down as prey pursued by vultures. In the Centro Gallego they broke into the operating room at the very moment when two of our critically wounded were receiving blood transfusions. They pulled them off the tables and, as the wounded could no longer stand, they were dragged down to the first floor where they arrived as corpses.

They could not do the same in the Spanish Clinic, where Gustavo Arcos and José Ponce were patients, because they were prevented by Dr. Posada who bravely told them they could enter only over his dead body.

Air and camphor were injected into the veins of Pedro Miret, Abelardo Crespo and Fidel Labrador, in an attempt to kill them at the Military Hospital. They owe their lives to Captain Tamayo, an Army doctor, and a true soldier of honor who, pistol in hand, wrenched them out of the hands of their merciless captors and transferred them to the Civilian Hospital. These five young men were the only ones of our wounded who survived.

In the early morning hours, groups of our men were removed from the barracks and taken in automobiles to Siboney, La Maya, Songo, and elsewhere. Then they were led out—tied, gagged, already disfigured by the torture—and were murdered in isolated spots. They are recorded as having died in combat against the Army. This went on for several days, and few of the captured prisoners survived. Many were compelled to dig their own graves. One of our men, while he was digging, wheeled around and slashed the face of one of his assassins with his pick. Others were even buried alive, their hands tied behind their backs. Many solitary spots became the graveyards of the brave. On the

FIDEL CASTRO

Army target range alone, five of our men lie buried. Someday these men will be disinterred. Then they will be carried on the shoulders of the people to a place beside the tomb of Martí, and their liberated land will surely erect a monument to honor the memory of the Martyrs of the Centennial.

The last youth they murdered in the surroundings of Santiago de Cuba was Marcos Martí. He was captured with our comrade Ciro Redondo in a cave at Siboney on the morning of Thursday the 30th. These two men were led down the road, with their arms raised, and the soldiers shot Marcos Martí in the back. After he had fallen to the ground, they riddled him with bullets. Redondo was taken to the camp. When Major Perez Chaumont saw him, he exclaimed: 'And this one? Why have you brought him to me?' The Court heard this incident from Redondo himself, the young man who survived thanks to what Pérez Chaumont called 'the soldiers' stupidity.'

It was the same throughout the province. Ten days after July 26th, a newspaper in this city printed the news that two young men had been found hanged on the road from Manzanillo to Bayamo. Later the bodies were identified as those of Hugo Camejo and Pedro Vélez. Another extraordinary incident took place there: There were three victims—they had been dragged from Manzanillo Barracks at two that morning. At a certain spot on the highway, they were taken out, beaten unconscious, and stranded with a rope. But after they had been left for dead, one of them, Andrés Garcia, regained consciousness and hid in a farmer's house. Thanks to this the Court learned the details of this crime too. Of all our men taken prisoner in the Bayamo area, this is the only survivor.

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

Near the Cauto River, in a spot known as Barrancas, at the bottom of a pit, lie the bodies of Raul de Aguiar, Armando del Valle and Andrés Valdes. They were murdered at midnight on the road between Alto Cedro and Palma Soriano by Sergeant Montes de Oca—in charge of the military post at Miranda Barracks—Corporal Maceo, and the Lieutenant in charge of Alto Cedro where the murdered men were captured.

In the annals of crime, Sergeant Eulalio Gonzales—better known as the ‘Tiger’ of Moncada Barracks—deserves a special place. Later this man didn't have the slightest qualms in bragging about his unspeakable deeds. It was he who with his own hands murdered our comrade, Abel Santamaria. But that didn't satisfy him. One day as he was coming back from the Puerto Boniato Prison, where he raises pedigreed fighting cocks in the back courtyard, he got on a bus on which Abel's mother was also travelling. When this monster realized who she was, he began to brag about his grisly deeds, and—in a loud voice, so that the woman dressed in mourning could hear him—he said: ‘Yes, I have gouged many eyes out and I expect to continue gouging them out.’ The unprecedented moral degradation our nation is suffering is expressed beyond the power of words in that mother's sobs of grief before the cowardly insolence of the very man who murdered her son. When these mothers went to Moncada Barracks to ask about their sons, it was with incredible cynicism and sadism that they were told: ‘Surely madam, you may see him at the Santa Ifigenia Hotel where we have put him up for you.’ Either Cuba is not Cuba, or the men responsible for these acts will have to face their reckoning one day. Heartless men, they threw crude insults at the people who bared their heads in

FIDEL CASTRO

reverence as the corpses of the revolutionaries were carried by.

There were so many victims that the government still has not dared make public the complete list. They know their figures are false. They have all the victims' names, because prior to every murder they recorded all the vital statistics. The whole long process of identification through the National Identification Bureau was a huge farse, and there are families still waiting for word of their sons' fate. Why has this not been cleared up after three months?

I wish to state for the record here that all the victims' pockets were probed to the very last penny and that all their personal effects, rings and watches, were stripped from their bodies and are brazenly being worn today by their assassins.

Honorable Judges, a great part of what I have just related you already know, from the testimony of many of my comrades. But please note that many key witnesses have been barred from this trial, although they were permitted to attend the sessions of the previous trial. For example. I want to point out that the nurses of the Civilian Hospital are absent, even though they work in the same place where this hearing is being held. They were kept from this Court so that, under my questioning, they would not be able to testify that—besides Dr. Mario Muñoz—twenty more of our men were captured alive. The regime fears that from the questioning of these witnesses some extremely dangerous testimony could find its way into the official transcript.

But Major Pérez Chaumont did appear here, and he could not elude my questioning. What we learned from this man, a 'hero' who fought only against unarmed and handcuffed men, gives us an idea of what could have been

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

learned at the Courthouse if I had not been isolated from the proceedings. I asked him how many of our men had died in this celebrated skirmishes at Siboney. He hesitated. I insisted and he finally said twenty-one. Since I knew such skirmishes had never taken place. I asked him how many of our men had been wounded. He answered: 'None. All of them were killed.' It was then that I asked him, in astonishment, if the soldiers were using nuclear weapons. Of course, where men are shot point blank, there are no wounded. Then I asked him how many casualties the Army had sustained. He replied that two of his men had been wounded. Finally, I asked him if either of those two men had died, and he said no. I waited. Later, all of the wounded Army soldiers filed by and it was discovered that none of them had been wounded at Siboney. This same Major Pérez Chaumont who hardly flinched at having assassinated twenty-one defenseless young men has built a palatial home in Ciudadamar Beach. It's worth more than 100,000 *pesos*—his savings after only a few months under Batista's new rule. And if this is the savings of a Major, imagine how much generals have saved!

Honorable Judges: Where are our men who were captured July 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th? It is known that more than sixty men were captured in the area of Santiago de Cuba. Only three of them and the two women have been brought before the Court. The rest of the accused were seized later. Where are our wounded? Only five of them are alive; the rest were murdered. These figures are irrefutable. On the other hand, twenty of the soldiers who we held prisoner have been presented here and they themselves have declared that they received not one offensive word from us. Thirty soldiers who were wounded, many in the

FIDEL CASTRO

street fighting, also appeared before you. Not one was killed by us. If the Army suffered losses of nineteen dead and thirty wounded, how is it possible that we should have had eighty dead and only five wounded? Who ever witnessed a battle with 21 dead and no wounded, like these famous battles described by Pérez Chaumont?

We have here the casualty lists from the bitter fighting sustained by the invasion troops in the war of 1895, both in battles where the Cuban army was defeated and where it was victorious. The battle of Los Indios in Las Villas: 12 wounded, none dead. The battle of Mal Tiempo: 4 dead, 23 wounded. Calimete: 16 dead, 64 wounded. La Palma: 39 dead, 88 wounded. Cacarajícara: 5 dead, 13 wounded. Descanso: 4 dead, 45 wounded. San Gabriel del Lombillo: 2 dead, 18 wounded... In all these battles the number of wounded is twice, three times and up to ten times the number of dead, although in those days there were no modern medical techniques by which the percentage of deaths could be reduced. How then, now, can we explain the enormous proportion of sixteen deaths per wounded man, if not by the government's slaughter of the wounded in the very hospitals, and by the assassination of the other helpless prisoners they had taken? The figures are irrefutable.

'It is shameful and a dishonor to the Army to have lost three times as many men in combat as those lost by the insurgents; we must kill ten prisoners for each dead soldier.' This is the concept of honor held by the petty corporals who became generals March 10th. This is the code of honor they wish to impose on the national Army. A false honor, a feigned honor, an apparent honor based on lies, hypocrisy and crime; a mask of honor molded by those assassins with blood. Who told them that to die fighting is dishonorable?

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

Who told them the honor of an army is the murdering of the wounded and the prisoners of war?

In war time, armies that murder prisoners have always earned the contempt and abomination of the entire world. Such cowardice has no justification, even in a case where national territory is invaded by foreign troops. In the words of a South American liberator: 'Not even the strictest military obedience may turn a soldier's sword into that of an executioner.' The honorable soldier does not kill the helpless prisoner after the fight, but rather, respects him. He does not finish off a wounded man, but rather, helps him. He stands in the way of crime and if he cannot prevent it, he acts as that Spanish captain who, upon hearing the shots of the firing squad that murdered Cuban students, indignantly broke his sword in two and refused to continue serving in that Army.

The soldiers who murdered their prisoners were not worthy of the soldiers who died. I saw many soldiers fight with courage, for example, those in the patrols that fired their machine guns against us in almost hand-to-hand combat, or that sergeant who, defying death, rang the alarm to mobilize the barracks. Some of them live. I am glad. Others are dead. They believed they were doing their duty, and, in my eyes, this makes them worthy of admiration and respect. I deplore only the fact that valiant men should fall for an evil cause. When Cuba is freed, we should respect, shelter, and aid the wives and children of those courageous soldiers who perished fighting against us. They are not to blame for Cuba's miseries. They too are victims of this nefarious situation.

But what honor was earned by the soldiers who died in battle was lost by the generals who ordered prisoners to be

FIDEL CASTRO

killed after they surrendered. Men who became generals overnight, without ever having fired a shot; men who bought their stars with high treason against their country; men who ordered the execution of prisoners taken in battles in which they didn't even participate; these are the generals of the 10th of March—generals who would not even have been fit to drive the mules that carried the equipment in Antonio Maceo's army.

The Army suffered three times as many casualties as we did. That was because our men were expertly trained, as the Army men themselves have admitted; and also, because we had prepared adequate tactical measures, another fact recognized by the Army. The Army did not perform brilliantly; despite the millions spent on espionage by the Military Intelligence Agency, they were totally taken by surprise, and their hand-grenades failed to explode because they were obsolete. And the Army owes all this to generals like Martin Díaz Tamayo and colonels like Ugalde Carrillo and Alberto del Río Chaviano. We were not 17 traitors infiltrated into the ranks of the Army, as was the case on March 10th. Instead, we were 165 men who had travelled the length and breadth of Cuba to look death boldly in the face. If the Army leaders had a notion of real military honor, they would have resigned their commands rather than trying to wash away their shame and incompetence in the blood of their prisoners.

To kill helpless prisoners and then declare that they died in battle; that is the military capacity of the generals of the 10th of March. That was the way the worst butchers of Valeriano Weyler behaved in the cruelest years of our War of Independence. The *Chronicles of War* include the following story: 'On February 23rd, officer Baldomero Acosta

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

entered Punta Brava with some cavalry when, from the opposite road, a squad of the Pizarro regiment approached, led by a sergeant known in those parts as *Barriguilla* (Pot Belly). The insurgents exchanged a few shots with Pizarro's men, then withdrew by the trail that leads from Punta Brava to the village of Guatao. Followed by another battalion of volunteers from Marianao, and a company of troops from the Public Order Corps, who were led by Captain Calvo, Pizarro's squad of 50 men marched on Guatao... As soon as their first forces entered the village they commenced their massacre-killing twelve of the peaceful inhabitants... The troops led by Captain Calvo speedily rounded up all the civilians that were running about the village, tied them up and took them as prisoners of war to Havana... Not yet satisfied with their outrages, on the outskirts of Guatao they carried out another barbaric action killing one of the prisoners and horribly wounding the rest. The Marquis of Cervera, a cowardly and palatine soldier, informed Weyler of the pyrrhic victory of the Spanish soldiers; but Major Zugasti, a man of principles, denounced the incident to the government and officially called the murders perpetrated by the criminal Captain Calvo and Sergeant *Barriguilla* an assassination of peaceful citizens.'

'Weyler's intervention in this horrible incident and his delight upon learning the details of the massacre may be palpable deduced from the official dispatch that he sent to the Ministry of War concerning these cruelties. "Small regiments organized by commander Marianao with forces from garrison, volunteers and firemen led by Captain Calvo, fought and destroyed bands of Villanueva and Baldomero Acosta near Punta Brava, killing twenty of theirs, who were handed over to Mayor of Guatao for burial, and taking

FIDEL CASTRO

fifteen prisoners, one of them wounded, we assume there are many wounded among them. One of ours suffered critical wounds, some suffered light bruises and wounds. Weyler.” ’

What is the difference between Weyler’s dispatch and that of Colonel Chaviano detailing the victories of Major Pérez Chaumont? Only that Weyler announces 20 dead and Chaviano 21. Weyler mentions one wounded soldier in his ranks. Chaviano mentions two. Weyler speaks of one wounded man and fifteen prisoners in the enemy’s ranks. Chaviano records neither wounded men nor prisoners.

Just as I admire the courage of the soldiers who died bravely, I also admire the officers who bore themselves with dignity and did not drench their hands in this blood. Many of the survivors owe their lives to the commendable conduct of officers like Lieutenant Sarría, Lieutenant Campa, Captain Tamayo, and others, who were true gentlemen in their treatment of the prisoners. If men like these had not partially saved the name of the Armed Forces, it would be more honorable today to wear a dishrag than to wear an Army uniform.

For my dead comrades, I claim no vengeance. Since their lives were priceless, the murderers could not pay for them even with their own lives. It is not by blood that we may redeem the lives of those who died for their country. The happiness of their people is the only tribute worthy of them.

What is more, my comrades are neither dead nor forgotten; they live today, more than ever, and their murderers will view with dismay the victorious spirit of their ideas rise from their corpses. Let the Apostle speak for me: ‘There is a limit to the tears we can shed at the graveside of the dead.

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

Such limit is the infinite love for the homeland and its glory, a love that never falters, loses hope nor grows dim. For the graves of the martyrs are the highest altars of our reverence.'

*...When one dies
In the arms of a grateful country
Agony ends, prison chains break—and
At last, with death, life begins!*

Up to this point, I have confined myself almost exclusively to relating events. Since I am well aware that I am before a Court convened to judge me, I will now demonstrate that all legal right was on our side alone, and that the verdict imposed on my comrades—the verdict now being sought against me—has no justification in reason, in social mores or in terms of true justice.

I wish to be duly respectful to the Honorable Judges, and I am grateful that you find in the frankness of my plea no animosity towards you. My argument is meant simply to demonstrate what a false and erroneous position the Judicial Power has adopted in the present situation. To a certain extent, each Court is nothing more than a cog in the wheel of this system and therefore, must move along the course determined by the vehicle, although this by no means justifies any individual acting against his principles. I know very well that the oligarchy bears most of the blame. The oligarchy, without dignified protest, abjectly yielded to the dictates of the usurper, and betrayed their country by renouncing the autonomy of the Judicial Power. Men who constitute noble exceptions have attempted to mend the system's mangled honor with their individual decisions. But the gestures of this minority have been of little consequence,

FIDEL CASTRO

downed as they were by the obsequious and fawning majority. This fatalism, however, will not stop me from speaking the truth that supports my cause. My appearance before this court may be a pure farce in order to give a semblance of legality to arbitrary decisions, but I am determined to wrench apart with a firm hand the infamous veil that hides so much shamelessness. It is curious: the very men who have brought me here to be judged and condemned have never heeded a single decision of this Court.

Since this trial may, as you said, be the most important trial since we achieved our national sovereignty, what I say here will perhaps be lost in the silence which the dictatorship has tried to impose upon me, but posterity will often turn its eyes to what you do here. Remember that today you are judging an accused man, but that you yourselves will be judged not once, but many times, as often as these days are submitted to scrutiny in the future. What I say here will be then repeated many times, not because it comes from my lips, but because the problem of justice is eternal, and the people have a deep sense of justice above and beyond the hairsplitting of jurisprudence. The people wield simple but implacable logic, in conflict with all that is absurd and contradictory. Furthermore, if there is in this world a people that utterly abhors favoritism and inequality, it is the Cuban people. To them, justice is symbolized by a maiden with a scale and a sword in her hands. Should she cower before one group and furiously wield that sword against another group, then to the people of Cuba the maiden of justice will seem nothing more than a prostitute brandishing a dagger. My logic is the simple logic of the people.

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

Let me tell you a story: Once upon a time there was a Republic. It had its Constitution, its laws, its freedoms, a President, a Congress, and Courts of law. Everyone could assemble, associate, speak and write with complete freedom. The people were not satisfied with the government officials at that time, but they had the power to elect new officials and only a few days remained before they would do so. Public opinion was respected and heeded, and all problems of common interest were freely discussed. There were political parties, radio and television debates and forums and public meetings. The whole nation pulsed with enthusiasm. This people had suffered greatly and although it was unhappy, it longed to be happy and had a right to be happy. It had been deceived many times and it looked upon the past with real horror. This country innocently believed that such a past could not return; the people were proud of their love of freedom, and they carried their heads high in the conviction that liberty would be respected as a sacred right. They felt confident that no one would dare commit the crime of violating their democratic institutions. They wanted a change for the better, aspired to progress; and they saw all this at hand. All their hope was in the future.

Poor country! One morning the citizens woke up dismayed; under the cover of night, while the people slept, the ghosts of the past had conspired and had seized the citizenry by its hands, its feet, and its neck. That grip, those claws were familiar: those jaws, those death-dealing scythes, those boots. No; it was no nightmare; it was a sad and terrible reality: a man named Fulgencio Batista had just perpetrated the appalling crime that no one had expected.

Then a humble citizen of that people, a citizen who wished to believe in the laws of the Republic, in the integrity

FIDEL CASTRO

of its judges, whom he had seen vent their fury against the underprivileged, searched through a Social Defense Code to see what punishment society prescribed for the author of such a coup, and he discovered the following:

‘Whosoever shall perpetrate any deed destined through violent means directly to change in whole or in part the Constitution of the State or the form of the established government shall incur a sentence of six to ten years’ imprisonment’

‘A sentence of three to ten years imprisonment will be imposed on the author of an act directed to promote an armed uprising against the Constitutional Powers of the State. The sentence increases from five to twenty years if the insurrection is carried out.’

‘Whosoever shall perpetrate an act with the specific purpose of preventing, in whole or in part, even temporarily, the Senate, the House of Representatives, the President, or the Supreme Court from exercising their constitutional functions will incur a sentence of from six to ten years imprisonment.’

‘Whosoever shall attempt to impede or tamper with the normal course of general elections, will incur a sentence of from four to eight years imprisonment.’

‘Whosoever shall introduce, publish, propagate, or try to enforce in Cuba instructions, orders or decrees that tend... to promote the inobservance of laws in force, will incur a sentence of from two to six years imprisonment.’

‘Whosoever shall assume command of troops, posts, fortresses, military camps, towns, warships, or military aircraft, without the authority to do so, or without express Government orders, will incur a sentence of from five to ten years imprisonment.’

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

‘A similar sentence will be passed upon anyone who usurps the exercise of a function held by the Constitution as properly belonging to the powers of State.’

Without telling anyone. Code in one hand and a deposition in the other, that citizen went to the old city building, that old building which housed the Court competent and under obligation to bring cause against and punish those responsible for this deed. He presented a writ denouncing the crimes and asking that Fulgencio Batista and his seventeen accomplices be sentenced to 108 years in prison as decreed by the Social Defense Code; considering also aggravating circumstances of second offense, treachery and acting under cover of night.

Days and months passed. What a disappointment! The accused remained unmolested; he strode up and down the country like a great lord and was called Honorable Sir and General: he removed and replaced judges at will. The very day the Courts opened, the criminal occupied the seat of honor in the midst of our august and venerable patriarchs of justice.

Once more the days and the months rolled by the people wearied of mockery and abuses. There is a limit to tolerance! The struggle began against this man who was disregarding the law, who had usurped power by the use of violence against the will of the people, who was guilty of aggression against the established order, tortured, murdered, imprisoned, and prosecuted those who had taken up the struggle to defend the law and to restore freedom to the people.

FIDEL CASTRO

HONORABLE JUDGES:

I am that humble citizen who one day demanded in vain that the Courts punish the power-hungry men who had violated the law and torn our institutions to shreds. Now that it is I who am accused, for attempting to overthrow this illegal regime and to restore the legitimate Constitution of the Republic, I am held incommunicado for 76 days and denied the right to speak to anyone, even to my son; between two heavy machine guns, I am led through the city. I am transferred to this hospital to be tried secretly with the greatest severity; and the prosecutor with the Code in his hand solemnly demands that I be sentenced to 26 years in prison.

You will answer that on the former occasion the courts failed to act because force prevented them from doing so. Well then, confess, this time force will compel you to condemn me. The first time you were unable to punish the guilty; now you will be compelled to punish the innocent. The maiden of justice twice raped.

And so much talk to justify the unjustifiable, to explain the inexplicable and to reconcile the irreconcilable! The regime has reached the point of asserting that 'Might makes right' is the supreme law of the land. In other words, that using tanks and soldiers to take over the presidential palace, the national treasury, and the other government offices, and aiming guns at the heart of the people, entitles them to govern the people! The same argument the Nazis used when they occupied the countries of Europe and installed their puppet governments.

I heartily believe revolution to be the source of legal right; but the nocturnal armed assault of March 10th could

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

never be considered a revolution. In everyday language, as José Ingenieros said, it is common to give the name of revolution to small disorders promoted by a group of dissatisfied persons in order to grab from those in power, both the political sinecures and the economic advantages. The usual result is no more than a change of hands, in the dividing up of jobs and benefits. This is not the criterion of a philosopher, as it cannot be that of a cultured man.

Leaving aside the problem of integral changes in the social system, not even on the surface of the public quagmire were we able to discern the slightest motion that could lessen the rampant putrefaction. The previous regime was guilty of petty politics, theft, pillage, and disrespect for human life; but the present regime has increased political skullduggery five-fold, pillage ten-fold, and a hundred-fold the lack of respect for human life.

It was known that *Barriguilla* had plundered and murdered, that he was a millionaire, that he owned in Havana a good many apartment houses, countless stock in foreign companies, fabulous accounts in American banks, that he agreed to divorce settlements to the tune of eighteen million *pesos*, that he was a frequent guest in the most lavishly expensive hotels for Yankee tycoons. But no one would ever think of *Barriguilla* as a revolutionary. *Barriguilla* is that sergeant of Weyler who assassinated twelve Cubans in Guatao. Batista's men murdered seventy in Santiago de Cuba. *De te fabuia narratur.*

Four political parties governed the country before the 10th of March: the Auténtico, Liberal, Democratic and Republican parties. Two days after the coup, the Republican party gave its support to the new rulers. A year had not yet passed before the Liberal and Democratic parties were

FIDEL CASTRO

again in power: Batista did not restore the Constitution, did not restore civil liberties, did not restore Congress, did not restore universal suffrage, did not restore in the last analysis any of the uprooted democratic institutions. But he did restore Verdeja, Guas Inclan, Salvito Garcia Ramos, Anaya Murillo and the top hierarchy of the traditional government parties, the most corrupt, rapacious, reactionary, and antediluvian elements in Cuban politics. So went the 'revolution' of *Barriguilla!*

Lacking even the most elemental revolutionary content, Batista's regime represents in every respect a 20-year regression for Cuba. Batista's regime has exacted a high price from all of us, but primarily from the humble classes which are suffering hunger and misery. Meanwhile the dictatorship has laid waste the nation with commotion, ineptitude, and anguish, and now engages in the most loathsome forms of ruthless politics, concocting formula after formula to perpetuate itself in power, even if over a stack of corpses and a sea of blood.

Batista's regime has not set in motion a single nationwide program of betterment for the people. Batista delivered himself into the hands of the great financial interests. Little else could be expected from a man of his mentality—utterly devoid as he is both of ideals and of principles, and utterly lacking the faith, confidence, and support of the masses. His regime merely brought with it a change of hands and a redistribution of the loot among a new group of friends, relatives, accomplices, and parasitical hangers-on that constitute the political retinue of the Dictator. What great shame the people have been forced to endure so that a small group of egotists, altogether indifferent to the needs

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

of their homeland, may find in public life an easy and comfortable *modus vivendi*.

How right Eduardo Chibás was in his last radio speech, when he said that Batista was encouraging the return of the colonels, castor oil and the Fugitive Law! Immediately after March 10th, Cubans again began to witness acts of veritable vandalism which they had thought banished forever from their nation. There was an unprecedented attack on a cultural institution: a radio station was stormed by the thugs of the SIM, together with the young hoodlums of PAU, while broadcasting the 'University of the Air' program. And there was the case of the journalist Mario Kuchilán, dragged from his home in the middle of the night and bestially tortured till he was nearly unconscious. There was the murder of student Rubén Batista and the criminal volleys fired at a peaceful student demonstration next to the wall where the Spanish volunteers shot the medical students in 1871. And many cases such as that of Dr. Garcia Bárcena, when right in the courtrooms men have coughed up blood because of the barbaric tortures practiced upon them by the repressive security forces. I will not enumerate the hundreds of cases where groups of citizens have been brutally clubbed—men, women, children and the aged. All of this was being done even before July 26th. Since then, as everyone knows. Cardinal Arteaga himself was not even spared such treatment. Everybody knows he was a victim of the repressive agents. According to the official story, he was prey to a 'band of thieves.' For once the regime told the truth. For what else is this regime?...

People have just contemplated with horror the case of the journalist who was kidnapped and subjected to torture by fire for twenty days. Each new case brings forth evidence

FIDEL CASTRO

of unheard-of effrontery, of immense hypocrisy: the cowardice of those who shirk responsibility and invariably blame the enemies of the regime. Governmental tactics enviable only by the worst gangster mobs. Even the Nazi criminals were never so cowardly. Hitler assumed responsibility for the massacres of June 30, 1934, stating that for 24 hours he had been the German Supreme Court; the henchmen of this dictatorship which defies all comparison because of its baseness, maliciousness and cowardice, kidnap, torture, murder and then loathsomely put the blame on the adversaries of the regime. Typical tactics of Sergeant *Barriguilla!*

Not once in all the cases I have mentioned, Honorable Judges, have the agents responsible for these crimes been brought to Court to be tried for them. How is this? Was this not to be the regime of public order, peace, and respect for human life?

I have related all this in order to ask you now: Can this state of affairs be called a revolution, capable of formulating law and establishing rights? Is it or is it not legitimate to struggle against this regime? And must there not be a high degree of corruption in the courts of law when these courts imprison the citizens who try to rid their country of so much infamy?

Cuba is suffering from a cruel and base despotism. You are well aware that resistance to despots is legitimate. This is a universally recognized principle, and our 1940 Constitution expressly makes it a sacred right, in the second paragraph of Article 40: 'It is legitimate to use adequate resistance to protect previously granted individual rights.' And even if this prerogative had not been provided for by the Supreme Law of the Land, it is a consideration without

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

which one cannot conceive of the existence of a democratic collectivity. Professor Infesta, in his book on Constitutional Law, differentiates between the political and the legal constitutions, and states: 'Sometimes the Legal Constitution includes constitutional principles which, even without being so classified, would be equally binding solely on the basis of the people's consent, for example, the principle of majority rule or representation in our democracies.' The right of insurrection in the face of the tyranny is one such principle, and whether or not it be included in the Legal Constitution, it is always binding within a democratic society. The presentation of such a case to a high court is one of the most interesting problems of general law. Duguit has said in his *Treatise on Constitutional Law*: 'If an insurrection fails, no court will dare to rule that this unsuccessful insurrection was technically no conspiracy, no transgression against the security of the State, inasmuch as, the government being tyrannical, the intention to overthrow it was legitimate.' But please take note: Duguit does not state, 'the court ought not to rule.' He says, 'no court will dare to rule.' More explicitly, he means that no court will dare, that no court will have enough courage to do so, under a tyranny. The issue admits no alternatives. If the court is courageous and does its duty, then yes, it will dare.

Recently there has been a violent controversy concerning the 1940 Constitution. The Court of Social and Constitutional Rights ruled against it in favor of the so-called Statutes. Nevertheless, Honorable Judges, I maintain that the 1940 Constitution is still in force. My statement may seem absurd and extemporaneous to you. But do not be surprised. It is I who am astonished that a court of law should have attempted to deal a death blow to the legit-

imate Constitution of the Republic. Adhering strictly to facts, truth, and reason—as I have done all along—I will prove what I have just stated. The Court of Social and Constitutional Rights was instituted according to Article 172 of the 1940 Constitution, and the supplementary act of May 31, 1949. These laws, in virtue of which the Court was created, granted it, insofar as problems of unconstitutionality are concerned, a specific and clearly defined area of legal competence: to rule in all matters of appeals claiming the unconstitutionality of laws, legal decrees, resolutions, or acts that deny, diminish, restrain, or adulterate the constitutional rights and privileges or that jeopardize the operations of state agencies. Article 194 established very clearly the following: 'All judges and courts are under the obligation to find solutions to conflicts between the Constitution and the existing laws in accordance with the principle that the former shall always prevail over the latter.' Therefore, according to the laws that created it, the Court of Social and Constitutional Rights should always rule in favor of the Constitution. When this Court caused the Statutes to prevail above the Constitution of the Republic, it completely overstepped its boundaries and its established field of competence, thereby rendering a decision which is legally null and void. Furthermore, the decision itself is absurd, and absurdities have no validity in law nor in fact, not even from a metaphysical point of view. No matter how venerable a court may be, it cannot assert that circles are square or what amounts to the same thing, that the grotesque offspring of the April 4th Statutes should be considered the official Constitution of a State.

The Constitution is understood to be the basic and supreme law of the nation, to define the country's political

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

structure, regulate the functioning of government agencies, and determine the limits of their activities. It must be stable, enduring and, to a certain extent, inflexible. The Statutes fulfill none of these qualifications. To begin with, they harbor a monstrous, shameless, and brazen contradiction in regard to the most vital aspect of this all; the integration of the Republican structure and the principle of national sovereignty. Article 1 reads: 'Cuba is a sovereign and independent State constituted as a democratic Republic.' Article 2 reads: 'Sovereignty resides in the will of the people, and all powers derive from this source.' But then comes Article 118, which reads: 'The President will be nominated by the Cabinet.' So, it is not the people who choose the President, but rather the Cabinet. And who chooses the Cabinet? Article 120, section 13: 'The President will be authorized to nominate and reappoint the members of the Cabinet and to replace them when the occasion arises.' So, after all, who nominates whom? Is this not the classical old problem of the chicken and the egg that no one has ever been able to solve?

One day eighteen hoodlums got together. Their plan was to assault the Republic and loot its 350 million pesos annual budget. Behind peoples' backs and with great treachery, they succeeded in their purpose. 'Now what do we do next?' they wondered. One of them said to the rest: 'You name me Prime Minister, and I'll make you generals.' When this was done, he rounded up a group of 20 men and told them: 'I will make you my Cabinet if you make me President.' In this way they named each other generals, ministers, and president, and then took over the treasury and the Republic.

What is more, it was not simply a matter of usurping sovereignty at a given moment in order to name a Cabinet,

FIDEL CASTRO

Generals, and a President. This man ascribed to himself, through these Statutes, not only absolute control of the nation, but also the power of life and death over every citizen—control, in fact, over the very existence of the nation. Because of this, I maintain that the position of the Court of Social and Constitutional Rights is not only treacherous, vile, cowardly, and repugnant, but also absurd.

The Statutes contain an article which has not received much attention, but which gives us the key to this situation and is the one from which we shall derive decisive conclusions. I refer specifically to the modifying clause included in Article 257, which reads: 'This constitutional law is open to reform by the Cabinet with a two thirds quorum vote.' This is where mockery reaches its climax. Not only did they exercise sovereignty in order to impose a Constitution upon a people without that people's consent, and to install a regime which concentrates all power in their own hands, but also, through Article 257, they assume the most essential attribute of sovereignty: the power to change the basic and supreme Law of the land. And they have already changed it several times since March 10th. Yet, with the greatest gall, they assert in Article 2 that sovereignty resides in the will of the people and that the people are the source of all power. Since these changes may be brought about by a vote of two thirds of the Cabinet and the Cabinet is named by the President, then the right to make and break Cuba is in the hands of one man, a man who is, furthermore, the most unworthy of all the creatures ever to be born in this land. Was this then accepted by the Court of Social and Constitutional Rights? And is all that derives from it valid and legal? Very well, you shall see what was accepted: 'This constitutional law is open to reform by the Cabinet with a

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

two thirds quorum vote.’ Such a power recognizes no limits. Under its aegis, any article, any chapter, any section, even the whole law, may be modified. For example. Article 1, which I have just mentioned, says that Cuba is a sovereign and independent state constituted as a democratic Republic, ‘although today it is in fact a bloody dictatorship.’ Article 3 reads: ‘The national boundaries include the island of Cuba, the Isle of Pines, and the neighboring keys...’ and so on. Batista and his Cabinet under the provisions of Article 257 can modify all these other articles. They can say that Cuba is no longer a Republic but a hereditary monarchy and he, Batista, can anoint himself king. He can dismember the national territory and sell a province to a foreign country as Napoleon did with Louisiana. He may suspend the right to life itself, and like Herod, order the decapitation of newborn children. All these measures would be legal, and you would have to incarcerate all those who opposed them, just as you now intend to do with me. I have put forth extreme examples to show how sad and humiliating our present situation is. To think that all those absolute powers are in the hands of men truly capable of selling our country along with all its citizens!

As the Court of Social and Constitutional Rights has accepted this state of affairs, what more are they waiting for? They may as well hang up their judicial robes. It is a fundamental principle of general law that there can be no constitutional status where the constitutional and legislative powers reside in the same body. When the Cabinet makes the laws, the decrees, and the rules—and at the same time has the power to change the Constitution in a moment’s time—then I ask you: why do we need a Court of Social and Constitutional Rights? The ruling in favor of this

FIDEL CASTRO

Statute is irrational, inconceivable, illogical, and totally contrary to the republican laws that you, Honorable Judges, swore to uphold. When the Court of Social and Constitutional Rights supported Batista's Statutes against the Constitution, the Supreme Law of the Land was not abolished but rather the Court of Social and Constitutional Rights placed itself outside the Constitution, renounced its autonomy and committed legal suicide. May it rest in peace!

The right to rebel, established in Article 40 of the Constitution, is still valid. Was it established to function while the Republic was enjoying normal conditions? No. This provision is to the Constitution, what a lifeboat is to a ship at sea. The lifeboat is only launched when the ship has been torpedoed by enemies laying wait along its course. With our Constitution betrayed and the people deprived of all their prerogatives, there was only one way open: one right which no power may abolish. The right to resist oppression and injustice. If any doubt remains, there is an article of the Social Defense Code which the Honorable Prosecutor would have done well not to forget. It reads, and I quote: 'The appointed or elected government authorities that fail to resist sedition with all available means will be liable to a sentence of interdiction of from six to eight years.' The judges of our nation were under the obligation to resist Batista's treacherous military coup of the 10th of March. It is understandable that when no one has observed the law and when nobody else has done his duty, those who have observed the law and have done their duty should be sent to prison.

You will not be able to deny that the regime forced upon the nation is unworthy of Cuba's history. In his book, *The Spirit of Laws*, which is the foundation of the modern

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

division of governmental power, Montesquieu makes a distinction between three types of government according to their basic nature: 'The Republican form wherein the whole people or a portion thereof has sovereign power; the Monarchical form where only one man governs, but in accordance with fixed and well-defined laws; and the Despotic form where one man without regard for laws nor rules acts as he pleases, regarding only his own will or whim.' And then he adds: 'A man whose five senses constantly tell him that he is everything and that the rest of humanity is nothing is bound to be lazy, ignorant, and sensuous.' 'As virtue is necessary to democracy, and honor to a monarchy, fear is of the essence to a despotic regime, where virtue is not needed, and honor would be dangerous.'

The right of rebellion against tyranny, Honorable Judges, has been recognized from the most ancient times to the present day by men of all creeds, ideas, and doctrines.

It was so in the theocratic monarchies of remote antiquity. In China it was almost a constitutional principle that when a king governed rudely and despotically, he should be deposed and replaced by a virtuous prince.

The philosophers of ancient India upheld the principle of active resistance to arbitrary authority. They justified revolution and very often put their theories into practice. One of their spiritual leaders used to say that 'an opinion held by the majority is stronger than the king himself. A rope woven of many strands is strong enough to hold a lion.'

The city states of Greece and republican Rome not only admitted but defended the meting-out of violent death to tyrants.

FIDEL CASTRO

In the Middle Ages, John Salisbury in his *Book of the Statesman* says that when a prince does not govern according to law and degenerates into a tyrant, violent overthrow is legitimate and justifiable. He recommends for tyrants the dagger rather than the poison.

Saint Thomas Aquinas, in the *Summa Theologica*, rejects the doctrine of tyrannicide, and yet upholds the thesis that tyrants should be overthrown by the people.

Martin Luther proclaimed that when a government degenerates into a tyranny that violated the laws, its subjects are released from their obligation to obey. His disciple, Philippe Melanchthon, upholds the right of resistance when governments become despotic. Calvin, the outstanding thinker of the Reformation, with regard to political ideas, postulates that people are entitled to take up arms to oppose any usurpation.

No less a man than Juan Mariana, a Spanish Jesuit during the reign of Phillip II, asserts in his book, *De Rege et Regis Institutione*, that when a governor usurps power, or even if he were elected, when he governs in a tyrannical manner, it is licit for a private citizen to exercise tyrannicide, either directly or through subterfuge with the least possible disturbance.

The French writer, Francois Hotman, maintained that between the government and its subjects there is a bond or contract, and that the people may rise in rebellion against the tyranny of government when the latter violate that pact.

About the same time, a booklet—which came to be widely read—appeared under the title *Vindiciae Contra Tyrannos*, and it was signed with the pseudonym Stephanus Junius Brutus. It openly declared that resistance to

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

governments is legitimate when rulers oppress the people that it is the duty of honorable judges to lead the struggle.

The Scottish reformers John Knox and John Poyntet upheld the same points of view. And, in the most important book of that movement, George Buchanan stated that if a government achieved power without taking into account the consent of the people, or if a government rules their destiny in an unjust and arbitrary fashion, then that government becomes a tyranny and can be divested of power or, in a final recourse, its leaders can be put to death.

John Althus, a German jurist of the early 17th century, stated in his *Treatise on Politics*, that sovereignty as the supreme authority of the State, is born from the voluntary concourse of all its members; that governmental authority stems from the people and that its unjust, illegal, or tyrannical function exempts them from the duty of obedience and justifies resistance or rebellion.

Thus far. Honorable Judges, I have mentioned examples from antiquity, from the Middle Ages, and from the beginnings of our times. I selected these examples from writers of all creeds. What is more, you can see that the right to rebellion is at the very root of Cuba's existence as a nation. By virtue of it you are today able to appear in the robes of Cuban Judges. Would it be that those garments really served the cause of justice!

It is well known that in England during the 17th century two kings, Charles I and James II, were dethroned for despotism. These actions coincided with the birth of liberal political philosophy and provided the ideological base for a new social class, which was then struggling to break the bonds of feudalism. Against divine right autocracies, this new philosophy upheld the principle of the social contract

FIDEL CASTRO

and of the consent of the governed, and constituted the foundation of the English Revolution of 1688, the American Revolution of 1775, and the French Revolution of 1789. These great revolutionary events ushered in the liberation of the Spanish colonies in the New World—the final link in that chain being broken by Cuba. The new philosophy nurtured our own political ideas and helped us to evolve our Constitutions, from the Constitution of Guaimaro up to the Constitution of 1940. The latter was influenced by the socialist currents of our time; the principle of the social function of property and of man's inalienable right to a decent living were built into it, although large, vested interests have prevented fully enforcing those rights.

The right of insurrection against tyranny then underwent its final consecration and became a fundamental tenet of political liberty.

As far back as 1649, John Milton wrote that the political power lies in the people, who can enthrone and dethrone kings and who have the duty of overthrowing tyrants.

John Locke, in his essay on government, maintained that when the natural rights of man are violated, the people have the right and the duty to alter or abolish the government. 'The only remedy against unauthorized force is opposition to it by force.'

Jean-Jacques Rousseau said with great eloquence in his *Social Contract*: 'While a people sees itself forced to obey and obeys, it does well; but as soon as it can shake off the yoke and shakes it off, it does better, recovering its liberty through the use of the very right that has been taken away from it. 'The strongest man is never strong enough to be master forever, unless he converts force into right and obedience into duty. Force is a physical power; I do not see

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

what morality one may derive from its use. To yield to force is an act of necessity, not of will; at the very least, it is an act of prudence. In what sense could this be called a duty?' 'To renounce freedom is to renounce one's status as a man, to renounce one's human rights, including one's duties. There is no possible compensation for renouncing everything. Total renunciation is incompatible with the nature of man and to take away all free will is to take away all morality to conduct. In short, it is vain and contradictory to stipulate on the one hand an absolute authority and on the other an unlimited obedience. . .'

Thomas Paine said that 'one just man deserves more respect than a rogue with a crown.'

The people's right to rebel has been opposed only by reactionaries like that clergyman of Virginia, Jonathan Boucher, who said: 'The right to rebel is a censurable doctrine derived from Lucifer, the father of rebellions.'

The Declaration of Independence of the Congress of Philadelphia, on July 4, 1776, consecrated this right in a beautiful paragraph which reads: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness; That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it and to institute a new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness.'

FIDEL CASTRO

The famous French Declaration of the Rights of Man willed this principle to the coming generations: 'When the government violates the rights to the people, insurrection is for them the most sacred of rights and the most imperative of duties.' 'When a person seizes sovereignty, he should be condemned to death by free men.'

I believe I have sufficiently justified my point of view. I have called forth more reasons than the Honorable Prosecutor called forth to ask that I be condemned to 26 years in prison. All these reasons support men who struggle for the freedom and happiness of the people. None support those who oppress the people, revile them, and rob them heartlessly. Therefore, I have been able to call forth many reasons and he could not adduce even one. How can Batista's presence in power be justified, when he gained it against the will of the people and by violating the laws of the Republic through the use of treachery and force? How could anyone call legitimate a regime of blood, oppression, and ignominy? How could anyone call revolutionary a regime which has gathered the most backward men, methods, and ideas of public life around it? How anyone consider legally valid the high treason of a Court whose duty was to defend the Constitution? With what right do the Courts send to prison citizens who have tried to redeem their country by giving their own blood, their own lives? All this is monstrous to the eyes of the nation and to the principles of true justice!

Still there is one argument more powerful than all the others. We are Cubans and to be Cuban implies a duty; not to fulfill that duty is a crime, is treason. We are proud of the history of our country; we learned it in school and have grown up hearing of freedom, justice, and human rights.

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

We were taught to venerate the glorious example of our heroes and martyrs. Cespedes, Agramonte, Maceo, Gómez, and Martí were the first names engraved in our minds. We were taught that the Titan once said that liberty is not begged for but won with the blade of a *machete*. We were taught that for the guidance of Cuba's free citizens, the Apostle wrote in his book *The Golden Age*: 'The man who abides by unjust laws and permits any man to trample and mistreat the country in which he was born, is not an honorable man... In the world there must be a certain degree of honor just as there must be a certain amount of light. When there are many men without honor, there are always others who bear in themselves the honor of many men. These are the men who rebel with great force against those who steal the people's freedom, that is to say, against those who steal human honor itself. In those men thousands more are contained, an entire people is contained, human dignity is contained...' We were taught that the 10th of October and the 24th of February are glorious anniversaries of national rejoicing because they mark days on which Cubans rebelled against the yoke of infamous tyranny. We were taught to cherish and defend the beloved flag of the lone star, and to sing every afternoon the verses of our National Anthem: 'To live in chains is to live in disgrace and in opprobrium' and 'to die for one's homeland is to live forever!' All this we learned and will never forget, even though today in our land there is murder and prison for the men who practice the ideas taught to them since the cradle. We were born in a free country that our parents bequeathed to us, and the Island will sink into the sea before we consent to be slaves of anyone.

FIDEL CASTRO

It seemed that the Apostle would die during his Centennial. It seemed that his memory would be extinguished forever. So great was the affront! But he is alive; he has not died. His people are rebellious. His people are worthy. His people are faithful to his memory. There are Cubans who have fallen defending his doctrines. There are young men who in magnificent selflessness came to die beside his tomb, giving their blood and their lives so that he could keep on living in the heart of his nation. Cuba, what would have become of you had you let your Apostle die?

I come to the close of my defense plea but I will not end it as lawyers usually do, asking that the accused be freed. I cannot ask freedom for myself while my comrades are already suffering in the ignominious prison of the Isle of Pines. Send me there to join them and to share their fate. It is understandable that honest men should be dead or in prison in a Republic where the President is a criminal and a thief.

To you. Honorable Judges, my sincere gratitude for having allowed me to express myself free from contemptible restrictions. I hold no bitterness towards you, I recognize that in certain aspects you have been humane, and I know that the Chief Judge of this Court, a man of impeccable private life, cannot disguise his repugnance at the current state of affairs that compels him to dictate unjust decisions. Still, a more serious problem remains for the Court of Appeals: the indictments arising from the murder of seventy men, that is to say, the greatest massacre we have ever known. The guilty continue at liberty and with weapons in their hands—weapons which continually threaten the lives of all citizens. If all the weight of the law does not fall upon the guilty, because of cowardice or

HISTORY WILL ABSOLVE ME

because of domination of the courts and if then, all the judges do not resign, I pity your honor. And I regret the unprecedented shame that will fall upon the Judicial Power.

I know that imprisonment will be harder for me than it has ever been for anyone, filled with cowardly threats and hideous cruelty. But I do not fear prison, as I do not fear the fury of the miserable tyrant who took the lives of 70 of my comrades. Condemn me. It does not matter. History will absolve me.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

No statement by a world leader has ever been so willfully distorted as Fidel Castro's historic speech of December 2nd, 1961. Made in a Havana television studio during the early hours of the morning and broadcast live over television and radio, the speech is a lengthy and complex analysis of the development of the Cuban Revolution; so frank that it bars comparison. It was not a formal diplomatic utterance of a statesman, but an incredibly sincere and searching account by a tested revolutionary leader of the evolution of his own political thinking. Officially, the speech opened a series of talks to the Cuban people by revolutionary leaders on the organization of the new United Party of the Socialist Revolution. And Fidel takes great pains to outline the political and ideological reasons behind the formation of this new integrated revolutionary party.

WHY IS THE UNITED PARTY OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION A NECESSITY?

I would certainly have liked a little more time to make a serious study of this topic, since the subject of the United Party of the Socialist Revolution is a matter of extraordinary importance to the Revolution. I, therefore, told some of my comrades that I was going to give a sort of provisional talk now, since I expect to return to this question in the future when I have more time to develop it thoroughly.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

I am, therefore, simply going to express at this time a series of fundamental ideas with which the United Party of the Revolution is concerned.

In the first place, what is the United Party of the Revolution and why is it being organized? Of course, on previous occasions, in different public ceremonies, we have already referred to this question and have expressed certain ideas about it.

The United Party of the Revolution was, in the first place, a necessity. Why was it a necessity? To begin with, you cannot make a revolution, and above all, you cannot carry a revolution forward without a strong and disciplined organization.

This necessity is becoming more and more evident as the revolutionary process advances and deepens and faces even more difficult tasks.

It has always been said, and rightly so, that it is easier to win power than to hold it; it is easier to win power than to govern.

And that is a great truth. The tasks a revolutionary movement faces in the struggle for power become enormous and multiply the minute that revolutionary movement seizes power. It has also been said in various books, (and we are really reviewing all of the books we have read and studied, seeing that we all studied in places where we often had to learn a lot of foolishness, things of no great importance); it has been said that the harder it is to win power, that is, consolidate it, the easier it is to keep it; that the easier it is to win power, the harder it is to hold on to it.

The only truth there can be in that assertion is basically the following: that it is in the struggle for power that the cadres who will later govern the country are trained. The

FIDEL CASTRO

longer and more protracted the struggle, the greater the number of men it trains capable of later discharging other duties.

To recall briefly the experience, our experience, an experience that was relatively short when compared with much longer struggles which other countries had to wage, armed struggles, as for example in China where the guerillas fought for more than 20 years before they seized power. Of course, the struggle for power does not begin only at the moment of armed conflict.

I remember when we gave the word to strike, prematurely, when the revolutionary movement made what you could call an error in evaluating the objective conditions, already trying to seize power in April 1958.

At that time, we still had very few men. If I am not mistaken, the total of our guerilla forces numbered about 180 combatants. When we decided to open the Second Front, we did it with 50 men; we opened the front around Santiago de Cuba with 35 men; and this left other forces that numbered no more than 130 men, all told, perhaps less; there were fewer than 100 men left in the Sierra Maestra at the time.

RESISTING WITH LIMITED RESOURCES

Well, if, at that time, we had succeeded in overthrowing the tyranny from the military point of view, our military leaders would not have been able to get the experience they got later. Up to that time, our guerilla forces had never launched a serious frontal attack from prepared positions against the enemy forces. It had been, indeed, a guerilla war.

However, it was during the last stage of the struggle, right after the failure of that attempt to seize power, when

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

the guerilla forces faced the most complex and crucial military problems. Once, we had to defend some national territory that we could not abandon because we had set up workshops, the Rebel Radio Station, and a whole lot of fighting equipment there which we would lose if the enemy took over.

We had to make a stand there with the limited resources at our disposal.

Among other things, we had to regroup all our forces, excepting those at the Second Front in Oriente, to resist the enemy offensive and we could count on scarcely 300 men of whom some 60 were so poorly armed we could hardly use them.

However, that new situation brought about a serious battle in defense of that territory, which was getting smaller and smaller, to the point where we could not, allow it to get any smaller. We fought some important battles. Once, the enemy surrounded us and we surrounded them, in turn. An enemy battalion surrounded us, and other enemy forces surrounded our other forces. But we had our first successes here in that sector, we became stronger and were able to counterattack. But one thing is certain: A complex battle developed, and we acquired a lot of experience from it. And the experience, and arms, and men strengthened by that struggle made it possible for us to start more important operations, for example, the invasion of Las Villas.

THE FIGHT AGAINST THE ARMY

It goes without saying that without the men forged by those 71 days of fighting, it would have been difficult to undertake the invasion of Las Villas from Oriente.

FIDEL CASTRO

The more we analyze the conditions under which we began that operation, the number of men who carried it out, facing an enemy militarily much stronger, the more extraordinary a feat it seems crossing all Camaguey from Oriente without cover, without anything in our favor, and arriving in Las Villas was a truly great feat.

One often wonders how this was possible. The answer is simply that the men who made the crossing were comrades who already had an extraordinary confidence in themselves, had developed a great composure, a great skill and were men who were fully tested. These are the things that made it possible to undertake that operation, and those operations in the lowlands that at first seemed incredible.

In other words, the continuation of the struggle kept developing a set of human values, and the ability to carry out more and more difficult tasks, and we kept on acquiring more experience.

So that by the war not ending in April but at the end of the year, the Revolution, at the moment of triumph, could count on a large group of comrades tested in battle and quite experienced.

Can anyone deny that all the experience acquired in those months has become of the greatest importance to the Revolution now? If we have a large number of comrades competent in defending the Revolution against imperialist attacks; if the Armed Forces of the Revolution can face up to the enemy planes, to oppose his aggression, then that is due, in great part, to the fact that the prolongation of the struggle developed a group of leaders. Of course, not in what they understood when the war ended; but still they at least were tested men, known men, who in time, after the triumph of the conquest of power were able to develop even more.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

And so, we have many comrades who took part in all those military actions who today have been trained in our military academies and who have devoted themselves fervently to study. Of course, all this involved a little work. The guerilla war from which most of our leaders sprang up—although at a given moment it was no longer a guerilla war, but a war of major proportions, of maneuvers, and of positions—made those who came out of it feel a certain scorn for military academies, a certain disdain for military theories and military manuals. That is an attitude we must overcome, though it will be hard at first. But this training has already brought about a change in the thinking of our war companions, a change in their attitude. And in fact, today there is not a single revolutionary leader who is not interested in attending the academies.

Well, then, our military schools are training comrades of high rank, and it is not rare to find a major going to a school for sergeants and taking a course for privates, for one of the things we are doing is to see that, they learn about the problems of the people whom they are going to lead. And they are doing so with extraordinary enthusiasm.

But the continuation of the struggle resulted in all those men ending up the war with much, and enough experience of a military nature, experience that was to develop still further in the months ahead.

This is an example from the military field, which is exactly the same as other fields, when it comes to organization, when it comes to the solution of administrative and political problems. During the struggle, of course, we didn't have vast areas to administer. In China, for example, they had a lot of problems, indeed, to resolve, even before they seized power. There were certain problems

FIDEL CASTRO

that we discussed after seizing power, such as the problems relating to art, which the revolutionary movement in China discussed before they seized power.

THE POLITICAL STRUGGLE DEVELOPED REVOLUTIONARY VALUES

It can't be said that there weren't experienced men among us. No one can deny that the political struggle in our country has developed a series of values in the public life of our country, revolutionary values, and well-trained men. In the end, however, the Revolution came to power. Under what conditions does a revolution come to power? Does it come with an organized and disciplined movement perfectly prepared for the duties of government? No. Do all of the revolutionary forces organic, embodied in that revolutionary movement come to power? No.

There is only one revolutionary movement, not two or three or four revolutionary movements. There is really one revolutionary movement and, in the long run, revolution or counter-revolution. A revolutionary movement can be more or less limited; with a revolution, it is possible to reach the objectives the revolution has set (and it cannot be denied that they may be revolutionary as far as they go) and from that moment, either the revolution ceases to be truly revolutionary, or it goes forward. In other words, one movement can be more or less radical, which cannot be the case with two, three or four revolutionary movements. That's absurd. Furthermore, those other movements are really counter-revolutionary.

THE VARIOUS REVOLUTIONARY FORCES

The truth is that a revolution does not come to power with an organization that embodies all of the revolutionary forces. There were different revolutionary organizations,

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

and these different revolutionary organizations represented different revolutionary forces. In the common goal that united all revolutionary and nonrevolutionary organizations—because there were forces against Batista’s tyranny which you could not call revolutionary—there were politicians who were simply against Batista because he had kept them out of his government; there were politicians of the ruling classes, those very ruling classes that Batista’s government represented, who were really angling for a change of power. The politicians ousted from power, for example, on March 10th, that whole political group headed by the celebrated Sr. Carlos Prio Socarras, was a group that in the long run represented the same interests as Batista. They, as agents of imperialism dressed in mufti, and Batista, as an agent of imperialism with a military apparatus, an apparatus of force and oppression.

All those people... What did those people intend to do when they got into the government? Did they intend to do anything different from what they did? Let us imagine for just a second that the group of Prio, Tony Varona and their ilk had come to power. Of course, that was virtually impossible. Here you had Prio, Tony Varona and that whole crowd after maybe ten or twelve years in exile alone and they’ve entered into an election, in a deal with Batista, content just to serve as senators or mayors or provincial governors. That’s the way everything ended up. But let us imagine hypothetically that those people had regained power, were once again ruling our country.

What would they have done? What would they have done that was different from what they did in the years when they were in power? They were definitely going to do exactly the same thing, that is, serve the interests of

FIDEL CASTRO

imperialism and serve the interests of the upper middle classes here, insofar as those interests did not conflict with the interests of imperialism, because the interests of imperialism—that is, the foreign monopolies—had a privileged position here in our country, even at the expense of the native middle classes.

THEY WERE GOING TO SQUEEZE YOU DRY

Those people in power would have simply limited themselves to doing the same as they had done. They would not have passed a single revolutionary law; they would not even have reduced rents, as the Revolution did, let alone instituted an Agrarian Reform or Educational Reform, or reform of any kind. Everybody knows what those people would have done. What would they have done? Don't you know? I am talking to the people. What would they have done, had they attained power? Listen to me, Lionel, it seems that this subject was not explained to your students at the School of Revolutionary Instruction. Man, everybody knows that!

What they did was to rob; what the government and that whole crowd would simply have done was to rob. That is, they were going to squeeze you dry for their services to the ruling economic interests. They would have maintained a professional army, instruments of repression; they would have maintained all the organs of persecution; they would have maintained the existing social system—that's all. In other words, there was a group representing the dominant economic interests and imperialists which was against Batista simply because they wanted to be the ones in the government; they did not at all like having Batista and

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

Batista's clique instead of them doing the robbing. Of course, they would be against Batista.

What did they do against Batista? Not a thing, absolutely nothing! They devoted themselves to the purchase of arms, to bringing arms here. Often they were successful in bringing them into the country, although they never had the least success in using them; they never even used them.

Everyone remembers the great supply of arms which they smuggled into the country and which the police seized. At the time when we were beginning to set up a revolutionary movement, to train some young people; at a time when we were expecting to see those bigwigs of public life, men with money and property, do something effective against the Batista dictatorship. They had arms, they had money, they had everything; in fact, all they lacked was the will to fight. They were merely playing at revolution. It is true that they brought arms into the country, were looking for people, instructed them in the use of the arms. There were a number of cliques. They acted exactly as they did in the ward politics. Some of them had one or two machine guns hidden and they were looking for people in the wards to fight Batista. How did they win them over? They taught them how to use a machine gun. But, it was the same old, classical politics carried over into the insurrection. Well, these characters were politicking with machine guns; for, indeed, they were all of them thinking of when Batista would fall, one way or the other, and they would bring back the same old thing.

FIDEL CASTRO

PLAYING POLITICS WITH ARMS

We, for our part, went about recruiting young people, picking from the youthful elements we moved around in those who were more serious, more willing, more involved and had a more sincere revolutionary inclination. And what sometimes happened? Where we had organized a cell, they would come—the genuine articles, autenticos, the Prio, the Aureliano crowd, all of them, with a machine gun.

In the first place, we didn't have machine guns; and in the second place, even if we had had them, we would not have been able to teach anyone to use them. You cannot imagine what these people did. For example, they had a room full of arms and when they wanted to win over someone, they would tell him: "How can you join that bunch if they have no arms, haven't got a thing?" And they would take him to the house where there were thirty M-1's, forty machine guns. I remember that some people left us that way.

There were a lot of people, serious and willing to fight who, in despair of fighting Batista, in view of his abuses, crimes and villainies, joined the organization which taught them how to use machine guns. There were a lot of people like that who were ready to fight and proved it later on. But the greatest majority, the leadership of that whole movement, was a group of people who did nothing but play politics with arms.

This was a stage we passed through. They took some people away from us. We trained them, spoke to them, explained to them what a revolution was, what we proposed to do, but the months passed and as there was no.... they became discouraged and joined any group which offered

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

them arms. It was a most interesting experience. Some day when we are discussing the insurrection, I'll have a lot to say about the experiences in those days when we were organizing....

Our attitude at first was one of willingness to collaborate with any movement prepared to fight for the downfall of Batista, for this was essential to us. We spent months, too, waiting for all those people.

FOOLING THE PEOPLE

Don't forget that there were a number of political leaders who had prestige among the people, with wealth; some had wealth, but no prestige; others had prestige, but no wealth. During one stage, we were simply taking stock of what was happening, ready to collaborate with any movement; above all, when you consider that the university had become a focus of rebellion. We thought that we could organize the movement around the university forces.

WHEN WE DECIDED TO START ORGANIZING A REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

We did not decide to organize a revolutionary movement until we became convinced that the people were really being deceived and that it was all madness, all that madness; people were desperate and were joining just any organization. There were twenty organizations at that "Montreal meeting;" there came a whole series of... I do not even wish to recall all that, but many of those important bigwigs—the Pardo Lladas and that whole crowd—were terribly divided. We decided then to start organizing a revolutionary movement with ideas that we would eventually carry out. We were convinced that absolutely nothing was going to come out of all that, about which part

FIDEL CASTRO

of the people had conceived certain illusions; and we were convinced, moreover, that the tactics were wrong.

The whole plan of organizing an army and taking barracks and overthrowing Batista in twenty-four hours seemed absurd to us and we fully realized that civilians—because in our country there was no background nor tradition of military instruction—those men called upon to fight in the streets against a professional army with discipline and technical training that had at its disposal tanks, aircraft, fighter planes, weapons of all types and, moreover, organization and experience; experience... I do not mean military experience, but experience in killing people in the streets and splitting up groups and breaking up demonstrations and all that—we realized that in those circumstances an organization of civilians, armed but without training, could be completely defeated in a putsch-type movement like the one we were planning.

It was not a type of insurrection that is accompanied by a condition indispensable for overthrowing a government, such as a strong and powerful mass movement, that is, a general strike. Neither the objective nor subjective conditions existed for organizing a general strike and it was simply a completely adventurous type of operation. We became convinced that it was all absurd and that was when we conceived the idea of launching another type of struggle, like the one we finally carried out, seizing an army barracks.

I remember that I always had a plan. I do not know whether I managed to convince many people, but when they told me that they had brought in 50 Garand M-1's in a ship, I said to them: "But there are places where you can get more than 50 M-1's; there are places where there are a thousand rifles, greased and well cared for. You don't have

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

to buy them, you don't have to grease them, you don't have to bring them in, you don't have to do anything; all you have to do is take them." I always really believed that there are far more weapons in a barracks than you can import in tons of oil and grease and so on.

I do not know whether I convinced them of that. In the end, we set about getting the first weapons in order to see how we could get the second weapons and how we could launch the revolutionary struggle with the second weapons.

What we always had in mind was, first, to attempt an uprising in one region and try to keep it going and, if that failed, then to go into the mountains with all those weapons and begin a struggle in the mountains.

It seemed to us that revolutionary conditions had to be created by fighting. We were smart enough to realize that we could wage that type of struggle and, under existing conditions, carry it forward to success. From that point of view, we made only one mistake. Do you know what it was? We believed that to begin that type of struggle, we needed more resources than was actually the case. Reality later taught us the following: that while we thought we needed several hundred armed men, (and we were unable to gather those forces and had to start with fewer than one hundred men) experience later demonstrated that it was possible to begin the struggle with far fewer than one hundred—with ten or twelve men. Had we known that, possibly we would not have planned to take Moncada Barracks. We would have planned to take Bayamo Barracks, close as it was to the mountains of the Sierra Maestra. And with the forces we used to attack Moncada Barracks, we would have been able to take Bayamo Barracks and would have certainly succeeded in taking it. And we wouldn't have had to work as hard

FIDEL CASTRO

as we did to get weapons for 82 men; so much fuss was not needed, and the fuss was created in order to get money; no one believes that the fuss was... The fuss had two objectives: agitation regarding the revolutionary struggle. No, it had three objectives: one, to paralyze the politicking elements that were making a tremendous effort to bring the country into a truce and an electoral solution, that is, a non-revolutionary solution; second, to uplift the revolutionary spirit of the people; and third, to gather the minimum resources necessary for us to carry on the revolutionary movement.

We were correct in opposing the elections of those days as a political sell-out, and in doing everything to encourage the revolutionary mood of the people. But the fact was that to start some action, we needed a great deal less than we had imagined.

Now, why did we follow those tactics? Can anyone imagine that you can win revolutionary power with a handful of men? We never imagined such a thing. Our entire revolutionary strategy was geared to our revolutionary understanding. We knew that you can win power only with the support of the people, by mobilizing the masses. We never thought we could win power with ten, twelve or a hundred men. We intended to lay the groundwork for revolutionary struggle through a guerilla action and to develop the struggle until it becomes a mass struggle, and to win power simply with the backing of the masses, as we eventually did. There is no question that the conquest of revolutionary power was due fundamentally to the support of the masses.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

OUR PEOPLE WERE EAGER FOR A REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE

We simply thought out how to take advantage of existing objective conditions, the objective conditions existing in our country and, above all, the system of exploitation prevailing in our country. The situation of the peasants. It wouldn't have occurred to anyone, at least not to me—although there are counter-revolutionaries who think that way, who try to bring off a revolution the way we did. But it would never have occurred to us to start a revolutionary struggle in a country where there are no owners of vast estates; a revolutionary struggle with guerillas in the countryside where there are no estate owners, where the peasants are owners of the land, where there are cooperatives and people's farms, where there is full employment for the entire population. That would not have occurred to us.

Everyone in our country was aware of conditions in the rural areas. Peasants who were not squatters were tenants. Squatters on public lands were the victims of constant evictions and abuse. Cane workers toiled three or four months during the harvest, and two or three months during "the dead season."

Unemployment in the countryside was high. The rural population had migrated to the city where in turn there was already much unemployment. Those who were not squatters were tenants. A tenant on the coffee plantation had to pay one-third or one-quarter of his crops. The tobacco tenant farmer or sharecropper also had to pay 25 or 30 percent of his crop. The cane planter had to pay a lower percentage, but still it was high, considering the value of raw cane. He had to pay at least 5 percent of the value of the raw cane. As for prices, the peasants were victims of all kinds of levies

FIDEL CASTRO

and speculating. Their crops were bought cheap, and speculators took advantage of their condition to exploit them miserably. In the countryside, commodities were very dear; the peasants had to sell their produce cheap. That was the situation in the countryside. The coffee planters were in the mountains. Who picked the coffee? Well, tens of thousands of men and women from the cane fields, from the sugar plantations, who had no work during "the dead season" went into the mountains to pick coffee. Coffee was grown in the mountains, because the peasants, evicted by the sugar and cattle barons, had taken refuge in the mountains and planted coffee there. It is not because coffee grows exclusively in the mountains, but because that was the only place where they could go to survive.

When we reached the Sierra Maestra, however, it was evident that we had not organized certain aspects of the struggle we were undertaking. For example, we hadn't even made a geographical survey of the Sierra Maestra. We hadn't even set up a preliminary organization in the Sierra Maestra; in short, we could not have started the struggle under worse conditions. It may be good to point up these things so that they can serve as examples to other exploited peoples. We have to say that we did not know a single peasant in the Sierra Maestra and, furthermore, the only ideas we had of the Sierra Maestra were those we had acquired in geography books, and I am sure that if you were to ask anyone here what they learned in their geography books about the Sierra Maestra, they would not know the name of a single river in the Sierra Maestra. They might know that the sources of the Cauto is there, in the Sierra Maestra, and the Contramaestre and the Yara. And what we

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

knew of the Yara was the song about the Rio Yara—that's all.

In other words, conditions were very difficult, but it's true that where the objective conditions are favorable, the Revolution can develop, that it's only on the basis of objective conditions that you can, at a given historical moment, make a revolution. This was fully demonstrated because the other circumstances, the subjective ones, did not exist. We began that struggle on the basis of certain premises, correct premises, the premise of an exploitative social system in our country and the conviction that our people wanted a revolutionary change. Though they may not have been very aware of it, nevertheless, that's what they wanted. It showed in their general discontent, in the fact that a rebel band immediately found support among wide sectors of the public, in the rebellious spirit of the people and in the degree of political maturity of our people; in spite of all the confusion sown, in spite of all of the propaganda and of all of the lies of imperialism and reaction.

We started with that assumption. That assumption was correct and since it was correct, the hopes and possibilities we had envisaged were fulfilled. So, this teaches the first lesson: that there can be no revolution, in the first place, unless there are objective circumstances at a given historical moment to facilitate and make the revolution. In other words, a revolution cannot be created out of the minds of men. We can give one very clear and evident example. Let us suppose that Martí had been born not in the middle of the past century, the 19th century, but had been born in the middle of the 18th century. With all his extraordinary intelligence, Martí would not have played the role he actually played in the era when he lived and carried on his

FIDEL CASTRO

revolutionary action, under really objective conditions, to start a struggle, a struggle that could not have been launched one century earlier.

Lenin. Let us suppose that Lenin had been born at the end of the 18th century. Well, he could not have developed the theories he developed as leader of the Russian proletariat, as interpreter of Marxism, since if Marx, in turn, had been born in the 18th century, in the middle of the 18th century, he would possibly have done only what Voltaire, Diderot and all those intellectuals did. One could not have been the intellectual of a class that did not exist; the other, creator of the doctrine of a revolution that could not be realized.

In other words, revolutions do not spring from the minds of men. People can interpret an historical law, a certain moment of historical development. To make a correct interpretation is to propel the revolutionary movement. In Cuba, our role has been that of propellers of that movement, through evaluating a series of objective conditions. Of course, the analysis is not as simple as this, inasmuch as there was another series of circumstances that favored the revolutionary movement we started—certain circumstances which, in the first place, were not taken into account. In the second place, many people thought we were romantics, that we were going to die right there. In the third place, many thought we were ambitious. In the fourth place, many thought that the group of revolutionary leaders was a group of leaders of conservative or non-radical ideas. There is no doubt that had we, when we were getting strength, been known as people with very radical ideas, the social class which is fighting us today would have fought us right then and not only since we took power.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

There was a series of circumstances which favored the role of we who initiated, on an objective basis, the guerilla movement in the mountains.

And what did we find in the Sierra Maestra? Well, we met with the first peasants who wanted to join us, peasants who were in a bad way; first, we had met setbacks and were scattered. Some peasants helped to bring the remnants of our forces together. This group of peasants, a very small group, helped us to go deeper into the Sierra Maestra. Some peasants began to join our ranks.

TERROR OF THE ARMY

But to the majority of peasants what were the hard facts at that time? First of all, there was great fear of the Army. This was the important fact. In the second place, it was difficult for them to realize how such a small group of starving people, ragged, with only a few arms, could destroy all those forces moving about in trucks, trains, airplanes—with so many resources. That is why at first we were, indeed, in a very precarious and difficult position. Indeed, many times we had to move around without the people seeing us. Why? Because in a village or group of 100 persons, there was always a Batista supporter, a grafter, a political sergeant, a something. Well, although he did not see us, he was able to find out where we were from rumors that an armed group had passed through. And he would then go and inform the army.

Nevertheless, we succeeded fairly well in passing through unnoticed until we reached one area, the area of La Plata. And what did we find there? The Army had taken advantage of the existence of our expedition, which it had

FIDEL CASTRO

already assumed to be entirely liquidated, to carry out a series of evictions and terrible abuses.

At the time, there was a certain amount of resistance among the farmers there to a company—La Viti, who owned an estate and the Media Luna sugar mill—I believe it is one of the sugar mills with thousands of acres of land in the area of Niquero. They owned large tracts of land in that area. They even owned Pico Turquino Mountain!

There was a private road going through there. You know that the history of peasants' evictions had always been intimately connected with the problems of roads. A private road is a boundary which the company sets, saying: "To enter, you must go this way; no one can get in." There was one of these roads there and the peasants had been fighting against them. There was a peasants' movement there, very embryonic, it is true. They received us well. Well, then, in those days we planned our first operation. All right, I wish to establish the following: that the day on which we took the first district, that of La Plata on January 17, we launched a surprise attack at dawn on a mixed patrol of soldiers and marines consisting of twelve men—we were about sixteen. We took them by surprise and overcame them. We took all their arms. Our forces came out of the operation that day with twenty-nine men. Then we turned inland towards the Palma Mocha River to the east, on the coast, facing Pico Turquino.

THEY WANTED TO EVICT THE PEASANTS

When we arrived in the morning, a large caravan of peasants were coming down the hillside. These peasants who were about ten kilometers from the scene of action had heard nothing about what had happened. We asked them

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

what had happened to them, but we already knew, for we had captured a harbor pilot who was part of the patrol before we attacked their post and we questioned him thoroughly and found out that a certain Corporal Baso had been around Palma Mocha River telling the peasants to leave the area, that it was going to be bombarded the following day. The patrol was staying at the house of the Viti Company's foreman. They had taken advantage of the presence of our expedition which they had already said was liquidated. No one knew we were there. However, they took advantage of this circumstance to evict the peasants. No airplane had bombed or was going to bomb. It was absurd to think of bombing these hillocks. Nevertheless, this corporal had told all the peasants living along the Palma Mocha River and on the slopes of Pico Turquino that they were going to bomb the next day, so that the peasants would abandon their houses. Then the patrol went around burning all the houses and simply evicting the peasants.

Just imagine, when we were going up along the Palma Mocha River early that morning, we saw a stream of peasants, some with seven children, ten children, four children, coming down and when we met up with them and asked them, "Why are you coming down?" they replied, "Because they are going to bomb." And I told them: "That's a lie. How can you believe that? No one knew yesterday that we were around here, no one knew that we were going to attack that post which we did early in the morning. They have done this to make you all abandon the area. Go on back." And the peasants, just imagine, when they saw us there in the flesh, after having attacked a post, thought it the more true that the place was going to be bombed. Very few went back. For—just think of it—a marine corporal had been there the

FIDEL CASTRO

day before, saying to them: "Clear out, they are going to bomb here." And the following day, early in the morning, while they are going down, they meet up with a patrol of revolutionaries who had just captured a post and was going to set up camp right there. What doubt could these peasants have had that they were really going to bomb the place? There was no bombing because it was absurd to bomb woods many square kilometers in area with no idea of where the devil a patrol might be. But we saw no bombing. So, they had taken advantage of our expedition to force them off the land.

A HEROIC WORKER

There, when we crossed over into the area of San Lorenzo, what did we find? The peasants there were scared, too. It was reported that some people from Maffo with money, who owned a coffee warehouse, were going to evict them because they had title to all the land around. Wherever we went, we found peasants who were faced with lawsuits. All the peasants were faced with the problem of eviction. Even those who were not being evicted lived in fear of being evicted.

Naturally, we began to do some political work among the peasants, explaining to them the aims of the Revolution. But the problem of the peasants was not only that the landowners wanted to deprive them of their lands and were actually taking their land away, and in a number of cases, had already done so, but that in addition, it took a thousand labors to cultivate the land on the slopes of these hills. There were places in the mountains that even goats could hardly climb. Still, the peasants had cultivated the slopes with sweet potatoes and coffee.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

Here, we thought, was the truly heroic type of worker. And how did he work? He worked in the lowlands for a fortnight, saved up fifteen or twenty pesos, bought a little salt, a little lard, and would go back into the hills. And for years while he went on like this, harvesting a few coffee beans; nobody helped him. But not only that. When this peasant cleared a patch of hill, a couple of rural police would show up and if it wasn't the rural police, it was a man sent by the chief of the nearest post to collect a fee for the clearing.

The unfortunate guajiro would come down into the lowlands to work for a fortnight under extreme hardships for a peso because they paid him a peso in the valley to keep a tiny coffee plantation going, and a corporal of the rural police or a sergeant from a distant post had some character in charge of collecting money every time there was a clearing. This made the peasants extremely annoyed.

These peasants had another problem: when they sold their coffee, they were paid thirteen pesos, fourteen pesos for it. They lent them money and charged them high interest. BANFAIC was already in operation, of course, but to whom did the BANFAIC lend money? They lent money to the peasant who already had a crop, to the person who already held cash, who was almost a capitalist, or to the one who with a lot of hard labor had been able to plant half a caballeria and was harvesting 100 quintals. They were willing to finance the man who collected 100 quintals, but those who didn't have a single quintal to harvest, in other words, the vast majority of the campesinos in the Sierra, would get no money because they didn't have title to the land. The BANFAIC demanded title to land. They also demanded that the peasant must already have a crop, that he

FIDEL CASTRO

harvest beans. If he didn't, no loan. This was the situation of the peasants.

Besides, whenever a rural guard came, he was sure to carry off at least a fine rooster, if not a little pig and things of that sort.

MISERY AND ILLITERACY

The merchandise they sold to the peasants was sold at an extremely high price. There was not one school there; not one teacher. If these peasants had realized much sooner what they could have done, it is possible that with only half a dozen rifles they could at least have made themselves independent in the mountains! For the conditions were very favorable. It was a better fate for the peasant to grab a rifle and rise up than to be thrown off his land and endure the hardship and misery he suffered.

These were the conditions, the objective conditions, that we found in the Sierra Maestra. Everything else, organization of the military apparatus, organization of the political apparatus, was still to be done! These things we had already done in the valley. In the valley we formed the suitable organization, but it was very embryonic. It was very new and, therefore, it did not have the discipline of a revolutionary organization tempered by many years of battle.

It is beyond question that in the valley, many young people struggled, made sacrifices, staked their lives, and fought heroically. Of course, it was a heroic type of fight, but it was not able to get the results that we were beginning to get in the mountains.

The arena of the struggle was the mountains. There began our task of organizing a guerilla movement, giving it experience, and at the same time, winning, conquering the

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

masses of peasants for the Revolution. It was perfectly logical that in those objective conditions existing in the Sierra Maestra, the revolutionary work should develop until it could count on practically unanimous support of the peasants—as it eventually did.

In other words, we were already counting on that social force although we had few weapons and a great many difficulties. The struggle continued to unfold; it developed throughout the land. Guerilla fighting became nationwide: first, in the Second Front of Las Villas; then, in the Second Front of Oriente. The tactics we were promoting had triumphed. In other words, events had demonstrated that, under certain conditions, that way was correct. We began to give up the putschist type of tactics, organizing forces to try to win the power in a frontal attack at great disadvantage against armed forces. The tactics we favored were wearing down the forces of the tyranny.

Needless to say, that's why we have tremendous faith in guerilla warfare. We believe in guerilla fighting under the conditions of our country, which are similar to the conditions in many Other Latin-American countries—and don't think that this is the reason (*applause*) you didn't let me finish... We seriously believe we have the right to think so because we have gone through the experience.

THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IS INVINCIBLE

Naturally, we know that when this conviction takes hold of other people equally oppressed by imperialism and the cliques in the pay of imperialism, by the military castes; equally exploited by the landowners, other people going through the same things as the Cuba of hungry peasants, exploited, landless, without schools, without doctors, without

FIDEL CASTRO

credit, without aid of any sort; when they become convinced as we were convinced—and we are convinced, above all, by facts—I am sure that no imperialist force, no reactionary one, no military caste, no NATO army will be able to withstand the revolutionary movement.

We simply believe that given Cuba's circumstances, we must be on guard against one tactical move. Our enemies tried to use the same tactics, but with only one difference: they think they can make a revolution in a country that has done with landlords, that has done with rent; where there is a teacher in every neighborhood, hospitals, doctors, credits, aid; where the day of the middleman is over, speculation is done with, harvests guaranteed. In other words, conditions that are the absolute opposite of the conditions in which we made our Revolution.

ALL OF THE MILITARY SCIENCE OF THE PENTAGON IS GOING TO CLASH WITH REALITY

In other words, we made a revolution under given conditions and along come the counter-revolutionaries to try to fight under conditions that are the very reverse of the conditions we fought under. In short, whatever had to happen to them, happened. In the Sierra Maestra and those areas where they tried to form counter-revolutionary groups, they were always knocked out of action within forty-eight hours.

They copied one part but did not copy the other. You can't copy the other. They copied the idea of guerrillas, but got them from among the enemy, among the reactionaries. Now, the Pentagon has followed suit, finally, but on the other side of the coin. We do not have to copy anything. We leave things as they are and see what happens. And we

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

know that all the military science of the Pentagon is going to clash with reality; reality being the conditions under which the peoples of Latin America live.

THE SPARK THAT KINDLES THE FIRE

There is only one way to combat the revolutionary guerrilla: with the disappearance of imperialism, its monopolies, and its exploitation. That is why we don't worry when we hear that General Taylor or some other general who was in Korea or wherever is setting up an anti-guerrilla school in Panama or Argentina. It's a waste of time.

In short, they are afraid; they're showing that they are really afraid. But they imagine they can escape it, the revolutionary struggle of the peoples. There is no remedy at all for the revolutionary struggle of the peoples except the disappearances of those conditions that drive people to revolt. That is why we can't help laughing at those schools of Taylor. We are sure that any handful of men can launch the struggle wherever the objective conditions that existed in Cuba are present—and I refer to no country in particular—that revolutionary movement, that group, following the rules that guerrillas have to follow, we are absolutely sure that is the spark that would start the fire.

We were like a match in a haystack. I won't say in a cane field because a match in a cane field is serious business. A match in a haystack! That was the guerrilla movement, given the conditions that existed in our country. Little by little, the struggle became a struggle of all the people. Naturally, it spread; it was the people, simply all of the people, who were the sole actors in that struggle, and it was the masses who decided the issue.

FIDEL CASTRO

When our tactics began to pay off, the people immediately started to join. All the revolutionaries began to join and were converted to these tactics and to the struggle of the entire Cuban revolutionary movement. And, in the end, to the struggle of all the people.

How was it possible—though finally by the end of December, the regular forces of tyranny were completely broken—for the revolutionary movement to avoid what's happening in Santo Domingo today, to avoid what reaction and imperialism have always tried to do everywhere in America? Only by the revolutionary consciousness that has been developed in the people, the active participation of the masses.

What was it that made the maneuvers of the American embassy and of reaction disappear like candy in a school yard? Simply the general strike. It was not necessary to fire one more shot. That was the right moment to give the signal for a general strike.

Sure, we launched it at a very premature moment. But what did this mean? That the subjective criteria predominated, that we didn't understand the objective conditions. Our own Revolution can show examples of everything. We had hoped that the conditions were ripe; and that the tyranny would collapse; that is what we wanted, what we hoped for. It so happened that we converted those desires into reality, but only in our imagination.

And what does a revolutionary have to do? He has to interpret reality. We did not interpret that reality and we made a mistake. The suit was that the strike didn't come off because conditions were it completely ripe, because of the tactics employed; but mostly cause, fundamentally, con-

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

ditions were not ripe; the military force of the Revolution amounted to less than 200 men.

THE CONQUEST OF REVOLUTIONARY POWER

When the signal was given the second time, we had already isolated whole provinces, destroyed complete enemy units; the enemy had been really split wide open. On other occasions, the enemy had always been able to cross any territory he wanted to and had always dominated the situation in the country. The signal must be given at the right time and then strategy is easy to carry out: the conquest of revolutionary power by the masses. This is what makes the difference between a true revolutionary movement and a coup d'état.

What factor mobilized the masses? The guerrilla war was the factor that mobilized the masses, that made the struggle, the repression acute, intensified the contradictions of the regime; and the people simply seized power; the masses seized power. This was the first basic characteristic.

It's possible to liquidate the force, the military apparatus, the machinery that propped up the regime. In other words, a series of revolutionary laws was passed: first, the seizure of power by the masses; second, the liquidation of the apparatus, of the military machinery that held the regime of privilege together.

What do reaction and imperialism try to do? What do they try to preserve in any crisis? The history of Latin America is full of examples. What they try to preserve at all costs is the military apparatus, the military machine of the system. In the final analysis, neither imperialism nor the ruling classes give a hoot who the president is, who is a representative, who is a senator.

FIDEL CASTRO

Naturally, reaction and imperialism would like to have for president, if possible, a man who is not a complete crook; it is to their interest, if possible, that he be honest, that he spend money to advance the interests of the ruling classes. It is to their interest to have the public administration function with honesty, and, in the end, they prefer a government that steals less to one that steals more.

What is imperialism interested in? It is interested, naturally, in a government that looks after the interests of the monopolies. It is all the same to them whether it be Pérez Jiménez or Rómulo Betancourt. If you want examples, there's one for you.

What more can a Pérez Jiménez give them than a Rómulo? Pérez Jiménez respected the interests of the oil companies in Venezuela. Rómulo more than respects these interests; he worships them. He goes to the extreme of even imposing taxes in order to get himself out of the mess he's in and exempting the military and the United States oil companies, the American interests, from these taxes. He has absolute respect for all the landowners, the big bourgeoisie, the interests of homeowners, owners of apartment buildings, big businessmen, owners of large estates—these he respects. And what's more, he pays all the debts Pérez Jiménez incurred, money that the bourgeois financiers lent him. In fact, he paid it back, penny for penny. He couldn't renounce these debts.

RÓMULO SERVES IMPERIALISM

And so, he is wholehearted in serving the interests of imperialism, of the ruling economic classes, the big bourgeoisie of Venezuela and the military caste. Yes, indeed, he finds it necessary to burn one candle for the Department of

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

State and another candle for the military, although the two candles were really serving the same interests. He is trying to please the military and at the same time, see that the American ambassador (that was the role of Mr. Moscoso) (*laughter*)...the role of Mr. Moscoso in Venezuela was to visit officials, to tell the high officials of Venezuela: "Don't conspire against Betancourt; Betancourt offers a solution; if you stage a coup d'état, there will be another Cuba."

What does this prove? That it suits the imperialists to dress up their domination of Latin America in a certain civilian garb, the trappings of "representative democracy" which disappear, as they have disappeared in Venezuela as soon as the contradictions become intensified.

In fact, at this very time, they have just begun the suppression of the Communist Party and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left. They have shut down the newspaper of the Democratic Republican Union; muzzled their newspaper. And who is left there? The COPEY party, the most reactionary party in Venezuela. And with whom are they allied? With the worst elements, those who were left behind with the Betancourt regime when the best people dropped him: the crooks, the gangsters, the Mujalistas, that whole gang working together.

In other words, we have the perfect union of the American embassy, military reaction, a political party which is the most reactionary, representing the interests of the exploiters and the worst elements, crooks, and thieves of the Betancourt clique. Yes, it has come to this. There is no more "representative democracy" there; they lack even that!

Well, the same is true of Peru. What more can you expect from an Odria than from a Prado? It's no problem for them.

FIDEL CASTRO

It is only logical that the national bourgeoisie, the ruling classes, should prefer a type of government—as I said before, that its possible, is respectable and, if possible, runs things in a way that will cause the least trouble. They have been partial, frequently, to military regimes; and why? Because they are governments by repression, by force, against the workers' movement, against the peasant movement.

DOWN WITH ONE AND UP WITH ANOTHER

But, at any rate, when a revolutionary movement comes to a head, when a popular movement turns into a revolution, they remove this military group and another military man, or a junta of military and civilian groups always emerges. They remove a military man here, put him there, appease the people and, in the end, after a while, the same military man is doing the same things. Or the same thing happens that happened in Venezuela, for one must take into account the special conditions in every country.

In Venezuela a military figure of prestige arose, one, moreover, the few military figures to act in a democratic, popular way: Wolfgang Larrazabal.

And what happens? There is a great movement of unity, a movement of unity resulting in the overthrow of Pérez Jiménez. And what is the first thing that Betancourt did? He divided the nation. He ran for election, destroyed the unity of the people, exactly when the people of Venezuela had a wonderful opportunity to get rid of the military caste.

IMPERIALISM AND THE BOURGEOISIE ARE TRYING TO KEEP THE MILITARY MACHINE INTACT

Well, I want to say simply that the first thing imperialism and the bourgeoisie try to do is to keep the military machine intact. What are they doing in Santo Domingo? In

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

Santo Domingo, they are trying to keep the military machine intact. It's all the same to them whether it's Trujillo or Trujillo's brother or Balaguer or Juan Bosch. It does not matter to them that there is a military machine intact with aircraft, tanks, and police skilled in persecution and repression of the people. All the imperialists aim for is to maintain the military machine. All the efforts of the Dominican people are, therefore, to destroy the military machine.

When a moment of crisis arrives, as it arrived in Cuba on the 1st of January or has now arrived in Santo Domingo, the key to this whole situation is whether the people take control of the weapons or whether the military machine remains intact with weapons in hand and the people defenseless. When a crisis of this kind arises in any country, the prime objective of the people's movement is to destroy the military machine and seize its arms. This is an indispensable condition; without it, the revolution can be checked, can be betrayed, and can be crushed.

Imagine what would have happened if the people of Venezuela had, been able to take control of the arms when the regime of Pérez Jiménez fell. Goodbye imperialism, goodbye oil companies, goodbye Rómulo Betancourt, or whatever traitor, to call things by their right name!

Of course, we do not invent this; it is all very clearly stated in a book by Lenin—I imagine that all of you or most of you are familiar with it—called *The State and Revolution*. It is a point he stressed very much, and it is undeniably a vital, perfectly comprehensible truth, even to those who have not been through the experience of Cuba.

This is just what we have seen happen throughout Latin America. The revolution must first destroy the military

machine of the old system and take over control of the weapons.

Of course, that is not the only condition for a revolution; but it is an indispensable condition for revolution.

In this way, the Cuban revolutionary process carried through a series of laws, laws that are fundamental to any revolutionary process. First, the conquest of power by the masses, that is, the conquest of power by the people; and, second, destruction of the military apparatus of the ruling economic class.

In other words, the military machine was in the pay of imperialism, of the landowners, of the financial, of the commercial and industrial bourgeoisie.

Those people, those people can now talk about democracy when they had renounced even that bourgeois democracy, a democracy that was for them alone.

Everyone remembers perfectly well what happened in Havana the day after the attack on the Palace. There was the most shameful procession of representatives of those economic classes marching to the Palace. Gentlemen, can you imagine anyone with honor marching to the Palace after that slaughter, after that bloodshed, after those acts perpetrated upon wounded men who fell prisoner, murdered students, people who sacrificed themselves in a heroic deed? Can you imagine that bunch of *bootlickers* lining up at the entrance of the Palace the following day to congratulate Mr. Batista?

And who went there? Well, simply the big bourgeoisie and their lumpen, their gangsters, their Mujalistas; the whole gang. Of course, the labor leaders went there right away; or, as they said, the workers. What a farce—the workers! Instruments of reaction and imperialism in the

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

labor movement, the reactionary clergy, big business, that whole crowd; the landowners, the industrialists, the whole crowd in Indian file to pay their respects. What did they care? I can assure you that none of those gentlemen visited the Presidential Palace after a revolutionary law was passed. None! And as we know, none of those gentlemen has yet marched to the Presidential Palace where so many revolutionary laws have been made.

On the other hand, they went there to congratulate Batista the day after the massacre. Why? Because, those people, those shameless people who now prate of democracy (perhaps many of them get together in Miami on a Sunday to talk about democracy or if not, to hear a sermon of some priest or other. I say some priest or other, not a revolutionary priest). They now talk about democracy.

If someone should ask them, *Good, but what are you fighting for?* “We are fighting for democracy,” they say. Actually, they’re not even fighting for bourgeois democracy, a regime with a minimum of freedom—but only what the ruling class permits. With this said, let’s go on to something else.

When they owned all the newspapers, all the radio and television stations, and even wrote the history books, it was understandable that we should fall for all those tales. But today it is really absurd to try to fool anyone with them. And they are less likely to succeed with the people learning and understanding more every day.

What these people cared about was the government, however bloody, however large the number of youths assassinated, of bodies piled up early in the morning. They didn’t care about that. How many died on April 9? They didn’t care. How many died in those torture chambers,

FIDEL CASTRO

assassinated? Why is it that wherever you go, you find a marker and a murdered youth—on nearly every highway? And they weren't the only ones. If you were to put a marker everywhere a youth had been murdered, the roads would be full of crosses and markers. In the hills, what they did: in the mountains, the murderers. One still learns of a child, every now and then; what can be done with him? He has such problems. He has to be taken to the doctor because he is the only surviving son of a family of six brothers and they killed the father. So, the child has psychological problems. One still finds things like that everywhere.

What did these sufferings of our people matter to the bourgeoisie, that whole ruling class? They were indifferent to them. They went to see Batista because Batista was obviously the one who protected their class interests. And, as you would expect, they were preparing to take immediate advantage of a change, should a change come about.

I will never forget the first days after the triumph, the visitors I received at home.

It turns out that one—I'm not going to make propaganda now—but I think that I acted quite decently. Anyone who asked for an interview with me I saw right away. I say that this was quite decent. Who showed up at my house? Well, from early in the morning, from the cardinal's nephews to the whole Pepin Rivera family of Diario de la Marina; bankers, businessmen, all the factory managers, the whole pack. What a list it was! During the first days I tried to receive those people. I thought it was one of my obligations to receive people who asked for interviews. I didn't have much to do those days because I had no part in the government either. They filled up my house, not only

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

the first day, but the second day, too, and the third day. And I said to myself, "What do those people want?"

Of course, I knew. But what really disgusted me was to see that procession of all those people of former days. (I asked myself) First, what are they thinking? And I said, well, the conceited ones, the more they think they can come here to see us freely, the better; the more of a surprise they'll get. (*lengthy applause*)

They came to offer their paper, the same paper that had been serving Batista during the tyranny. They came to offer their banks, the same banks that had served Batista to the very last. And then to talk only about the day that the American ambassador, Mr. Bonsal, arrived. Three days before, the entire bourgeois press, radio, and television began to herald the arrival of Mr. Bonsal as a great event. They gave it such publicity that it really began to jar and insult every revolutionary and every man of honor who may not have been revolutionary. Any honorable person holding any position in the country must have felt ashamed of all that publicity surrounding the arrival of a foreign official, as though the great chief executive of the country were arriving—the great governor of the country. They began to surround it all with an atmosphere as though a proconsul, Bonsal, were coming.

THE FIRST INTERVIEW I HAD WITH BONSALE

I remember the first meeting with Bonsal. It's a shame I don't have the habit of keeping a diary of my impressions and of events. Well, no matter, I received him there in Cojimar—the great Bonsal. The American ambassador! From the first moment he began to talk, he spoke about the Electric Power Company, about the Telephone Company,

FIDEL CASTRO

about the problem of the banks, about the problem of the estates of North American companies, the history of what those companies had done for the country... Good, those were the very first words that gentleman began with. Furthermore, his manner was truly the manner of someone who comes to a country to give instructions. Of course, he didn't have the slightest idea what sort of people he was dealing with. His manner from the outset was something shocking, that of a gentleman... practically, those were the mannerisms of that gentleman. Finally, he left.

I don't think there was a single interview in which that gentleman didn't harp on the same old theme. But at that time there wasn't yet the Agrarian Law or nationalization of... well, I do not quite recall what month it was; I believe Miró Cardona was still Premier.

Well, of course, from the very outset he began to rub us the wrong way, from the very first moment immediately; simply over the... Ah! The American Military Mission and all that, because one of the first things we found when we got to Havana and at Ciudad Libertad—Ciudad Libertad after the triumph—were the officers of the American Military Mission delighted with their life there, with their uniforms, with their job. They were still there; Batista's army was there; Batista's army leaves, enters the Rebel Army, and they still went to the office every day "to render their services." They were ready to render their services calmly to the people.

I remember when I met those officers. I arrived there and I said to myself: *And these people, what are they doing here?* And I went there and called over two or three officers—and I don't remember whether it was in Spanish or English, I don't remember—and I told them to leave. How could they

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

give us classes, seeing that we had defeated the army they had been teaching? How could they give us classes?

Of course, all that reaction, all that press, was very interested in what the Ambassador would do. They began to deify him, to prepare the ground. All they managed to do, actually, was to make us look forward even less to the arrival of Mister Ambassador. From the very outset, a series of clashes began because of the opinions and points of view, etc., so that those meetings became strained and intolerable until somewhat later, I recall, after he spent three months asking for an interview—it was three months before we gave him an interview. Finally, I had no alternative, according to the elementary rules of protocol, but to give it to him.

Why? Because we just couldn't stand that gentleman's proposals. Good, that's how it was with us. Imagine how those ambassadors must talk in other places where they find a Rómulo Betancourt, a Prado, or that type of individual. We certainly know that the American ambassador must talk to them as one talks to a servant.

Well, we were speaking about the reaction of all that bourgeoisie and big bourgeoisie the day after the Revolution seized power. Those were the conditions. Two requirements had already been fulfilled. And let us now delve a little deeper into the subject. We must look at it all, eh? I assure you. Let's go into the subject.

The Revolution had accomplished two things: it had already come into power with the masses; secondly, it had liquidated the military apparatus of the ruling social class. It had an army of the people, that is, it now had the people armed.

FIDEL CASTRO

Bearded ones, who hadn't gone to military school, were, however, the army of the people. In fact, the Rebel Army was the firmest, the most solid part of the Revolution.

How were the existing classes related one with the other? Well, in the hands of the ruling class at this moment were: all the financial resources, all the economic resources, the entire press, all of radio; that is, to say, all the big radio and television stations, the big printing presses, the publishing houses, all these, were in their hands. Besides this, were the American magazines, all the imperialist literature in our country. They held all these resources in their hands, the economic resources... they were, to put it simply, still the owners of the country. And in the government... Of course, we were the ones to put him there; in other words, it was simply due to the Rebel Army and the fighting of the Rebel Army that a president of the republic was proclaimed.

I am not going to say that we are now revolutionary sages, nor that we were sages then. Far from it. But I will tell the truth, how we always thought, at least how I used to think. One can introduce personalities when one speaks of how we thought then, because the revolutionary forces were still fragmented. I was sure that neither Urrutia nor anyone could prevent the achievement of a revolutionary program. We certainly knew what a revolutionary program was. If we didn't plunge in with a whole set of basic measures, it was because we understood that a series of revolutionary reforms and laws, given the conditions in which the struggle against Batista was developing, would simply weaken the camp of those forces opposed to the Batista tyranny.

We had succeeded, fortunately, in welding together against Batista a large number of political and social forces.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

We had succeeded in welding together, into a broad front for the struggle, many sectors of the country. Of course, we had to go through certain embarrassing situations. For example, there were the opinions of the Prio-Miró Cardona group, that whole bunch in the Front, who were in Miami, opposed to a broad, complete unity. They all were in favor of excluding the Socialist Party from that unity. We defended the inclusion of the Socialist Party. Carlos Rafael is witness to all the difficulties we were in because we had to prevent a split, we had to keep (the united front) together. They wanted to have a meeting in Miami to discuss who would make up the union of forces against Batista. We knew that if the discussion took place in Miami, those people were going to impose their conditions and, to put it simply, to break the little unity there was.

Then, we argued that the meeting should be held in the Sierra Maestra, that the delegates of the Front should come to the Sierra Maestra to confer with us. We knew that in any discussion held in the Sierra Maestra, we would be able to lay down the conditions, but that, on the other hand, in Miami, they would be the ones who would lay down the conditions. We weren't going to accept that, because we weren't at all disposed to go along with the exclusions they proposed, and that would have created a problem at a most inopportune moment.

But in the long run, with a little cooperation from some quarters, you could say we all agreed on the prime objective: the prime objective of overthrowing the Batista tyranny. Of course, we had already had a previous experience with the Front. It was when some delegates went and said they represented "the 26th of July" and formed a front there. We had been in the mountains a long time

FIDEL CASTRO

already, more than a year, struggling under difficult conditions, under many privations and without help from the outside; and we became boiling mad, all of us, when we found that they had made a pact in our name in Miami. What we did was to send that letter there which those elements called a divisionist letter, and things like that. The only thing we could not accept at all was that pact.

Then, of course, we made a proposition that had a very clear intention, and always formed part of our proposals. It was the following: proposals that made all reconciliation with the army impossible. We always tried to create the worst conditions for a putsch. In other words, we wanted to make a putsch impossible. We were always worried lest, since the revolutionary forces were not yet very developed, a military coup would take place through the maneuvers of imperialism and reaction, like that famous coup of which so much has been said, Barquín's coup. Still, let it be said in passing, that among those officers there were some good ones, honest, who are today with the Revolution. Well, when the historical record comes to be written, let them clear up what properly needs to be cleared up.

The leader of that coup was a man who had been shaped by the ideology, and by the methods, and by the style of the North American Department of State or of the Pentagon... I believe he was part of that junta, that junta which bred dictators and this, the Inter-American Organization... I believe they threw us out of it or didn't admit our representative. They do not comply with the laws of the Organization of American States, well, they do not fulfill their international commitments. The question is that we always tried to prevent a military putsch. When the Revolution did not have sufficiently developed forces, the people

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

would have accepted that change and would have been deceived as other peoples at other times have been deceived, because they do not understand that the system itself, and not individuals, must change. We always feared that maneuver. And what did we do? We said that we would never accept a coup, that we reserve the right to clean out, reorganize and rebuild the armed forces of the Republic. Clearly, no military organization is inclined to accept, even remotely, a formula that implies that a civilian movement could come and rebuild it. And our first move then was this: but, I want you to know first that when we sent word (to strike) from the Sierra Maestra, we were just 120 armed men. Of course, to anyone, it must have seemed a colossal and monstrous absurdity that such a small force should give the word. The followers of Prio and all those people then said that what we were doing was contributing to the strengthening of Batista, because we were scaring the military off with our declarations.

WE STOOD ALONE

The military didn't want to know about us then; they changed their minds later on, due to the progress of the war: many of them were taken prisoner and later freed, and they were well treated. The fact is that at that time, first in the campaign that developed around Moncada which was a slaughter of soldiers for all that, and also through our own proposals, because we were interested in seeing that the military did not stage a coup, and we always warned, "If there's a military coup, the war goes on, and on, and on." And we said that from first to last.

The eventuality that worried us was that imperialism might promote a coup before our forces became strong

FIDEL CASTRO

enough to decide events. That was a most correct tactic, and we expounded it in the letter to Miami denouncing the pact, and the pact was broken. We were alone, but it was a time when it was a thousand times better to walk alone than in bad company.

WE REJECT THE MIAMI PACT

Another thing: Why, at that time when we were just 120 armed men, weren't we interested in a kind of broad unit with all the organizations that were in exile; yet, later on, when there were thousands of us, we certainly were interested in that broad unity? Very simple. Because in any union at a time when there were 120 of us, the conservative and reactionary elements, or representatives of interests, non-revolutionary but against Batista, would have formed a clear majority. In that unity, we would have been a very small force. However, when the struggle was over, all those organizations agreed that the movement should march ahead victoriously, and that the tyranny should be overthrown. At that time, they were interested in unity, but we already were the decisive force in that unity.

At a Miami meeting of representatives of those organizations—there were so many, I can hardly remember them; but there were several—there were just one or two revolutionary organizations represented: the Directorate and the 26th of July Movement, and that was all. Then—I'm talking of Miami, don't make such a face, Carlos. Or were you represented at Miami? Well, in that group of... at a meeting in Miami, they could have tried to set the conditions. What did we decide to do? Well; we were going to prolong the situation, and not have a meeting until the war ended. It was better to sidestep the position those people took, opposed as

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

it was to the point of view we were going to present... and they were interested in excluding the Socialist Party. This was a basic point of theirs. They would never have accepted it. We understood that it was better not to discuss this problem and to end the war.

That unity did mean definitely that the front against Batista would be maintained, and solid. That is, a broad front, with everyone against Batista. Now then, money didn't matter to me, arms didn't matter to me. Actually, we were capturing weapons by the hundreds; as for money, we were collecting taxes from the sugar mills, and we already had millions of pesos. It simply represented a broad front, but a front in which we were the main force. Under those conditions, we were more interested in maintaining that front than in any other interest we could have had, inasmuch as, if anyone were left out of that front, the interests of the reactionaries and rightists would have prevailed. These are the conditions under which the overthrow of Batista took place.

THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE

Then there was the phase when we broke the pact that had been made without our agreement, with no representation from us, and without our authorization and, furthermore, that did not represent any revolutionary goals. That was when Urrutia was proclaimed a candidate against one of their candidates. It would have been better if the Revolution had not made any commitment, but we were obliged to name a candidate. Of course, this was not important, nor is it important in any revolution. In a revolution in which the military apparatus does not exist, In a revolution that conquers power with the people, destroys the military

FIDEL CASTRO

apparatus and has a revolutionary army, it does not matter if it is Tom, Dick, or Harry, who is nominated.

At any rate, we never had the least worry—I say this with all clarity—that the Revolution could be distorted, that the reactionary elements could seize the government, because the force of the masses and the armed force were there, were in revolutionary hands.

What were we worried about? I believe, I do not know what historians will say and that's up to them, but we'll give our opinion—I believe that what happened those first months was correct, considering the interrelation of the existing forces, the social, the political order, and the ideological order, it was convenient to have Urrutia and all those people in the Revolutionary Government. Especially, the interrelation of the ideological forces still existing in the country. We had the sympathy of the masses, and we had the Rebel Army.

How was the revolutionary leadership formed? The revolutionary leadership was mostly a one-man leadership: that is to say, at that time numerous decisions were made pretty nearly by one man. Why were they made by one man? Simply because a well-developed revolutionary organization did not exist. There were differences between those who had been in the mountains and those who had been in the plains; between the leadership in the mountains and the leadership in the plains. There were differences that lasted all through the war and some persisted.

I NEVER WANTED TO BE A DICTATOR

It is not always the most pleasant thing to speak about those problems. But even so, one is able to talk about them. Why? Because a part of those comrades with whom we

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

differed at the time, a part, some of those comrades, today take a magnificent revolutionary position and have fully identified themselves with the Revolution. Another part of that leadership is today in Miami, in Puerto Rico, in the American Department of State, or here making counter-revolution. There certainly were differences. Besides, something else took place: the military arm of the Revolution had developed in a really extraordinary way, and this extraordinary development also changed its relation within the 26th of July Movement. The preponderant force at that time was represented by the Rebel Army. And when we arrived in the plains we found within the Rebel Army—which was a military organization that was led, as armies are led in war, through decisions of a supreme commander—almost a kind of one-man leadership, due to the way the Revolution developed and ended.

I remember, and I can speak of those things calmly for a good reason, a little unpleasant though it may be to speak in the first person. I'm going to say the following because, if some people are going to speak of it, it is well for interested parties to speak of it, too. I remember that we felt we had to be on guard against dictatorship. We always said that one of the things we had to fight against was dictatorship, because our country suffered from dictatorship and also suffered the consequences of dictators. From the time of the War of Independence a series of dictators cropped up; among other peoples of Latin America a series of dictators cropped up. Fortunately, I really was not born with any bent to be a dictator, although leading an army at war creates the kind of authority, as armies do, that makes for one-man rule. It can create the habit of dictatorship in men, the habit of being overbearing, the habit that takes pleasure in giving orders. I

FIDEL CASTRO

never really got any special pleasure from giving orders. I remember that, even during the war, I did not issue orders in a military way. I knew that they would be carried out, but I always liked to give my reasons for them: that this ought to be done for such and such a reason. It always seemed much better to me that people should accept orders because they are convinced of the reasons for them.

THE FIRST STAGE OF REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT

That's why they talked so much about dictatorship at the time, why they had already begun to talk about it. Who talked about dictatorship? Were they who talked about dictatorship really worried about it? They were worried only by the fact that the Rebel Army was getting the upper hand in the Cuban revolutionary process. The talk of dictatorship was not against a non-existent dictator; the argument against *caudillismo* was against a growing revolutionary force. And one heard certain remarks about *caudillismo* and such things, but this what they were really directed against. But the fact is that when the Revolution comes to power, the Revolution, that's the way it we are being led.

There is something else. We, the principal leaders of the Revolution, did not even meet to discuss many of the problems. Some of my other comrades were very confident and many of those decisions were taken in the heat of events and were not collective decisions. At the time, on the other hand, the first Revolutionary Government included elements representing those classes. I said that it was proper to go through that stage. First, we probably had prejudices of our own. I do not know whether it is unfair for us to call it prejudice; but, among other things, it was necessary... we acted, certainly, imbued with the idea that the revolutionary

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

struggle could not be interpreted in terms of personal ambitions, and things of that sort; second the circumstances gave rise to the naming of a president and a count of ministers...

Let us return to the main thread of the theme, which was somehow lost. The main thread was as follows: There was a group that formed part of the government and largely decided who the ministers of the government would be. They put in the government men who, in some cases, were people with anachronistically conservative or more or less conservative minds; in short, it was a conservative type of government.

Good, I recall that in those early days the responsibility for making revolutionary laws was left in their hands. The policy we adopted was that there was a council of ministers all set up and that it was not a matter of calling the President on the telephone or anything like that. Throughout that whole period, we waited to see what would happen. And what finally happened, had to happen. The first went by and they had not passed a single revolutionary law. We had to put up with this because some of those gentlemen had a certain following among the people; and if they had no following because of their merits, they had a following because the entire press and radio and television, which were in the hands of the social class whose ideological and economic interests those gentlemen represented, defended them, and had taken it upon themselves to wage a big propaganda campaign for them. The interests those gentlemen represented were diametrically opposed to the interests of those peasants whom we met when we arrived in the Sierra Maestra; diametrically opposed to the interests of the farm laborers who worked three months during harvest and then

FIDEL CASTRO

went through the endless "dead season" hungry; diametrically opposed to the interests of the great majority of the country.

WHAT DID MIRÓ CARDONA & COMPANY REPRESENT?

And it was simply necessary to pass through that stage, to use it to unmask those gentlemen.

Now, under what conditions does the Revolution come to power? Why do all these things happen? Well, all these things happen as a result of the absence of what we stated before: a single revolutionary movement, organically embodying all revolutionary forces. So, it had to happen. We represented part of those forces; but did not have the organization.

How were the revolutionary forces represented? What were the revolutionary forces, in the first place, the revolutionary social forces? The working class, the peasants, the students, and more or less wide strata of the petite bourgeoisie. Those were what could be called revolutionary forces whose interests were opposed to the interests of the big bourgeoisie, in the first place, to the interests of imperialism and of the financial, commercial, and industrial bourgeoisie: small property owners, small businessmen, that whole stratum of the petit bourgeoisie; intellectuals, students, peasants, and the working class. They were the forces, the revolutionary classes.

Now, what did Urrutia represent in all that? What did Miró Cardona represent? What did Felipe Pazos represent? What did Justo Carrillo represent? What did those gentlemen represent? I am not going to ask what Manolo Fernandez represented, because, I believe, he represented trash; he was a "mad anarchist."

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

Reporter: He aspired to be another Peron, from the Ministry...

Dr. Castro: To tell the truth, I do not know that gentleman. I was told later that he was very famous for his conversations in cafes and that he talked for hours and hours and hours; I do not know him. The truth is, I did not know many of those people; they were there in the government...

Then, what organizations represented these forces? The working class, the most advanced, most developed elements of the working class, of the industrial and agricultural workers? What political organization represented that class? Not the entire class, because within those classes there were sectors with a petit bourgeois mind, especially those with higher incomes. Certainly, no one can deny that the petit bourgeoisie was against Batista.

THE P.S.P. REPRESENTED THE WORKING CLASS

The Popular Socialist Party represented the most advanced elements of the working class, both in the city and in the country. It also had some followers in the countryside; among the small farmers we found a few militant followers of the Popular Socialist Party in the Sierra Maestra. But, fundamentally, it represented that class.

The 26th of July Movement represented, in the first place, the peasants; that is, the entire peasant movement which was organized around the Rebel Army. It represented...the 26th of July Movement attracted many people, too, from the working class who did not belong to any party, laborers, groups of workers who belonged to some party of the petite bourgeoisie, any political party, decent people, also joined the 26th of July Movement, professional people, intellectuals, youth, students, and elements of the petite

FIDEL CASTRO

bourgeoisie, the most progressive and the most revolutionary elements of the middle class and of the petite bourgeoisie also joined. It can be said that those were the forces that the 26th of July represented.

Similarly, the Revolutionary Directorate represented more or less the same sectors, but fundamentally the student sector, where José Antonio Echeverría, Faure Chomón and their companions came from. The Revolutionary Directorate sprang up from the student groups and in turn also worked to win members from labor sectors, intellectual sectors, and peasant sectors.

That is to say, the revolutionary forces of society were represented in three organizations. It is a fact, I believe, that we have all learned to agree in matters of politics and revolutionary theory. Isn't that so?

You, what sector did you belong to, to the intellectuals? (pointing to Soto).

SOTO: To the middle class.

DR. CASTRO: No, you did not belong to the petite bourgeoisie...

Well, you came from the petite bourgeoisie but were a member of the Socialist Party, a vanguard organization... Listen, if you are going to say that to the people, they are not going to understand well the revolutionary instruction you give them in class. You were an intellectual, you were a member of the party of the working class. And that business of being an intellectual is something among us here! Now, no, no! Lionel, now you are an intellectual. It's true that I recognize you sincerely as an intellectual of the working class, so don't let the jokers here misunderstand you and harm the program of revolutionary instruction.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

Those are the forces.

THEY DEFENDED THE BOURGEOISIE

Whom did Prío Socarrás represent? I still believe that one can say he represented the “lumpen bourgeoisie,” to coin a phrase. Of course, like the crowd that followed him, his role was to defend the interests of the Yankee monopolies, to defend the interests of the landowners and of the big bourgeoisie. Without any doubt all those groups... Pazos? Pazos was a bourgeois intellectual; Justico was a bourgeois intellectual; Manolo was so much loose garbage. Ray, for all his ideology, his mind, was a perverse defender of bourgeois ideology. The great debates in the Council of Ministers were simply over the question whether works projects were to be carried out by the Administration or by contractors. That was one of the tremendous arguments we had with that gentleman. Our position was that the projects should be carried out and that it was inconceivable that a worker would work better on a job for a contractor than for the state. It was one of the first points we clashed over in the Council.

Let me say that the President signed the Agrarian Law and signed some other legislation, but the situation was becoming more difficult every day.

The other elements who had really played at revolution, who had been in exile, and were portrayed as great men here on the bourgeois radio and television and in the press, they represented simply the interests of the dominant classes.

Well now, the revolutionary sectors, the revolutionary classes, were represented by three separate organizations. Those three separate organizations, of course, maintained contacts. They helped each other during the revolution, dur-

FIDEL CASTRO

ing the revolutionary struggle, but organically they were three completely separate organizations each of which had its own leadership, its own tactics, its own sphere of action. It is well known, in fact, that there was friction between our colleagues in the Directorate and us because of the hassle over arms.

REPORTER: All of our comrades in the Directorate and we were closely united in the Revolution.

THE FORCE LENIN SPOKE ABOUT

DR. CASTRO: How absurd those problems really appear today! How different are the power, security and confidence, the force of the revolution of today from those early days when the Revolution had to face the most trying moments, when it had to face the responsibilities of power, to launch a revolutionary program, and when a large part of the government, all of the press, all of the mass media and, above all, a force—a force that I believe was the greatest—the force Lenin had spoken about, that is, the force of custom or of the manner and habits of thinking and looking at things prevalent among a vast segment of the populace.

That is, force of habit, a series of prejudices, instilled, sustained, and spread by the ruling economic classes, by imperialism and by capitalism in our country, constituted, beyond any doubt whatever, one of the most powerful forces that faced the Revolution. And yet, the revolutionary elements of society, the revolutionary social forces, were divided into three organizations, into three separate forces, (taking) three separate paths.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

REVOLUTIONARY UNITY

How much more healthy the situation would have been if, when the Revolution came to power, these forces had been an organic unit as they are today, with a single leadership, with a single program, with one tactical orientation, with one strategic orientation? Now, of course, this is to pose something illusory. Why? Because the conditions that produced this unity are the conditions that were engendered by the revolutionary process itself.

Our force, that of the 26th of July Movement, at that time made up primarily of the elements of the Rebel Army, was a force that comprised many comrades, many of them officers of the Rebel Army, who, in a revolutionary way, from a revolutionary point of view, had been magnificent fighters, valiant in battle. Many of them were of peasant origin and lacked any solid political instruction.

From inclination, from feeling, from a spirit of rebelliousness, they had joined the ranks of the Rebel Army, enemies of abuse, enemies of crime, men who, while lacking opportunity and with no political instruction at all, developed into officers. Many of these comrades were easy prey then to the lies and confusion sowed in our ranks.

Of course, there were some comrades—there weren't many, fortunately, who attained some prominence in the Rebel Army, elements who, even before they joined our ranks, knowingly defended the interests of the bourgeoisie and the ideology of the bourgeoisie. They had reactionary ideas. Many of the comrades of the Rebel Army, magnificent comrades, today politically conscious militant comrades of the Rebel Army, having acquired unusual training in the course of these three years, were good comrades, but

FIDEL CASTRO

soldiers who, at the time, still lacked any solid ideological training. That was the situation.

In other words, the very force the Revolution counted on was fundamentally of peasant origin, of working-class origin, including politically many comrades in the Army who could neither read nor write.

Conditions that made it possible for the revolutionary forces that exist today to take shape were maturing through the revolutionary process. And that organic unity of the revolutionary forces, that is to say, that unity was forged, precisely, and it necessarily had to be forged, through the revolutionary process itself, which is in fact how it was forged.

What is the meaning of the organization of this Party, this organization? What does the unification of all these revolutionary forces mean? What does the unity of these three organizations mean? What, clearly and in all truth, does it mean for the people, and what does it mean for the Revolution? It means that all the revolutionary forces of society, all the revolutionary forces of society, that is, the working class, the peasant class, the students, the revolutionary strata of the petit bourgeoisie, and the intellectuals—that is to say, the only sectors or classes in society, the only classes in society who, by their very nature and because of the place they occupy in the society, are called upon to be revolutionaries, are today all united within a single revolutionary organization.

THE WORKING CLASS

In other words, then, all the forces which were previously divided among these separate organizations are now fused in a single organization, under a single revolutionary

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

leadership. What does this mean? It means simply a tremendous strengthening of the Revolution.

From the very first moments, these forces, except for some differences and except for some initial friction, advanced, though separately, of course, by common agreement from the beginning of the Revolution. We went through that first stage of the Revolution with more or less discussion, with more or less exchange of views.

That is, a revolution acquires extraordinary strength when the revolutionary strata of the people, the revolutionary classes, represented in their class organizations, become united in a single organization. And the facts have shown this to be so.

Consider, for example, what forces support the Revolution. They are not the big landowners, they are not the owners of sugar mills, nor big bankers, nor businessmen, nor industrialists, nor any of those people, though there may be an individual here or there who does support the Revolution, for there are always exceptions; there is always the exceptional case of some philanthropist, some honest individual who, besides, becomes enthusiastic over the Revolution and can pass beyond his own class interests.

The working class...Who joined the procession at the funeral of Manuel Ascunce? (*16-year old volunteer in the literacy campaign, lynched in the Escambray by counter-revolutionaries in October 1961*) Fundamentally, of course, it was the entire population, but who made up the bulk of that demonstration? Simply the workers. Who make up the bulk of the National Revolutionary Militia? The workers. Who gave their lives in the fighting at Playa Giron, who fell and died fighting the mercenary invaders? It was the force composed of battalions principally from the capital, though

FIDEL CASTRO

units from Matanzas and Cienfuegos also participated, fighting bravely there, too, workers in the overwhelming majority.

In other words, the fundamental strength of the Revolution, the backbone of the Revolution, is made up of the working class.

THE REVOLUTION IN THE ESCAMBRAY MOUNTAINS

Now who, along with the workers, supports the Revolution? Let's not say, rather let us distinguish between agricultural workers—the agricultural workers on the sugar latifundias who today are members of sugar cane cooperatives—they were a group that before they formed cooperatives, belonged to the working class, and should be viewed as such; the peasants, the peasants of the Sierra Maestra, the peasants of the Baracoa area, the peasants of the Escambray, certainly, because the best proof of what we're saying is the following: despite the fact that a group of elements in no way revolutionary developed there, a group of free-loaders, and we are going to distinguish clearly between the role played there by the "Second Front of the Escambray" and the Revolutionary Directorate. But the situation was such that that band of freeloaders practically forced out from the Escambray the more revolutionary elements, for neither Menoyo nor those people started the Second Front. The Second Front was started by comrades of the Directorate, but the group that developed under the leadership of Menoyo and those people ended up by virtually displacing the comrades of the Directorate out of one Zone. Among those gentlemen, the more revolutionary elements were practically pushed aside. That was the situation prevailing in Las Villas when Che Guevara arrived there.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

Those people, who had formed a clique there, at a certain point began to act on their own and followed an outrageous line of action. There are some facts, for example, which are worth recalling. Just one of those gentlemen of Menoyo's "Second Front," himself murdered thirty-three persons. During the entire war, even during the most difficult times among our forces throughout the Sierra Maestra, in a war lasting over two years, we found it necessary to impose the death penalty to hardly more than ten persons. And one single individual, one man alone, had executed thirty-three peasants. And the terrible thing is that this was a group that was up there sponging off the people.

IN THE ESCAMBRAY A REVOLUTIONARY TRADITION WAS NOT AWAKENED, AS IN THE SIERRA MAESTRA

A revolutionary tradition was not awakened there, as it was in the Sierra Maestra. The whole way in which the nucleus of the so-called "Second Front" was developed had a negative influence on that entire Escambray area. When the war ended, all of the jobs, from the mayoralty of Cienfuegos, Trinidad, and Topes de Collantes to the director of public works of Hanabanilla and other places were distributed. They later went there to go politicking as much as they could. That contributed to the development in the Escambray region of a counter-revolutionary movement they organized.

However, even though that counter-revolutionary nucleus developed there, when they had 200 or 300 or 400 and even 500 men—not all from the Escambray, because there were a lot of worthless people who went up there to the Escambray. That's not all. The people in the Escambray were a small minority—the forces that hunted down the

FIDEL CASTRO

counter-revolutionaries there had 3,000 men from the Escambray. In other words, the Revolutionary Militia from the Escambray numbered 3,000 when they had hardly 100, which definitely shows that the small farmers benefited from agrarian reform, rescued by the Revolution from taxes, given teachers, doctors, and credits, even when on some occasions, the revolutionary policy came to peasants more slowly than in other places. Despite that, that is despite the fact that they actually carried on counter-revolutionary work there, negative work, the number of people they managed to get from the Escambray was very, very small. And the Revolution had thousands of militiamen and still has thousands of militiamen there.

Since the Escambray was cleaned up, after the revolutionary work was done there, there are innumerable Revolutionary Defense Committees and militiamen in the Escambray. The anti-illiteracy campaign in the Escambray culminates on the 9th; more than 20,000 people have learned how to read and write in the Escambray. The Escambray is today a revolutionary reserve. And it is undeniable that the small peasant, the poor peasant, the small farmer, that numerous sector of the population, is decidedly with the Revolution, in spite of the fact that culturally it had the highest rate of illiteracy in the country, where they lacked the experience that the organized labor movement had, and the degree of political awareness of the labor movement, the proletariat. That sector is with the Revolution.

Now, the students are with the Revolution. What better proof is there that the students are with the Revolution than the 100,000 volunteers who are teaching people how to read and write? In other words, while the students, in Venezuela, in Caracas, for example, are in the streets protesting against

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

repression, struggling against imperialism, fighting the fascist measures of Mr. Rómulo Betancourt and while throughout Latin America there is a vigorous student movement struggling against imperialism, in our country 100,000 students have gone into the countryside to teach people how to read and write. An overwhelming majority of the intellectuals are with the Revolution; honest professional men are with the Revolution, and a wide and numerous stratum of the petit bourgeoisie is with the Revolution. That cannot be denied.

That social stratum, the upper bourgeoisie, the counter-revolution; is trying to drag them back, while the Revolution is trying and is succeeding in keeping the best elements with the Revolution. As you can see, Lionel, it is not bad to come from the petit bourgeoisie. Those are truths.

THE WORKING CLASS IS WITH THE REVOLUTION

I believe that our people can perfectly understand these things because they see them. When it sees a congress of 10,000 labor delegates, when they see huge gatherings, when they see hundreds of thousands of militiamen, they realize that the working class is with the Revolution. When they see 100,000 volunteer teachers, they realize that the students are with the Revolution. When they see peasant meetings, tens of thousands of peasant militiamen, they realize that the peasants are with the Revolution, and they realize that the intellectuals are with the Revolution, the more honest professional men. The facts prove it,

And, this precisely has been the significance of the unity, the efforts of all the revolutionary sectors of society united in a single revolutionary organization.

FIDEL CASTRO

Because now another question comes up: How many revolutions could three separate organizations have made? That is, those organizations that represented the revolutionary sectors of society, could they have made three separate revolutions? Or did they have to make one revolution?

I believe this is an important point. In discussing the question of the United Party of the Revolution, it is, above all, desirable for the people to understand the historical roots of the revolutionary process and of the unity of the organizations, so that everyone can realize that there are certain positions or certain attitudes that are purely utopian, illusory, idealistic, false.

We recall that during the interrogation (*of the prisoners from Playa Girón*) one fellow spoke up about a third position and a string of idiocies along the same lines.

First, I must say one thing. In the first place, we are gaining a lot of experiences with the Revolution itself. The Revolution itself is revolutionizing us. The Revolution itself is making us more and more revolutionary every day. There was a time when we were not revolutionaries. Yes, there was a time when there was nothing revolutionary about me. Ah, was it because I was reactionary, thieving and corrupt? No, nothing of the sort. There was a time when politically I could be considered a complete illiterate as a result of my class origins.

And, did I know more about revolution twenty years ago than Marinello, Carlos Rafael, Anibal, Blas? No, sir. Twenty years ago, many of us knew not one word about revolution, among other things, because twenty years ago many of us...I believe that twenty years ago Raul was just learning to read and write; we were just boys.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

But even though many of us were not just boys, we came from social classes other than the working class, and I am very much aware of that; very much aware, furthermore, of the influence that class origin must have had on our thinking. But by the same token I am very much aware of this too, very much aware of instilling in myself revolutionary thought, clear, straight, and cleansed of everything that could have remained in me by reasons that have nothing to do with the consciousness and will of men. But many of us, even when we were students at college, were still political illiterates. I was a political illiterate when I finished, even when I received my bachelor's degree.

Should I be ashamed to admit it? No, quite the contrary. I am very proud to know that I was a B.A. and knew nothing about politics or revolution, and yet today I do know something. Because that proves that I have made some progress.

Don't think I am talking about my own case just because it is my own. I believe I am talking about a case I know better than others and which can serve... As we have had here today the pleasant surprise of seeing the students of the National School of Revolutionary Instruction present, I have taken advantage of the opportunity to expound some ideas that might be useful. It must be an example similar to many others.

What is the most revolutionary class? The working class, beyond a shadow of a doubt. Why? Because its social position makes it revolutionary. Which are the reactionary classes, by definition? The wealthy classes. Their social position as the exploiting class makes their minds and their thinking reactionary.

But in the Revolution there are many cases of revolutionary comrades coming from strata other than the

working classes. What has happened in some countries with the presence of numerous people from the middle class in the labor movement? Well, they have instilled the thinking of the petite bourgeoisie and of the middle class in the labor movement. That has happened and we have to struggle so that it does not happen here. We therefore have a tremendous struggle in revolutionary education. Why? So that the presence of so many of them shall not inculcate the ideas of a vacillating social class that does not understand discipline, that is given to despairing, that has a whole string of vices, which I am not now inventing, but have been known throughout the history of the revolutionary movement from the middle of the past century until today.

Now, does that mean that a good revolutionary cannot come from that stratum? No! A magnificent revolutionary can come from it; in fact, the great theoreticians of revolutionary thought came from those strata. But why did they come from those strata? Because they were the ones who went to school and to the universities.

I have not come here to present an autobiography, far from it; nor an analysis of how I came to be revolutionary. If I ever have the time, and right now I don't see where I will find the time, I may write about it. But I can say this. Whenever I discovered something, I always held firmly to it, as many other people do.

My first contacts at the University—even with bourgeois political economy—for I remember that I began to see contradictions and began to have a few revolutionary ideas while taking a course on bourgeois political economy.

Later on, naturally, at the University, we began making our first contacts with the Communist Manifesto, with the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and all that. This marked (the

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

beginning of) a process. I can certainly say, admitting it honestly, many of the things which we have done in the Revolution are not things we invented—far from it.

When we left the University, especially in my own particular case, I had already been greatly influenced—I wouldn't say that I was a Marxist-Leninist, far from it. It is possible that I had two million petit bourgeois prejudices and a string of ideas that I'm glad not to have anymore, but fundamentally—if I did not have all those prejudices, I would not have been in the position to make a contribution to the Revolution, as I did.

Anyway, let's put things as they are.

I meant to say that had I been in the position of Carlos Rafael (Rodríguez), we would have faced a much more difficult situation when we went up into the mountains. Definitely, certain circumstances were really quite favorable. Our revolutionary thinking was already strongly influenced precisely by contact, and that is how arose... I remember that when we were reading the history of Latin American independence, even in the classical history books, of course, books written by bourgeois authors explain that the influence of the Declaration of the Rights of Man of the French Revolution was a factor that greatly influenced the thought of Latin American liberators. Ideas naturally always spread and win adherents.

One thing is indisputable—I'll come back to this point later on—these ideas already formed much of our revolutionary thinking, although we could hardly say that we were polished revolutionaries. We still cannot honestly claim to be polished revolutionaries. Why not? Because we ourselves realize full well that our love for the accomplishments of the Revolution, our passion for the Revolution, is

FIDEL CASTRO

something that we felt growing from day to day, our attitude in the race of all the problems; at most, today we believe that we are thoroughgoing revolutionaries and five years from now we may find out that we were really still ignoramuses.

WE ALL HAVE MUCH TO LEARN

I believe that we all have a great deal of studying to do. Am I a convinced revolutionary? Yes, I am a convinced revolutionary, that is so. To some of those who have at times asked me, some people have asked me if I used to think at the time of Moncada as I do today, I say, "I thought very much like I do today." That is the truth. Anyone who reads what we said on that occasion will see that many fundamental things about the Revolution are expressed in that document, and that it is, moreover, a carefully written document. It was written with sufficient care to expound some basic points without at the same time raising problems that could limit our scope of action within the Revolution, so as to prevent the movement which we believed could lead to the overthrow of Batista from being very much reduced and limited. In other words, it was necessary to try to broaden that movement as much as possible.

If we had not written that document carefully, if it had been a more radical program—although it is true that many people were somewhat skeptical about programs and often paid them scant attention—of course, the revolutionary movement of struggle against Batista would certainly not have gained the scope it did, and which made victory possible. Anyone who reads the manifesto, the speech on that occasion, will realize what the basic ideas were.

ON MARXISM-Leninism

There are some things, like certain suggestions we made on that occasion, such as increasing the cane workers' share of the sugar, which were brought up to me later on at meetings with the cane workers. They would say to me: "Good, but didn't you mention an increase?" And I told them: "Yes, but at that time we could not say what we can say today and that is that we have made those cane workers owners of the land which is much more than having granted them an increase in the share of sugar."

Certain suggestions were made at that time simply through care not to damage the scope of the revolutionary movement. I remember that on that occasion among the books the police caught us with was a text of Lenin. And then one of the lawyers asked at the Moncada trial: "And that book? Whose is it?" "That book was ours." And, of course, as I was somewhat irritated, I added: "Yes, that book was ours and anybody who does not read those books is an ignoramus." And that shut him up!

By that time, our revolutionary thinking had, in general, already taken shape. We were not, however, complete revolutionaries; we were far more revolutionary when we attained power. We are convinced revolutionaries. I say so with all due sincerity because I believe that these appearances should not become a matter of theoretical explanation of things and... There is something that can help more to shape the political thinking of the people, and that is to speak this way, with complete frankness and clarity and honesty.

I consider myself more revolutionary today than I was even on the first of January. Was I a revolutionary on the first of January? Yes, I believe I was a revolutionary on the

FIDEL CASTRO

first of January. That all of the ideas I have today I had on the first of January.

Now then, am I at this moment a man who has studied thoroughly all of the political philosophy of the Revolution, the entire history? No, I have not studied it thoroughly. Of course, I am absolutely convinced and have the intention—an intention we all ought to have—to study. Recently, while looking through some books up there in the capital, I found that when I was a student I had read up to page 370 of Capital. That's as far as I got. When I have the time, I plan to continue studying Karl Marx's Capital.

I BELIEVE ABSOLUTELY IN MARXISM!

In my student years I had studied the Communist Manifesto and selected works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Of course, it is very interesting to reread now the things I read at that time. Well, now, do I believe in Marxism? I believe absolutely in Marxism! Did I believe on the first of January? I believed on the first of January. Did I believe on the 26th of July? I believed on the 26th of July! Did I understand it as I do today, after almost ten years of struggle? No, I did not understand it as I do today. Comparing what I understood then with what I understand today, there is a great difference. Did I have prejudices? Yes, I had prejudices on the 26th of July, yes. Could I have been called a thoroughgoing revolutionary on the 26th of July? No, I could not have been called a thoroughgoing revolutionary. Could I have been called a thoroughgoing revolutionary on the first of January? No, I could have been called almost a thoroughgoing revolutionary. Could I be called a thoroughgoing revolutionary today? That would mean that I feel satisfied with what I know and, of course, I am not satisfied. Do I

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

have any doubt about Marxism, and do I feel that certain interpretations were wrong and have to be revised? No, I do not have the slightest doubt!

What occurs to me is precisely the opposite: the more experience we gain from life, the more we learn what imperialism is—and not by word, but in the flesh and blood of our people—the more we have to face up to that imperialism; the more we learn about imperialist policies throughout the world, in South Vietnam, in the Congo, in Algeria, in Korea, everywhere in the world; the more we dig deeper and uncover the bloody claws of imperialism, the miserable exploitation, the abuse they commit in the world, the crimes they commit against humanity, the more, in the first place, we feel sentimentally Marxist, emotionally Marxist, and the more we see and discover all the truths contained in the doctrine of Marxism. The more we have to face the reality of a revolution and the class struggle, and we see what the class struggle really is, in the setting of a revolution, the more convinced we become of all of the truths Marx and Engels wrote, and the truly ingenious interpretations of scientific socialism Lenin made.

The more we read today, with the experience, the load of experience we have, in those books, the more convinced we become of their inspired vision, of the foresight they had.

But there is something more than what anyone, any revolutionary leader can say to explain why Marxism made its way in history. It is enough to read the history of Marx, the biography of Marx, which is a book I believe everyone should read when the Government Printing Office publishes it, which is the biography of Marx by Mehring.

FIDEL CASTRO

But who was Marx, his life, his work, his sacrifices? How did he study? And it will be seen that Marx was a man little known in his time, even hated by many intellectuals, by many pseudo-revolutionaries. His work was known only in small circles. In his time, many other socialist writers had far more renown and prestige than Marx and were better known than Marx. A whole series of writers on socialism who wrote that they were socialists, but who were socialists as a Cuban in 1917 might have been, who had conceived of an ideal world, a more just world, without slaves and without exploiters; they were idealistic socialists, utopian socialists. Then, many of these people devoted themselves to working out a program, writing about a utopia, expressing a revolutionary sentiment on an idealistic basis, not on a scientific basis. But many of those writers had the opportunity to make themselves known; many of those thinkers, many of those thoughts penetrated broad segments of the proletariat in Europe, in France, in Italy, in Germany, in Belgium, in England. Marx writes his scientific, eminently scientific work, not writing things as he wished them to be, but writing things as he saw them, as they would have to be as a result of the very development of human society. From his study of history, from his study of economics, he drew a series of conclusions. It is a fact that the work of Marx has made a way for itself. Indeed, the work itself, the truths it contained were so superior and so solid and had such a firm basis, compared to anything of all other socialist writers, that the workers he wrote for—because he wrote for the workers and knew that one day, the workers would understand his work. He had a blind faith that the workers would understand his revolutionary work, his ought end,

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

as they interpreted the truth, it would become the dominant thought among workers throughout the world.

ENGELS CARRIES ON THE WORK OF MARX

And Marx's work by itself—and this is the fullest proof of the scientific value, of the theoretical value, of the real value of a revolutionary doctrine—the fact that it showed the way by itself, for when all the most advanced workers, the most progressive intellectuals, began to search through everything that had been written on socialism, they rejected all other socialist theories as lacking a sound basis, as lacking a scientific character, and adopted the theories of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. After the death of Marx, Engels undertook to steer the thought... One must keep in mind that Engels was a great thinker, too, but that Engels sacrificed his own intellectual work, because Marx was so poor and lived in such misery and hunger and under such terrible conditions that he saw his children die of hunger, that Engels who knew Marx's genius better than anyone else stuck to working as a merchant simply so that Marx could write *Capital*, on which he had been working for twenty years. It was one of the most noble, most self-denying, and most beautiful lives; and one of the most altruistic sacrifices ever made was the sacrifice Engels made for Marx.

This, aside from Marx's own life, his conduct, his spirit as a self-denying and exemplary father, the sacrifices he made, are sufficient in themselves to destroy one of the greatest hoaxes that the bourgeoisie, capitalism, and imperialism have spread about Marxism: that it is an enemy of the family, children, women. One has only to read the life of Marx to begin to realize the number of infamous and stupid

FIDEL CASTRO

lies they have written about him. The moment Marx discovered a great truth and that truth in turn began to influence events, all the writers of reaction and exploitation naturally began to write against Marx. Nevertheless, in spite of that, scientific socialism, Marxism, made headway and was to become the revolutionary theory of the labor movement.

To begin with, there was a labor movement, and the labor movement was revolutionary, and Marx clearly saw and understood that and, since he had uncovered the truth, the first to become Marxists, the first to adopt his theory were the workers, the labor movement throughout Europe, the most advanced groups, the most intelligent, until it really became the theory of the working class.

THE VALUE OF LENIN

But it wasn't enough that the European labor movement had a revolutionary theory; this theory needed interpretation and so there came a period when the influence of non-revolutionary thought, of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois ideology tried to distort Marx's thought. What is Lenin's great merit? Well, simply that he takes Marx's thought, defends it against all mystification, against all forms of revisionism, against all of the revisions and changes they wanted to make in the thinking of Marx. Armed only with theory, he forms a party, struggles within that party against all petit bourgeois currents, against all non-revolutionary currents, triumphs over these currents in the party and, with a revolutionary theory, seizes power. That is to say, he wins revolutionary power. What is Lenin's great merit? Lenin has the extraordinary merit of having made a thoroughgoing interpretation of Marx's thought, of having carried it into practice and having developed it under new

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

circumstances, as is the case of a revolutionary party in power. That he developed an entire theory, thought of extraordinary depth, there is not the slightest doubt. That is Lenin's great historical merit as theoretician and leader.

THE BUILDING OF COMMUNISM

Marxism is continuing to develop. Now, one has only to read Khrushchev's report to the 22nd Congress, which is a wholly political treatise, one that begins to confront an entirely new task, the building of communism. Marx did not say how to set up a socialist regime or society. Marx did not say how to build a socialist society. Marx interpreted the laws of history, made a correct interpretation, studied the nature of class society, developed a whole revolutionary theory by virtue of which he explained history through the development of means of production. He studied history through the systems of production which in turn develop relationships of production. These little words, I warn you, are quite hard to understand when one begins to study Marxism—means of production, system of production, relationships of production—but they can be explained perfectly through practical examples. He interprets history, for until then, history was a mass of interpretations.

Some gave a divine interpretation to history. They said: history develops in accordance with supernatural designs, in accord with the designs of God. Others said that men make history and that men who made history were individuals like Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon. There were racial theories of history, claiming that race was the determining factor of history. A series of anti-scientific theories. A series of absurd theories. Then Marx says: no, history is not made by the divinity, not made by races.

FIDEL CASTRO

History is a process of development, determined by the material conditions of production. In other words, man first hags to live, I'll explain this in simpler terms.

Man has to live. In order to live, he begins to struggle with nature. First stage of man: man, the gatherer; the Stage of primitive communism. In the stage of primitive communism, land is common, property is common, means of production are absolutely rudimentary, corresponding to the stage in which man's means of production are most elemental; that is, in techniques for producing goods to satisfy his needs, man is really very poor. I am not going to give you a better lesson than Lionel, but I am going to explain things, not to you; I am going to explain things to the people.

PRIMITIVE COMMUNISM AND ITS MODE OF PRODUCTION

In the stage of primitive communism, there are neither exploiters nor exploited; property is held in common; and some social groups still live under primitive communism in some parts of the world. I have to laugh, because at times some comrades want to make such a great leap ahead as to land in primitive communism. Yet, it is fitting that we learn to appreciate this difference in order to distinguish between primitive communism and the communism the Soviet Union is planning for. What is the difference? Simply this, the fundamental, the big and outstanding difference is that the former was a communism of poverty, an elemental life of poverty and scarcity among men which corresponded to their means of production. The means of production, techniques of production, of cultivation, the first accumulations of capital develop. This further develops, as a consequence, the private appropriation of the means of production and of land, (domestic) animals, of farming tools. A new mode of

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

production, new relations of production consequently arise as the means of production develop.

Private owners appear on the scene: private owners of livestock and farming implements, of land, and also, as a means of production, of men themselves.

SLAVERY

The second social system (in the history) of man was the system of slavery, of slave labor; very simple, very rudimentary; more advanced, much more advanced, of course, than the techniques of labors in the stage of primitive communism. So, the system of slavery spread. This is the system that characterizes that whole epoch of mankind, of the history of Greece especially, of Rome. The whole Roman Empire developed with that social system as a base. Men were then divided into slaveowners, the masters... There were classes that had no political rights, but had certain civil rights; for example, in Rome, the plebians, as well as the slaves.

Everyone knows the history of the struggles of those classes to free themselves—the history of the slaves and their uprisings so shake off the yoke of slavery. The slaves managed to rise up, and developed a great movement all over Italy, opposed to Roman power. They placed the power of Rome in jeopardy, founded cities, even organized a nation of slaves. In the long run, their revolution was smashed.

(We have) the movements of the plebians with the Gracchi, demanding their rights from the Roman patricians who had economic rights and political rights. Eventually, the system of slavery is superseded, replaced by a system which was a little more benign, but nonetheless still cruel

FIDEL CASTRO

and still a system of exploitation, coming into being as the Roman Empire fell apart: the system of feudalism..

Under feudalism individuals were not slaves, but were semi-slaves, dependent on the feudal lords, who owned the land. They worked part of the time on their own land, part on the lands of their masters, a situation that does not really differ much from that of some peasants today, who work on the land of their landlords and have to turn over half the crop to him, and, in addition, have to supply their own tools and seed.

And that medieval system corresponded to the Middle Ages, was based on the system of serfdom. Men were dependent on a few lords, on the land; when those holdings passed to the hands of other lords of the nobility or of the feudal aristocracy, the peasants changed hands with them. Again, this is not much different from what happens in some countries, like Peru, where latifundias are still sold with the Indians on them.

THE BOURGEOISIE

Now a new class emerges, but who? The manufacturers, the traders, the merchants make their appearance. Where do the traders and merchants set up shop? In the towns, in the villages. As a result, they begin to develop industry, trade. But this trade finds itself bound in shackles. What shackles? I don't see any shackles... What shackles do they find? They find all the shackles of feudalism. What were these, shackles? A whole array of taxes, complete insecurity. When merchandise leaves a town, goes from one village to another, from one medieval burg to another, they have to pay a whole series of tolls. You can imagine what happened with goods from the Near East, from those countries to Italy:

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

spices, perfumes, gold, and things like that, that had to reach France and pass through a hundred feudal lords, a hundred practically different states that did have, it is true, some fealty, some weak bonds, in the first stage of feudalism, to the power of a king, of an absolute monarch.

This new social class coming to the fore, that is, the class of traders and merchants, very rudimentary, to be sure, begins to build up the economy, to accumulate wealth, and begins to clash with the existing relations of production. That is, the existing social relations, the superstructure—so they call it technically in Lionel's classes—the economic structure begins to conflict with the social superstructure. The economic structure of the emerging class comes up against all that framework that was a real hindrance to its growth. That social class then begins to fight for a whole series of rights. It undertakes a long struggle. The new class kept winning such rights in the various countries of Europe. In some cases, the movement culminated in a bloody revolution, in others in less bloody revolution, in still others in a transformation, but the indisputable fact is that the problem was the same in all countries. That is, this rising social class, the bourgeoisie—and that is where the word "bourgeoisie" stems from—appeared everywhere, in France, in Germany, in England, in Italy. It had no political rights, it represented different interests from the interests of the nobles and the aristocracy that ruled those countries. It began the struggle against the aristocracy, and then two social classes became locked in struggle: the nobility versus the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie came out on top, as it inevitably had to.

How did it triumph? In France, through a bloody and violent struggle. First, national states were set up, developing in a way parallel with the absolute monarchy, an

FIDEL CASTRO

absolute monarchy resting on a feudal basis, as in France. The bourgeoisie had to break with the existing social system, had to destroy all those feudal shackles. It is then that the French Revolution occurred, in the course of which, this social class, having burst through all the bonds of feudalism, developed, and a new social system was established. Under new conditions, that new system began to develop all the forces it was capable of developing: an extraordinary development of technique, of production, a significant step forward from the previous system.

THE PROLETARIAT

It triumphed in other countries as well, without overthrowing the monarchy; instead, converting the absolute monarchies into monarchies resting on a bourgeois base. In other words, it was all the same to the bourgeois whether there was a republic or a monarchy. What really mattered was to eliminate the existing feudal obstacles to the development of the new system, of the new social class, of the new productive forces. Then national states were set up, the ideal of that class, a vast market it could sell to.

I have been explaining all this pretty much in my own way, without the elegance of the teachers at the School of Instruction. These were the things that Marx discovered. He discovered that a new social class arises at the same time: the proletariat.

Where does the proletariat arise from? Precisely, from the development of all the means of production. Factories arise. Textile weavers gradually disappear from the scene (cotton industry) and are now concentrated in the workshops; new techniques of production lead to a steadily increasing concentration of the means of production into

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

few hands. The workers begin to form associations and the new class begins to take form, centered, where? Around the factory. Marx discovers that all these factories would keep on developing, and that the process of concentration of property was going to continue, that the small proprietors or small industrialists were going to be ruined, and that an increasingly powerful working class would develop.

But at the same time that this capitalist system has given rise to the bourgeoisie, it becomes transformed—as happened to feudalism in its time. Feudalism became an obstacle to the development of society in its opposition to the emergent class. So, capitalism, in turn, becomes an obstacle. What, then, are the characteristics of the capitalist mode of production? Waste in production, lack of planning, competition, squandering, failure to utilize all the technical resources mankind has developed to produce the goods that men need.

By that time in history there were already a number of socialist thinkers who were writing that “We must have socialism.” But why should there be socialism? “Because I like it and it seems good to me, and all the workers would want it.” Others gave different reasons and advanced a series of hypotheses.

SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

What is the historical merit of Marx? Marx writes something, a correct interpretation of what was going to happen, not simply because people wanted it, but because the very laws of historical evolution predetermined it. This is the great merit of Marx, the founder of scientific socialism which gives the working class a theory.

FIDEL CASTRO

They interpreted the laws, studied the conditions at a given moment. Marx did not claim to be a fortuneteller. Once they asked him what it would be like once communism was established. He said that he had no crystal ball. He interpreted the laws, gave the labor movement a scientific theory. The theory was developed. The first revolutionary workers' movement came to power in the Soviet Union armed with that theory, the theory continued to develop, and the Soviet Union develops a long experience. What experience?

The experience of building the world's first socialist state.

One should bear in mind that this experience is of incalculable value for humanity. When they developed, initiated, and carried out the building of the first socialist state, they were taking a path entirely new to humanity, just as they are today advancing along another entirely new road: the building of communist society.

This tells us one thing: simply, that Marxism is a living science, a developing science. We have to study everything that Marx taught, but at the same time we have to study everything that Lenin taught, we have to study the entire experience derived from the building of the first communist society.

There is a question: when the Bolshevik party of the Soviet Union started out to build the first socialist state, what was involved was simply giving reality to a political theory, a revolutionary theory. Humanity stands today before the reality that this theory has been put into practice. What are the results of the application of that theory? What is it that no one can argue against today? Only the imperial-

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

ists still argue against the facts, and I don't think they themselves are sure of their ground.

Socialism is no longer something new to mankind. Socialism is a reality for mankind. But this reality is contained in numbers, in the statistics of the Soviet Union, in the figures comparing the difference between the old Russia of 1913 and the Soviet Union of today. The development and growth of production, the radical change in all aspects of the life of the Soviet people, and what they are today, and the foundations for further development which the Soviet Union has available today. Even during the first five-year plans of the Soviet Union, they were experimenting, just starting to learn something about planning and acquiring experience. Today, they're working at the same program, but from the perspective of 20 years, with a great deal of experience and certainty. No one can doubt that they'll carry out the program they've outlined because the men carrying the job forward have an apprenticeship of forty years in managing the economy, in planning the economy, in building socialist society. And the figures already demonstrate unequivocally the victory of socialism over capitalism and over imperialism.

This means it takes much less merit to be a socialist today, to build a socialist society, than to have been a socialist when there was no socialist state anywhere in the world yet, and the experience of life and reality had not yet taught and had not submitted the implementation of that theory to proof.

The building of socialism follows a well-beaten path by now. This doesn't mean that conditions are exactly the same in all countries, that socialism has to be built in exactly the same way in every country or that we have to copy rigidly

FIDEL CASTRO

the way it was done. Certainly not! Every country has its own peculiarities, and each country has to tailor its program, and its methods, and tactics to its own peculiar features. That is what we have to do.

But there do exist some common experiences of immense value, just as in medicine, in astronomy, in physics, there are truths already proved by historical fact, and we have the advantage of being able to rely on all this experience and all these acquired techniques as we build a socialist society.

This is, of course, easy enough to say. In practice, however, the job is somewhat difficult.

SACRIFICES BY THE USSR

There is an enormous gap between theory and practice. It is easy to say that the Soviets built a socialist society. Well, they had to build that socialist society, to build their society at the cost of immense and titanic sacrifices. They even made mistakes, they made many mistakes, at first. Lenin himself undertook to expose some of these basic errors.

Among other things, the workers' movement, the triumphant revolution in the Soviet Union, had to face a long series of interventions. Well, one of Lenin's great merits was to see clearly the moment when it was possible for the revolutionary movement to seize power. Many felt that this movement would not be able to stay in power. He thought it could, if it took advantage of the correlation of international forces brought about by the imperialist war, and made the demand of the people for peace, bread and land its foremost demand. And he thought that while the imperialist powers were still fighting, he would set up Soviet power and consolidate it. In effect, he was banking

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

on the supposition that he had a certain amount of time before the imperialist war came to a close.

The imperialist war ended, and all the countries agreed to intervene in the Soviet Union. Consequently, the Soviets were confronted by unbelievable hardships. First, they had to face foreign intervention. They had to deal with a powerful bourgeoisie. They had to confront the whole aristocracy and the remnants of Tsarist; they even had to face petit bourgeois movement at home. But finally, they won their victory, naturally under the most difficult conditions. At last, they had in their hands power over an immense country, divided, thoroughly devastated, and worse yet, a backward country; a country left with such devastation after the civil war that discontent broke out one occasion among the peasants and among the workers of Moscow and Leningrad.

Lenin himself acknowledged that one of the most trying moments for Soviet power was when the peasants and workers themselves gave vent to their discontent stemming from the extremely precarious economic situation and devastation in the Soviet Union. This was the time of the New Economic Policy: a series of measures temporarily installed to save the situation.

For a long time, the Soviet Union had to go through a period of starvation, of privation, of sacrifice. And when, after twenty years of building socialism, the Second World War broke out, the country was invaded and lost twenty million lives. One must remember that among those twenty million lives were the finest youth of the Soviet Union, the most self-sacrificing, the bravest—who lost their lives in the underground or at the front lines. And imperialism again, with its factories intact, its economy intact, threatens with

FIDEL CASTRO

war. Moreover, all the capitalist countries, with their arms, their atomic weapons, faced a war-ravaged Soviet Union which, in addition, had to help rebuild countries that had also suffered under the Nazi boot. To do this, it had to invest its meager resources in the reconstruction of other countries in the socialist camp.

ADVANTAGES OVER CAPITALISM

And, surmounting all those conditions, it reached the present stage. Nobody will dare challenge the extraordinary technical, cultural, and scientific progress made by the Soviet Union. I feel that it would be an absurdity and folly only of the blind, not to see that in the scientific field, the Soviet Union has completely surpassed all capitalist countries. In the technical and educational sphere, it suffices to say, for example, that three times as many engineers are studying in the Soviet Union than in the United States. In housing, the Soviet Union is at present the world leader. It has the lowest infant mortality rate in the world. And the average life span is increasing at the fastest rate in the Soviet Union. All this holds true now at this stage and in the wake of all these vicissitudes.

In other words, one thing has been definitely proved: the reality of history has fully demonstrated, has confirmed the doctrine of Marxism and Leninism. Socialist construction promotes an incomparably greater progress in society than does capitalism. The United States is growing at an annual rate of 2.3 or 2.5 percent; the Soviet Union, at an annual rate of 10 or 11 percent. So that in twenty years' time the Soviet Union will have surpassed with something to spare, total United States production, and in per capita

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

production, will have surpassed the United States at an even earlier date.

Can the United States win in that competition? Can they compete with the socialist countries? Not at all! They would have to give up capitalism to do it. They would have to give up private ownership of the means of production, private control of the circulation of finance capital, private ownership of land, and transportation. They would simply have to set up a socialist system. They would have to tell the American millionaires: "There'll be no more throwing money around." They would have to tell all the American millionaires: "No more underutilization of capital, no more unemployment; we'll use all the means of production achieved by technology here, all the factories that have been built, and we'll manage the economy of the country, we'll plan it, and plan its development, and we'll build the plants we don't have." The only way they will be able to compete with the Soviet Union is with a planned economy, with rational investment of the entire national income—there is no other way.

In other words, the only way out for the United States is to cease being imperialist and capitalist and become socialist. This is the truth. To understand this now, at a time when we have the opportunity to read, to study and to appreciate all these facts is of no particular merit. The absurd thing about it is that people should be so fenced in by a curtain of lies and prejudices that they are unaware of things that are basic historical truths.

It is fairly easy and quite simple for our people to understand these things today. All the more so, since the capitalist system of production has reached its highest stage, the phase of imperialism, of colonialism, of exploit-

FIDEL CASTRO

ation of all peoples, creating starvation and misery. Where do colonial wars take place today? In the Portuguese and French colonies. Where do we see discrimination, persecution, hunger, poverty, cultural backwardness, all this? In the colonies, in colonized countries, in countries exploited by imperialism.

REVOLUTION AT THE CROSSROADS

Imperialism today is also the cause of starvation, of poverty, of underdevelopment of all the people. Imperialism makes it necessary to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on armaments every year.

Who alone is not interested in disarmament? Imperialism. If the manufacture of armaments were to be stopped in the United States, the immediate result would be that instead of four million unemployed, there would be perhaps ten or fifteen million unemployed.

They have been trying to resolve their problems through wars and arms races because, on the one hand, they can maintain a certain level of employment that way; on the other hand, they can keep the people in a state of hysteria—more readily manipulated in the direction they want to take them.

Anyone who honestly analyzes the state of affairs in the world will find that it is the imperialists, the capitalists, who subject the world to the worst poverty, the worst backwardness, and they are simply the scourge of mankind. It is enough for our people to study what is happening around the world to become even more an enemy of imperialism, an enemy of capitalism, simply because of its world policy of exploitation and extortion, its policy of war.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

We didn't have to look around the world to find out what was going on, it was enough to see what was happening right here, in a nutshell. I have dwelt at some length on this topic to draw the following conclusions. When the Revolution came to power, there were two roads for it to follow: to stay within the framework of the existing social order or to go forward; to remain within the capitalist system, within the imperialist orbit, within the criminal policy of imperialism in the Western Hemisphere, in Asia, in Africa, within the same policy which embraces a Franco in Spain, an Adenauer, a Chiang Kai-Shek, which embraces all the military dictatorships, all the French colonialists in Algeria; or to place our country where it rightfully belongs, that is, on the side of, the exploited peoples, on the side of the oppressed peoples, on the side of the colonized peoples.

Our nation, seeing things clearly, could never have accepted a place alongside France against the Algerians, at the side of Franco against the Spanish people, at the side of Chiang Kai-Shek against the great Chinese people, at the side of the imperialists against the South Vietnamese who are fighting there for their independence, at the side of Portugal against the Angolans, at the side of Rómulo Betancourt against the Communist Party and against the MIR Movement of Venezuela (*Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria, or Movement of the Revolutionary Left, an independent revolutionary leftist mass movement in Venezuela*), at the side of the Somozas, at the side of any of those regimes. For despite the fact that the propaganda of imperialism pretends there are differences, the great truth is that the policy of imperialism was exactly the same in Spain and in Nicaragua as in Cuba—in Cuba under Frio; in Venezuela,

FIDEL CASTRO

the same as under Pérez Jiménez as under Betancourt; in Peru, the same under Odría as under Prado..

Viewing the march of world history, viewing the great efforts all people are making to free themselves from starvation, poverty, exploitation, colonialism, discrimination, such as the struggle the peoples of Asia, of Africa, of Latin America are waging, we could never in all conscience be on the side of imperialism. It is possible that some people stuffed with the Reader's Digest, Yankee films, Life magazine, the UPI and AP news services which have told so many lies, may be led to believe that the policy of the United States was a correct, noble, and humanitarian policy, as they try to make out.

What thinking person today, what reasonable person today, what person who sees what is going on all over the world today, can honestly be on the side of the imperialist policies?

It was logical that our nation, not just from the point of view of national values and national feelings, but from the point of view of the universal interests of mankind as well, could never be on the side of those policies, but instead on the side of the policy it supports today, defending the rights of all peoples everywhere. It is possible that some people see this more clearly than they see their own economic problems.

THERE ARE NO MIDDLE ROADS

For anyone who does not see that our country had to choose between two policies: either the policy of capitalism, the policy of imperialism, or the anti-imperialist policy, the policy of socialism, we must point out that there are no middle roads between capitalism and socialism. Those who

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

persist in thinking they can find some third positions have fallen into a really false and really utopian position. This would be equivalent to blindfolding oneself, it would mean becoming an accomplice of imperialism. It is perfectly understandable that anyone who remains indifferent to the struggle of the Algerians is an accomplice of French imperialism. Whoever remains indifferent to Yankee intervention in Santo Domingo, is an accomplice of that Yankee intervention in Santo Domingo. Whoever remains aloof from the persecution unleashed by the traitor Rómulo Betancourt against the workers and students of Venezuela, those same workers and students of Venezuela who are defending us, is an accomplice of that oppression. Whoever remains indifferent to Franco in Spain, to German rearmament, to the German warmongers, the Nazi officers who are today rearmed and even demanding thermos-nuclear weapons; whoever remains indifferent to what is happening in South Vietnam, to what is happening in the Congo, to what is happening in Angola, whoever remains indifferent and seeks to adopt some third position in the face of those facts, is not really adopting a third position, but is adopting a position of virtual complicity with imperialism.

There are some who believe, who presume themselves to be sharp thinkers, when they insist that what the Cuban Revolution should have done was to take money from the Americans and to take money from the Russians as well.

That is to say, there is no lack of people who preach such a repulsive, such a cowardly, such a cheap and vile political line. What they're saying is: sell yourself, sell the country as if it were just any piece of merchandise to the imperialists. Take handouts from imperialism while scaring them with the threat of friendship with the Soviet Union; in other

FIDEL CASTRO

words, be a blackmailer. There were those here who peddled the line of blackmail.

Ah, but how to blackmail? How would they carry out that line of blackmail? There was no room for such blackmail. To have done this would have meant to remain in the status quo prevailing in the country, to respect all the interests of imperialism here: all their thousands of acres, all their sugar mills, their electrical monopoly, their telephone company, their control of our foreign and domestic trade, of our banks. On the other hand, any country that decided to free itself from the monopoly grip of North American business, that decided to carry out agrarian reform, that decided to run its own industries, to carry on an independent policy, would have to take an anti-imperialist position.

TREASON OR REVOLUTION

In other words, either the Revolution was not revolution or there had to be a betrayal. The Revolution had to choose between both these terms: betrayal or revolution.

And we who remember the men who have died for this Revolution, who remember our fallen comrades, as any revolutionary remembers those who fell, from Guiteras, from Martínez Villena—although Martínez Villena actually did not die murdered but died as a result of the disaster of that fight—of Melia, all those revolutionaries. They who thought not of the revolutionaries of today, they who thought of Martí, Martí who also had a brilliant vision.

What is the merit of Martí, what makes us admire Martí? Was Martí a Marxist-Leninist? No, Martí was not a Marxist-Leninist. Martí said of Marx that since he placed himself on the side of the poor, he had all his sympathies.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

Because the Revolution of Cuba was a revolution of national liberation against Spanish colonial power; it was not a revolution that was a social struggle; it was a struggle for national independence first. And even at that time, at that time Martí said of Marx: "Since he placed himself on the side of the poor, he deserves my respect."

And what other vision did Martí have? An equally brilliant vision in the year 1895. He had the vision of North American imperialism when North American imperialism had not yet begun to be imperialism. That's what you call having long-range political vision.

North American imperialism began to develop vigorously from the time of the intervention in Cuba, during which it practically seized the wealth of the country, seized Puerto Rico, seized the Philippines, and launched the imperialist stage of North American capitalism. Martí foresaw in 1895 the development of the United States as an imperialist power. And he wrote and alerted the people against it; and spoke out against it. See how brilliant a revolutionary Martí really was to grasp the development of imperialism in 1895, when it had not yet begun to manifest itself as a world force.

And then one must think of all those who fell, all who died, all who fought. What did they fight for? So that the Electric Power Company would keep on being a Yankee company? So that the 18,000 caballerias (600,000 acres) of Atlantic Gulf would keep on being 18,000 foreign-owned cabaleries? So that our peasants would keep on being landless, in hunger and misery? So that the banks would continue being foreign properties? So that our country would again be drained of hundreds of millions of dollars every year? So that there would continue to be a million

FIDEL CASTRO

illiterates in our country? So that the peasants would remain without schools, without hospitals, without homes, living in shacks and in slums? So that our people, fifty years after it had supposedly won independence, would continue under those conditions?

NO SACRIFICE IN VAIN

Of course, I am not talking here to the revolutionaries, and it is possible that it is unnecessary to talk to the revolutionaries about this. It is the insensitive, the indifferent, the confused who have to be spoken to, those who do not understand why this and why that.

Did all those people die so that the big landowners could continue to be the masters of thousands of caballerias of land? No. Anybody understands that this could not be; that the leaders of the Revolution would have been traitors, had they made a Revolution, led so many young men into combat and into war, sacrificed so many lives for that. So little glory would not have been worth the life of a single Cuban! For so little glory it would not have been worthwhile to raise one weapon. To raise a weapon, to fight, to struggle, to suffer what our country suffered, had to be for something much more than all that.

And some people tried to say that all were dying just so that this system of exploitation could go on, so that a thousand families could go on living like princes in our capitals and in our cities, so that this system of exploitation, of starvation, of poverty, of discrimination, of social abuses, could continue. Some tried to say that. They seemed to believe that the Revolution would do nothing to change that. There were some who, at the last minute, even bought up some bonds and did a few little things, with that in mind.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

How mistaken they were: How mistaken they were who thought that certain achievements our country had made and had aimed at from as far back as the war of 1895 were going to remain unfulfilled and that things would continue in the same old way.

It is obvious that this honest line, this revolutionary line, this line which marches in step with history, in harmony with the feelings and interests of underdeveloped and exploited peoples everywhere in accord with national interests and national honor, is not an easy policy to pursue. It necessarily had to be a policy of sacrifices, since, if we wanted to redeem our people from illiteracy and a low cultural level, from unemployment, from hunger and poverty, if we really wanted to develop our economy, to manage our own economy, an independent economy, and along with an independent economy, an independent policy that would wipe out unemployment and illiteracy, poverty and backwardness, misery and ignorance, sickness, and the unhappy situation in which most of our people were living, we had no other choice than to pursue a consistently revolutionary line. Had we not done so, we would not have been able to do what we have done. To do it meant that we had to brave imperialism with all its power. That is what we have done.

THE ANTI-IMPERIALIST STRUGGLE

Of course, we leaders of the Revolution, are revolutionaries; were we not revolutionists, we would not be here making a revolution. What I mean by this is simply that the revolutionists and the people together with the revolutionists, in other words, the great exploited mass of the

people, is ready to make the necessary sacrifices and pay the necessary price for all this.

A "pancista" (*person concerned only with his "panza" or potbelly*), one who is indifferent, one who is insensitive, one who is corrupt, would say: "It's best not to look for trouble; it's best to leave all those foreign interests alone." They could have said this, and they did.

We had to choose between remaining under the domination, under the exploitation and, furthermore, the insolence of imperialism, to go on putting up with Yankee ambassadors giving the orders here, keeping our country in the state of poverty it was in, or making an anti-imperialist revolution, making a socialist revolution.

There was no alternative. We chose the only honorable road, the only loyal road that we could follow for our country, and in keeping with the tradition of our revolutionary forefathers, in keeping with the tradition of all those who fought for the good of our country. That is the path we have followed: the path of anti-imperialist struggle, the path of the socialist Revolution. Moreover, there was no room for any other position. Any other position would have been a false position, an absurd position. We will never adopt such a position, nor will we ever waver. Never!

Imperialism should know well that, for all time, we will never have anything to do with it. And imperialism must know that however great our difficulties, however hard our struggle to build our country, to build the future of our country, to write a history worthy of our country, imperialism must not harbor the slightest hope so far as we are concerned.

Many who did not understand these things before, understand them today. And they will understand them

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

more and more. For all of us, these things become ever clearer, more evident, and more Indisputable.

THERE IS ONLY ONE REVOLUTION

This is the path that the Revolution had to follow: the path of anti-imperialism and the path of socialism, that is, the path of nationalization of all the big industries, nationalization of big business, nationalization, and social ownership of the basic means of production; a path of planned development of our economy at a pace that our resources permit, and that the aid we are receiving from abroad permits. Another truly favorable thing for our Revolution has been the fact that we have been able to count on the aid and solidarity which have enabled us to carry our Revolution forward without the enormous sacrifices that other peoples have had to make.

The Revolution had to be anti-imperialist and socialist. Good. There could have been only one anti-imperialist and socialist Revolution, because there is but one revolution. And that is the great dialectical truth of mankind: imperialism, and imperialism versus socialism. The result of this: the victory of socialism, the triumph of the epoch of socialism, the overcoming of the stage of capitalism and imperialism, the establishment of the era of socialism, and later on the era of communism.

No one need be scared by that; here won't be any communism—I'm saying this for any anti-communists left out there—there won't be any communism for at least thirty years.

Just so even our enemies will get to understand what Marxism is. In a nutshell, simply, remember that you just cannot skip over an entire historical stage. Perhaps, today,

FIDEL CASTRO

some underdeveloped countries can skip over the stage of building capitalism, that is, they can start developing the economy of a country through planning and along the path of socialism, but they cannot skip over the stage of socialism. The Soviet Union, itself, after forty years, is just beginning to build communism and hopes to have made considerable progress in this area at the end of twenty years. Thus, we are in a stage of the building of socialism.

I AM A MARXIST-LENINIST

What is the socialism we have to apply here? Utopian socialism? We simply have to apply scientific socialism. That is why I began by saying with complete frankness that we believe in Marxism, that we believe it is the most correct, the most scientific theory, the only truly revolutionary theory. I say that here with complete satisfaction (*applause*) and with complete confidence: I am a Marxist-Leninist, and I shall be a Marxist-Leninist to the end of my life. (*prolonged applause*)

And what kind of a Marxist-Leninist am I? Am I a half-way one? We revolutionaries don't know how to be anything halfway. We only know how to be 100 percent something. And to that we shall dedicate our efforts, our energies, our entire selves. Moreover, it is a great satisfaction to have been illiterate at the age of eighteen and to feel revolutionary as I do now at thirty odd years—I think the “odd years” run to thirty-six (*laughter and applause*). I've learned a thing or two in eighteen years, and still have a lot to learn! And that is what we are telling the people, with complete candor, with complete loyalty, with all clarity, as I have always spoken to the people, always with complete frankness.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

Did I have prejudices? I believe it is good to talk about that. Did I have prejudices about the communists? Yes. Was I ever influenced by imperialist and reactionary propaganda against the communists? Yes. What did I think about the communists? Did I think they were thieves? No, never; I always regarded the communists -at the university and elsewhere—as honorable and honest people and all that... But, well, that is no special merit, because almost everyone recognizes these qualities in them. Did I have the idea they were sectarian? Yes. Why did I have such opinions about the communists? Simply, I am absolutely convinced that the ideas I had about the communists—not about Marxism, nor about the Communist Party—like the ideas many people have were the product of the propaganda and prejudices instilled in us since childhood, practically from school age, in the university, in the movies and everywhere else. I should say so. Do I believe they could make mistakes? Yes, I believe they can make mistakes. Marx, Engels, and Lenin could make mistakes, and they themselves were the first to admit that they could be wrong, that they could err, because they did not think themselves infallible.

THE MERIT IN BEING COMMUNIST

My opinion of the members of the Communist Party, the opinion they really deserve. I believe that as they were unknown for a long time and were excluded and attacked and kept on the sidelines and, whenever a committee was formed, they were left out and were left out because they were regarded as “pests” and none of their statements were printed in the newspapers, we must also recognize that it was a great merit, a very great merit to be a communist. Not

today... No, today we are going to see to it that is a merit. Of course, we are going to see that it is a merits!

It had to be a great merit to have been a communist in those days when, as Félix Torres told me, he was taken out of Santa Clara jail and was forced to walk to Yaguajay. On foot to Yaguajay! And so on, along those lines, they made innumerable sacrifices and (suffered) tribulations. It is a merit to have been a communist when they were persecuted, when all doors were shut to them, all printing presses, all newspapers, all opportunities. This we have to say.

Far more merit, of course, than being one today. Today, conditions are different. I have, therefore, said that we have to strive so that socialists, Marxists, are really Marxists, in the true sense of the word, ready for all contingencies.

But, in short, I meant this: that I had prejudices against the Socialist Party, prejudices stemming fundamentally from the campaigns. I admit it with the honesty one ought to have when admitting such things. I am not going to ask anything at all of the socialists. I say this now that we are perfectly integrated—comrades all, socialists all.

On certain occasions, on certain occasions early in the revolutionary process, there was some friction between us, probably due to different conceptions of certain things, but, basically, because we did not discuss matters.

I must also say that there were people here who fell victim to the intrigue of the early days, when, every time something happened, it was said that there were a group of communists stirring up trouble, provoking a riot. I must say that at one time I even believed that it was the communists who had provoked a riot at a certain place, when a group of people with sticks attacked a citizen there. I was led to believe it; I must admit it here. And later I discovered that it

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

wasn't the communists who had staged the riot, but divisionist elements who had armed that whole mob with sticks to beat up some citizens.

UNITY FOLLOWS DISCUSSION

In any case, in the first stages, there was a clash between two things, in reality between prejudices and a series of things: There was a "communist" behind everything. The employment of a communist had to be almost a secret. Right off the bat, the UPI, the AP and all the North American newspapermen would be on the spot digging up ten, a dozen, fifteen or so "communists." It was strange, back in those days, they were already starting to call all the comrades communists, and there was a group of comrades who were not members of the Communist Party, but members of the July 26th Movement. Then they were pointing the finger at them, dragging some story of previous communist activities before the public. They started with that campaign, a campaign which even found an echo in some, more or less numerous, in all areas influenced by anti-communist and imperialist propaganda. Fortunately, due to the efforts of everyone, we got through those stages.

I believe that one of the errors of those first days was the lack of any major exchange of views between the different organizations. Each of us was acting more or less on our own account. It was the revolutionary struggle itself which brought us more and more into contact, more and more into common discussion, more and more into an exchange of views, and steadily promoted our unification.

I must tell you about a terrible experience we had. Some day when the history of this stage is written down and something is said of merit of this Revolution, they might

FIDEL CASTRO

well say that we were making a socialist Revolution without socialists, because at that time anti-communist prejudice was so strong that whenever a communist functionary was appointed to a job no matter how modest, there'd be a wave of protest, followed by a squabble and a train of intrigues. Our measures were socialist measures: a people's farm, a cooperative, an industry nationalized, all these are socialist institutions. We had good comrades, honored comrades of the July 26th Revolutionary Movement; but there weren't enough of them for those tasks. Certainly, there aren't enough men now! How were we going to manage with the jobs and tasks piling up on us at the time? Carrying out a socialist revolution without socialists was one of the most difficult jobs. When the process of uniting the revolutionary forces and the revolutionary organizations began, when anti-communism began to be routed and destroyed, we reached the stage in which it was easier for a number of members of the Socialist Party to fulfill various functions without all that intrigue and all that divisiveness.

A MARXIST-LENINIST PROGRAM

Now, what does this union mean? What is the significance of the moment when all revolutionary organizations unite? What it means, among other things, is hundreds, thousands of cadres, thousands of cadres! of tested people, of people who had gone through sacrifices, through hard trials, through difficult trials, who had a political education. And this reminds me of the times people came and said: "*When are we going to carry out the July 26th program?*" And I said: "*What 26th of July program are we going to carry out unless it is a Marxist-Leninist program? Why should we carry out two Marxist-Leninist programs?*" This is the

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

reality. Anything else would mean building castles in the skies.

So then, unification meant the participation of thousands of cadres, all indispensable, basic and essential to the building of socialism. It meant the participation of all the cadres of the Revolutionary Directorate. The Revolutionary Directorate didn't have as many experienced cadres as had the Socialist Party. Yet there were people who said: "No, they want to seize this, they want to seize that!" One must be completely ignorant of what a revolutionary really is, to think that a revolutionary just wants to grab a position. What we know about all revolutionaries is that they all share in the work now, and that there is so much work that there are not enough people to handle it all. So much work that some comrades, if they are in the army, would rather go to military school, and if they are civil servants, they prefer to go to a School of Revolutionary Instruction, as a vacation. In other words, some revolutionaries find studying easier than the work they have to do.

ALL OF THE MEMBERS OF THE REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATIONS

Today the Revolution can count on all the cadres of all the revolutionary organizations. A very important contribution of the Socialist Party has been the cadres of old members, educated in Socialism, educated by the Socialist Party; the contribution of the Directorate is its youthful cadres; the contribution the 26th of July Movement could not consist of politically educated members with long years of experience, but of many young and enthusiastic people, revolutionary by choice, with all of the experience they acquired in the struggle to attain power. In other words, we have all made

FIDEL CASTRO

our contribution in one way or another and have represented the basic forces.

FORMATION OF THE ORI

These forces were called upon to unite in a single organization, and we organized the ORI. It was not easy, it was also a lengthy process; but, in the end, we organized the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations.

Sectarian attitudes are gradually disappearing; so are the attitudes of exclusivism. In the same way, people are no longer being excluded because they are socialists, and, consequently, sectarianism and similar attitudes are disappearing. Some attitudes of extremism are also disappearing. Extremism, which is often called "the measles," should, of course, not be confused with revolutionary firmness. Extremism is another manifestation of the petit bourgeois spirit in the revolutionary movement which we must fight against just as we have to fight against sectarianism.

There are many things our people have already had time to learn. They have had time to get rid of some of the prejudices that many people had who depicted socialism as something terrible something inhuman, something harsh, something enslaving, which is exactly all that imperialism is and which it accuses socialism of being.

Well, we are in a socialist regime. How different is this socialist regime from everything that had been said about socialism! So much so that even those who have had problems, like the reactionary clergy, who have had problems with the Revolution, can't blame the socialists for them, can't say the socialists tried to close the churches, prohibit, and persecute religious ideas. On the contrary, aware that religious sentiment is a part of the feelings of some people,

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

revolutionary power must respect the religious sentiment of that part of the people. It does respect it and gives it every facility. It was those who waged war on the revolutionary regime who said that they would be deprived of parental authority over their children. And the people have learned the truth. Who were they who took away parental rights? Saboteurs who murdered young men and women, counter-revolutionary criminals who murdered a 16-year-old teacher and deprive his mother forever of parental rights, of affection, of warmth and the hope of having her son at home again.

Not only did they murder him; they tortured him. Why did they torture him? Did they torture him, as the Batista secret police used to do, to force a secret from a revolutionary? No, they did not torture him to get any secrets out of him. They tortured him because they were sadists, because of their love of torture, because that boy was there teaching. What secret could he have had? Thus, it was not to squeeze out any secrets. They stabbed him fourteen times. They stabbed him simply to torture him, to fill him with anguish, to make him suffer, to sow terror in the hearts of all mothers. We found out that what robbed people of their parental rights was exploitative—capitalism, which dragged peasant girls away from the countryside to put them to work as servants, to force them into a life of prostitution. We found out that it was capitalism that condemned the daughters of workers and the daughters of peasants to that fate. And it turns out to be precisely socialism that wipes out illiteracy, that educates a million Cubans, that makes plans to rehabilitate prostitutes, to teach typing and shorthand to domestics, to wipe out unemployment, to bring teachers to the remotest corner of the country, to fight and die

defending the country from the claws of imperialism, to bring hospitals, to bring roads, to organize social activities, to organize children's activities, to organize youth activities, to develop culture and to struggle for the happiness of the people. That is what we have given our people.

Socialism behaves very generously toward its enemies—too generously. The social system which captured over a thousand mercenary traitors—paid by and serving the Central Intelligence Agency and the Pentagon, and who came here escorted by foreign ships—the system that captured 500 counter-revolutionaries—among whom were many murderers who had already committed blatant crimes against the peasants—without even applying the maximum penalty on them, the social system that sees with anguish its calm and generous attitude repaid by the cowardly and vile murder of a 16-year-old youth—that is socialism.

In other words, with all its power, socialism does not abuse it. It is calm. It is conscientious. It struggles to overcome all its defects. It struggles to overcome—extremism, sectarianism, abuses, injustices, simply because it is socialism, simply because it is what Marx and Engels conceived of what Lenin and all the revolutionaries fought for—a better life for man, a happier life for the people, a freer life for the people, that replaces the regime of class oppression, the regime of an exploiting class over the workers, with a workers' democracy. In Marxist terms, this is known as the "dictatorship of the proletariat." (*applause*)

But though it is called "dictatorship of the proletariat," it does not mean torture, murder, crime. Certainly not! Those are characteristics of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie—which, indeed, means torture, murder, dipping

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

into the public till, injustice, and arbitrariness. Proletarian government means simply that the working class seizes power to develop a historic cycle, and that it exercises this power over other classes, against which it has to struggle during the entire stage of the building of socialism. What better proof of the hatred of a class displaced from power than the murder of a boy in Trinidad. Could hatred and sadism be expressed any clearer? That is, simply, a manifestation of the class struggle, the struggle of the classes thrown out of power to regain their class control. That's why they develop such hatred, a hatred which, as Martí put it, is born "drooling from the entrails of the man." That description fits this case better than any other because only a mouth-frothing hatred born from the entrails of the exploiting classes could engender a crime like the crime they perpetrated against that boy.

This rule by the working class, the dictatorship of the working class, does not mean torture, or social crimes, or arbitrariness because socialism is opposed to all that. None of those things has anything to do with socialism. Socialism struggles against all injustice and rectifies all injustice. It struggles against all arbitrariness and rectifies all arbitrariness. It struggles against crime and will never tolerate crime, never tolerate torture, never tolerate cowardice, never tolerate baseness. Of course, it's no bed of roses. The enemies of the working class, the enemies of the peasantry, the enemies of the students, the enemies of socialism, the enemies of national independence won't find the struggle a bed of roses either. These enemies will get a reply from the strong hand of the Revolution, the strong hand of the proletariat, the strong hand of the people.

FIDEL CASTRO

This means they are not going to waltz through here; for the things that were the cause of the law which the Revolution approved—and which it had to approve because of their behavior, for despite all the care the Revolution takes and all the effort it makes not to commit excesses, to use its power with discretion, to be generous and to keep on stressing generosity, it has been rewarded with crimes and acts as cowardly and barbarous as this (murder of a teacher)—have taught the people to be harsh toward the enemy. We are not inhumane, and none of us can ever take pleasure in anything that involves bloodshed, that involves shooting. No, none of us likes that. None of us are cruel, but we are aware, however, we are very much aware that the enemies of the Revolution should be treated with the harshness they deserve. That in this struggle they are not going to find a proletariat that murders, tortures; but they are going to find a proletariat that is firm, hard, and will give them the punishment they deserve. This law was not made just to be proclaimed but to be carried out.

THE REVOLUTION HAS CADRES

The very intensity of the struggle between the interests of the exploited classes and those of the exploiting classes compelled us to take this decision and to adopt these measures, all absolutely necessary. The Revolution has strength enough for this—strength that comes from the union of all revolutionary social forces, from the integration of all those forces, from the union of all the revolutionary cadres, from the formation of a powerful revolutionary armed force. From all the apparatuses of the masses which the Revolution has created—like the unions, youth organizations, peasant organizations, student organizations,

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, and women's organizations—from these organizations the Revolution gets its cadres, gets its mass support, gets strength and the power to apply the necessary measures against its enemies. And let us repeat: We take no pleasure in being harsh out of pure fancy, in being harsh for pleasure, but we revolutionaries know how to be harsh when we have to, and we will be as harsh as necessary with the enemies of the Revolution.

I believe that this background explains the reason for the integration of the revolutionary forces and the creation of the ORI, the reason for the socialist course of the Revolution. But they are going to throw the blame for the socialist Revolution on Carlos Rafael. A Marxist would never blame Carlos Rafael for the socialist revolution. Of course, it is logical that the non-Marxists, the utopians, the lunatics—because they are lunatics—should throw the blame on the Popular Socialist Party, on the socialist leaders. That is simply the result of their lack of political education, of revolutionary instruction. Rather, we have all contributed to this unity. We feel satisfied to have contributed to this unity and we are striving to organize and create a strong, disciplined, and firm vanguard political organization of the working class and of the Cuban Revolution.

A PARTY OF SELECTED MEMBERS

How are we trying to do this? Do we do it like the traditional parties, by inviting everyone, opening the doors equally to everyone to join the party? No.

What did the bourgeois parties do when they were in power? They opened the doors wide, invited everyone in

and suddenly, any party that came to power immediately had a million followers.

When we were novices and knew nothing about politics, the newspapers we read used to say: "As proof of what the Soviet Union is, the Communist Party has no more than five million members out of a population of two hundred million." To capitalism and imperialism this proved that it was a tiny minority! Of course, they wanted to make us look at a revolutionary Marxist party through the same prism they use on a bourgeois party. With a bourgeois party, the more people, the bigger the show. The bourgeois party has no ideology. It defends the class interests of a bunch of politicians, a conglomeration of individuals. The more people it has, well, the more the patronage, the bigger the shows. They are not at all concerned about what their party members think. So, they try very carefully to hide the fact that a revolutionary Marxist party is a vanguard party, a party of leadership and a party of selected people, that if the Soviet Union had opened up recruiting centers, well, there would have been tens of millions of members; that a party of leadership directs and works through mass organizations; that mass organizations are the instruments of leadership and revolutionary work and form the basis of revolutionary work. A revolutionary party is a selective party which leads. It leads and works basically through its mass organizations, through labor unions, youth organizations, women's federations, defense committees (which, in this case, is an invention of the Cuban Revolution and is also a fantastic mass organization) peasant associations, cooperatives and the farms which are now in the unions. In other words, it leads and guides through all of these mass organizations.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

Therefore, the standard that the political organization of the Cuban Revolution will have to follow will be, above all, the standard of selection and quality. It will not be a quantitative organization; it will be a qualitative organization.

IT IS BETTER TO BE SELECTIVE

We must say that as this is a product of the union of different revolutionary organizations, it is logical that in this initial stage the standard shouldn't be applied too rigidly, since one of the steps, in the plan to organize this force—the integration of this revolutionary force—is to train revolutionary cadres. That is, in this initial stage of unification, we cannot logically set as strict requirements as they will have to be in the future, because all the comrades and cadres of the separate organizations have to be integrated into one organization and many of them are engaged in study and training.

This organization will be restricted in membership. It will not be small in number; it will be large, but not too large numerically, because we are going to be very demanding in our requirements for membership in the political organization of the Revolution. Furthermore, as we face greater demands, more conditions and more requirements will be laid down for membership in the United Party of the Socialist Revolution. We will establish a strict standard of strict for it is better to be selective before admitting, than to expel after admitting.

Because, moreover, the enthusiasm of the masses, the revolution spirit of the masses is so great, we know that a party which takes shape, develops, and grows strong under these conditions has the advantage of being able to recruit the best elements, the most 'positive elements from among

FIDEL CASTRO

the masses, and make them members of that organization. It is fundamental that precisely the best of the people, the best of the mass organizations should get the honor and at the same time, fulfill the honored role of membership in the United Party of the Socialist Revolution.

And the more this is so, the more every worker, every peasant, every intellectual, every citizen will appreciate it. It is necessary to point out that any citizen can become a member of the United Party of the Socialist Revolution, whether he is a worker or not. In other words, the doors are open to any true revolutionary who identifies with the Revolution and is willing to follow the standards set and to accept fully and with conviction the program of the United Party of the Socialist Revolution.

Good. In the first place, the standard of selection will become stricter and stricter, precisely because we want the best people represented in that apparatus, which is a vanguard organization, the leadership of the Revolution.

Naturally, other comrades will talk here about certain organizational problems. We want to say a few important things: All members of the separate revolutionary organizations will have equal rights and privileges in the United Party of the Socialist Revolution. This means that there will be no special privilege for having been a member of the Socialist Party for twenty years and it means no discrimination for having been a member of the 26th of July Movement or of the Revolutionary Directorate. Everyone comes in with Absolutely equal rights! We especially have to avoid extremes and mistakes. On the one hand, we must prevent those who say "I have thirty years," or "I have twenty years," from resting on their laurels of these twenty years and believing that their revolutionary background is

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

sufficient. On the other hand, being a new member doesn't give one the right to believe that he doesn't have to know everything he should know about the questions of socialism and the questions of revolutionary theory nor to feel that he is not obliged to follow all our standards with discipline.

THE MERIT OF THE FUTURE

That is, we must now have... make an effort to create a fuller and deeper unity on the basis of one thing alone which is what we should all take as a basis. In the early days, there were people who used to say: "I was in the Sierra." And they drove people crazy with this "I was in the Sierra." And there were also people who had been nothing in the Sierra. There are also people now who say: "I have been a communist for fifteen years" when there has been nothing communist about them in all their lives. We definitely have to eradicate from the vocabulary and the attitudes of a true revolutionary such things as: "I have been a communist for fifteen years."

Neither the "I was a communist" nor the "I threw bombs" nor the "I was in the Sierra" has any, reason to show off.

Whatever the merits each of us may have, comrades, there is still a greater merit and that is the merit in what lies ahead. It would have been correct to say to a militiaman: "You are a boaster." What rumor, what line did the reaction try to put across? "To divide the militiaman from the rebel soldier, to create animosity between them?" Some people even let themselves be carried away by that false sentiment and some let themselves be carried away by the opinion of a militiaman who had done nothing. On that basis, what should we think about the hundred militiamen who fell

FIDEL CASTRO

alongside the soldiers and the revolutionary police! What should we think when we see today the photograph of a young worker who died fighting at Giron Beach, who gave his life, who left his wife a widow, who left his children orphans! Wouldn't everyone really feel ashamed to have thrown up in someone's face that, at one time, he was a militiaman, that he was not in the Sierra? Wasn't Girón Beach a historical battle too, as glorious as any other battle, a battle that will go down in history as the great victory of the revolutionary Cuban people against Yankee imperialism? Who fell and died there? Don't we have to take off our hats today in respect for the heroes who fell there, though they may not have been in the Sierra, though they may not have been communists for fifteen years, though they may not have thrown a single bomb? So, what is the greatest merit?

In the long run, everything that has been done is done and over with. All those who have died and all those who have fallen would have done so in vain if we don't learn how to carry the work of the Revolution forward. And so, the merit is in what is not yet, in what is to come. Who knows what struggles lie ahead of us? Who could have told that sixteen-year-old boy, whose picture we saw recently as an eleven-year-old among children seated at desks, that today he was going to be a great hero of our fatherland, a symbol of the nation, a symbol of the culture of Cuba and America? Who would have had a right to look scornfully at that sixteen-year-old boy who was teaching people how to read and write, and not have to bow their heads in respect to his name and his memory?

Who knows what battles we'll have to fight, what struggles lie ahead? Why should we believe that there is

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

merit only in what is behind us? Why don't we believe that there is some merit in what we will have to do together from now on. I wish we had been able to do it together from the very beginning. I wish we could always have done it together, like the Bolsheviks who carried out the revolution in 1917.

THERE WILL BE NO SPECIAL PRIVILEGES

Let us be enthusiastic about the tasks before us. Let us approach them with honor, starting with the honor we have spoken about here today, with what I have said here with all honor and with all candor, because the first thing a revolutionary must be is honorable and frank—in the history we must all write together, in the history the OBI must write, and in the history the United Party of the Socialist Revolution of Cuba must write.

In that history, and that struggle, and in the task before us, we must be enthusiastic. Who belongs in the United Party of the Socialist Revolution? Everybody. Every honorable Cuban, every revolutionary Cuban does. Does anyone have special privileges? No, no one. Is there any favoritism here? No, none. For the first time in our fatherland there exists a revolutionary power in which neither influence, nor patronage, nor nepotism, nor favoritism count, but in which merit alone is indispensable. And what a beautiful thing it is that today our country has such an opportunity.

What, before anything else, will the United Party of the Socialist Revolution be? It will be a school for revolutionaries. It will be a party where one learns to be revolutionary. That is why such special emphasis has been put on the school. The party, as such, is still not officially established. It has not had its first congress yet; but it will have one.

FIDEL CASTRO

When? There's no rush, but it'll have it. But the important thing is that extraordinary progress at the base has been made in integration and unity, and that in fact a revolutionary vanguard organization exists and that hundreds of schools are functioning, and that more than 10,000 citizens are taking courses of revolutionary instruction; they are training and developing their capacities.

And I tell you sincerely that one thing that makes each of us more and more revolutionary every day is to see a comrade who knows practically nothing of revolution, nothing of economics, nothing of Marxism. There were even anti-communists among them, poor people, who had been instilled with anti-communist ideas, though they owned nothing: no capital, no wealth, no property of any kind. That's the limit. There's an explanation for the anti-communism of the owner of the sugar mill, or of a bank, but it is inconceivable that a man who has absolutely nothing should not be in accord with us when we tell him that we are going to socialize big business and the big banks.

STUDY IS NECESSARY

And to see comrades devote themselves to the study of economics but in such a way that, to speak the truth, if we revolutionary leaders don't study, we'll soon have people from the ranks knowing more about economics and political economy, Marxism-Leninism, and a whole lot of revolutionary things than we do. I tell you this seriously, whether you want to take it seriously or not, but we shall see. I believe, I believe that, meanwhile, we the leaders are obliged to study more than anyone else.

I have seen how those comrades have changed. Why have they changed? They see themselves as comrades who

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

have discovered something, who have found a truth, an indescribable enthusiasm, not usually found in their first studies. We have something to give the masses. We'll be lacking many material things, but there is something more, there is a whole revolutionary doctrine, scientific, profound, full of interest, which we can give to the masses. We can educate them politically, teach them, give them a revolutionary theory. We have schools, we have a press to teach the people.

There is one thing that no one should doubt, and that is that our people will become more revolutionary by the day, and as they become more revolutionary, they'll become better workers, better students, better administrators, we'll have higher production, better fighting units. The Revolution will be better defended, and the Revolution will have more prestige as the people assimilate revolutionary instruction.

TEACHING, NOT INDOCTRINATION

It is not a matter of indoctrination — we should drop that term. Why? Because the word “indoctrinate” implies instilling something in someone, filling someone's head with something. It isn't a matter of indoctrinating or instilling the people with something, but teaching them to analyze, teaching them to think. No one could have instilled Marxism-Leninism in me, and the best proof is that they tried to inculcate the very opposite of this in me, and they failed completely. They might have planted a few prejudices in me, some things, but really, no one could have instilled the reactionary, fascist, counter-revolutionary, selfish, exploitative spirit in me. And you must remember that for twelve years I was a pupil in parochial schools. And in those twelve

FIDEL CASTRO

years, they couldn't really instill the counter-revolutionary spirit in me, the conservative spirit, the spirit of the exploiter, but on my own I was reading, analyzing, and thinking with honesty.

I believe that we ought to teach the citizen to think, to analyze; to search among the sources of history where there are so many lessons; to search among the sources of the universal revolutionary movement where there are so many lessons; to search among the sources of the universal workers' movement; to search among the sources of theory and explain them. Do not say that a person can believe something he doesn't understand. You create fantasies that way. You develop mystic, dogmatic, fanatic minds that way.

And when someone doesn't understand something, don't stop discussing with him until he understands; and if he does not understand today, he'll understand tomorrow or the day after, because the truths of historic reality are so clear, so evident, and so obvious that sooner or later, every honest mind understands them. So, it isn't a matter of indoctrination.

No one goes to any revolutionary school to be indoctrinated. No one lets himself be indoctrinated, no one accepts absolutely something he doesn't understand. He goes to be educated, to learn to think, to learn to analyze, to be given the elements of wisdom so that he may understand and discuss the ideas of the bourgeoisie, the lies of the bourgeoisie, the lies of imperialism, the lies of capitalism; so that he can learn to dissect, analyze, and understand and with patience get to understand Marxism-Leninism, assured that it will cost nothing to teach the people the truth.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

REVOLUTION AS A CAREER

No one should fear he'll be indoctrinated. He who believes that he's going to be indoctrinated will not find anyone interested in giving him a "shock treatment" or a hole in the head or anything of the sort. Besides, there are people who, because of their nature, their temperament, can never be revolutionaries. They couldn't be because, above everything, a revolutionary is also a generous person, a disinterested person, a person ready to sacrifice himself.

A revolutionary is not an opportunist or a faker. He is a man who is ready to give up many comforts, and who likes it and wants it that way.

Not everyone is a revolutionary just as not everyone is a musician, or a painter just because he has to have a career. Now, we must teach the worker above all, the peasant, the student, the great masses of the exploited of yesterday. And we must do this more every month because just as it is certain that there are people who could never be revolutionaries, so are there more and more people who understand the truths of the Revolution. This is what we have to do, and this is the aim of the School of Revolutionary Instruction: to teach our people to analyze, to teach them to think.

And a revolutionary has to be, above all, a man who knows how to analyze situations objectively, not subjectively. Learning to think is learning to seek the right solutions. That is one of the important questions I wanted to bring out.

Furthermore, regarding questions of organization, any day now I imagine Anibal will also be invited to join in this program, so that he can speak of everything relating to the

FIDEL CASTRO

organizational aspect of the United Party of the Socialist Revolution.

Program? It will be a Marxist-Leninist program conforming to the specific objective conditions of our country. That is to say, we shall adapt in our program the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism to our conditions. So, that is not nor is it going to be a secret, not at all. And our people, our working class agrees with that, our peasantry agrees, all honest intellectuals agree, the youth, all honest citizens of our country agree.

So, those were the fundamental questions. Other questions relate to discipline and a whole series of standards, but it seems to me that my duty here today is to talk about the United Party of the Socialist Revolution—and I wish to point out that you were the ones who decided when and how the United Party of the Socialist Revolution should be discussed—the fundamental thing, the “why” of the United Party of the Socialist Revolution, the roots of the process and the functions of the United Party of the Socialist Revolution.

FUNDAMENTAL TASKS OF THE PARTY: TO LEAD AND TO ORGANIZE

It is known how fundamental is its tasks: to organize and to lead, through mass organizations, through its cells; and, at the same time, to organize the people in accordance with Marxist-Leninist standards of collective responsibility and leadership.

I am now going to say something about collective leadership which is possibly the only thing left for me to discuss. For a good part of the time revolutionary leadership was a one-man leadership. That is to say, it was not bossist, not whimsical, nothing like that, but for a good part of the

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

time the decisions were decisions that were made in practice by virtue of the confidence bestowed in the Premier of the Revolutionary Government; and as such, the basic-decisions were so made.

I said and I say and repeat: I firmly believe this is wrong. I do not have to reproach myself for this though; it was simply the result of the revolutionary process. Well, what did we think about that? We simply thought that was wrong; in fact, for a long time there was concern here about the problems of leaders and "what would happen if we should lose a leader?" and "if the Revolution is deprived of a head?" Why? We just had to get out of that situation as soon as possible; above all, we had to create a revolutionary party leadership.

That instrument is the best guarantee and the only sound guarantee of the continuity of power and of the revolutionary line. I sincerely believe that of the many political systems man has devised throughout his history, throughout his wanderings through history, it is simply the system of government based on administration of the state by a revolutionary and democratic party with collective leadership.

Why? Since individuals play a role, there is no doubt that individuals play a role in revolutions and an important role, but individuals are, after all, just individuals. And there is nothing more fragile than the life of an individual; even the conscience of individuals is fragile. But we have absolute faith in the firmness of our consciences; however, we know that an individual is the most fragile thing there is. He dies from a bullet, an accident, a stroke, a sickness, anything.

FIDEL CASTRO

THE IDIOT KINGS

Monarchies, which represented the social system of the empires of the feudal era and of the first national states, are characterized by the fact that a country can be ruled by an idiot. A son of a king is an idiot, and the country is condemned to having an idiot rule for forty years because unless he dies before, he can live for forty years and even more. And there are many cases in history of nations ruled by idiots.

Representative bourgeois democracy is characterized by politicking, bribery and corruption and it is a system in which only the ruling classes and the wealthy classes have access to power, aside from the accompanying anarchy of that system of government, as demonstrated by recent history, for example, in France, a country where the government changes ten times a year.

Besides the risks arising from the system—a system of one class ruling another—it also often happens that one man alone can deceive the masses; one man can confuse the masses. A big demagogue, a theatrical person, can under certain circumstances rise to a position of leadership in the state, far beyond his capacities and his merits.

The system of one-man government, the consequence of dictatorship, has two important drawbacks. First, if the dictator is bad, the people suffer the consequences. And secondly, there is the lack of continuity and security in the continuity of power and of revolutionary direction and program. Moreover, some individuals are weak and feeble when exposed to all kinds of risks; and this is in absolute contradiction to the sentiments of the revolutionaries, in absolute contradiction to the sentiments of men.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

THE IDEAL SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT IS THE PARTY SYSTEM

I, therefore, believe that the ideal system, the most perfect ever devised by men to govern a country, a system moreover that does not aspire to be eternal, but transitory, as temporary as are the stages in the history of a country, is the system of government based on a revolutionary party democratically organized through collective leadership. This meant the party must exercise the functions of a leader.

Why is it the best system? (*It is the best*) if democratic rules work if the rules of collective leadership work. If democratic rules do not work, if the rules of collective leadership do not work, the system can be as bad as any other system. But if the fundamental principles of internal democracy and collective leadership are maintained, it is without any doubt the most perfect method of government and, above all, of government of a country in a stage of revolutionary transitions.

What does this mean? In the first place, if that party is not a mass party, but a selective party, it will get the best citizens of the country, because of their character and their merits, to join revolutionary cells. For long years, they undergo a process of apprenticeship, of direct experience, of performance of duty.

Little by little, through merit, such a citizen can take on ever greater responsibilities. That citizen can become a member of the Regional or Central or National Leadership; he can become a leader through merit. This is not the case with the king who leaves the idiot son in power; it is not the case with the lucky military caudillo, the great soldier, because there are men with great talents as fighters and they

FIDEL CASTRO

acquire great fame and great prestige as warriors but are perfectly stupid as rulers.

It is not a question of being a demagogue or faker or a theatrical man. In a party where discipline, principles, selectivity, internal democracy, and collective leadership predominate, the fool cannot rise, nor can the idiot become chief of state nor can the lucky adventurer. That school will be a school where men will be tested by learning and training.

And so, the most important posts in the state will be filled by men who have ability and have risen through merit.

What citizen can get to be a leader of his country in this way, a member of the leadership of his country? Simply, all citizens through merit, all citizens through their own worth. Only those who have true political bent, who have a true spirit of sacrifice, will get ahead.

It is not the other kind of politics where positions depend upon money, upon connections, upon favoritism. Let's rid ourselves of connections, of favoritism; let's rid ourselves of all that, and we shall without a doubt have a system that guarantees that the people will be governed by the most competent, best equipped men. Put simply, collective leadership.

How can the most fundamental decisions of the country, all of the decisions vital to the life of a country be made by one man, by a single official? That is simply absurd. We have seen, as one can see every day, that in some issues he can be wrong.

Suppose the views of some leaders were not checked with those of other leaders, if one leader's evaluation of the facts were not checked with another leader's, were not

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

discussed and that decisions were simply adopted unilaterally and without discussion.

What does this expose the people to? It exposes them to being victimized by all the whims, all the mistakes and all the errors. It is far less likely that solutions which are discussed can be wrong, than solutions that are adopted without guidance and without discussion. I believe that very strongly, I believe in collective leadership, I believe in leadership by a vanguard political party.

And that is simply what we think and that is what every revolutionary has to think. The words of the Internationale are appropriate: "neither Caesar nor bourgeois nor God." As for the believer, well, he can leave out the other two and remain with God. But neither Caesar nor bourgeois nor, above all, Caesar. And to be truthful, we have had no ambitions to be Caesar.

If the people are interested in our personal experience, we can say that nothing really gives more satisfaction than discussion, than looking for the best solutions through discussion. Nor is there, greater satisfaction than when everyone shares responsibility, when the Party shares it, when the people share it. I strongly believe this, I have the right to speak from having gone through this revolutionary period, from having assumed grave responsibilities in the Revolution, from never having become vain because of it, never having felt I was infallible and admitting that I can make mistakes.

PEOPLE WRITE HISTORY

I believe that one of the most honest things any citizen, any revolutionary can do is to recognize not by words alone but sincerely that one can make mistakes; to say there are no

FIDEL CASTRO

Caesars; to say that no one is appointed by Providence; to say that one believes, strongly that it's the people who write history, and who make history.

What often happens is that they don't mention the people. They refer to the people by the name of a leader, and millions of men die anonymously, and all the glory, all the prestige often falls on one man, on one individual, on one leader so that one attributes the merits of the people to the leader. This is wrong because a revolution is not made with the intelligence nor through the efforts of one man alone; it is made with the intelligence of many people, with the blood and sacrifice of many, with the blood and sacrifice of thousands of comrades who won the fight against the tyranny, with the blood and sacrifice of hundreds of comrades who won the fight against counter-revolution; who defeated imperialism; with the unselfish efforts and the self-sacrifice of those who go to the mountains for training, who shut themselves up in schools separated from their families for long months, of workers who cultivate the fields for hours in the sun; of workers who cut cane, of fisherman who fish, of conductors who drive trains, trucks; of workers who manage factories; of workers who get up early in the morning to milk cows, to do some chore, or perform some service. These are the ones who make history, the fighters.

Who can credit himself with all the merit of millions of men who make up a society, who make up a people? Who can think that personal vanity and pride—however legitimate, it's still his pride only—are worth the effort and the sacrifice of millions? Whoever believes himself superior and so infallible as to feel this way is simply wrong.

ON MARXISM-LENINISM

THERE ARE MANY CAMILOS

I came here to tell the people what I believe, and I have defended it and contributed to removing all obstacles to it. Very seldom have we felt as we feel on this occasion that we have contributed something to the history of our country, to the progress of our country, and if all of us, if all the comrades with more responsibility in leadership; if we all respect these rules, if we all live by these principles, our country will enjoy a great future, our country will be spared the problems of provincialism, will be spared a thousand other problems. For one thing that nobody doubts is what was said about comrade Camilo at his death, that among the people "there are many Camilos." And nobody doubts it because Camilo worked for a tailor shop and left. Camilo would not have been Camilo without the Revolution, without a chance to fight. Give this young man the chance to fight and you will see that he is a Camilo, that he wins battles and displays courage.

THE PARTY MUST BE THE GREAT INSTRUMENT OF MERIT

"There are many like Camilo among the people," we said that time. But what is valid for a military leader is also valid for everything else; it is also valid for all other responsibilities. There are thousands and tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of worthy men, of competent men among the people. Give them the chance to educate themselves, to train themselves, to learn, to lead, to work! Give them the chance and just as you'll see magnificent athletes, magnificent military leaders, magnificent students coming from the people, so will magnificent leaders, magnificent cadres, magnificent administrators, magnificent orators, magnificent writers, magnificent ministers, magnificent

FIDEL CASTRO

political leaders also arise! Let us accustom ourselves, in accordance with the times and in accordance with our Revolution, to seeing in the people the great virtues, the great minds, the great merits, knowing that there are great reserves among them and that, therefore, they cannot fail! A man can fail because a man is one. A people cannot fail, because there are thousands, because there are hundreds of thousands of minds, hundreds of thousands of potential leaders.

Then, what must the Party of that revolutionary people do? That Party must be the great instrument of merit, the great instrument of revolutionary vocation, the great instrument of revolutionary intelligence; that Party must always be above individuals because the Party is going to embody, not the value of one mind, but the value of tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of minds; not the value of one heroism, but the value of the heroism of all; not the value of one spirit of sacrifice, but the value of the spirit of sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of citizens, of the fighting spirit, of love for the Revolution.

This is what the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution must be!

SOCIALISM OR DEATH

Speech given by Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Council of State and of the Council of Ministers, at the memorial ceremony held at El Cacahual on December 7, 1989, "Year 31 of the Revolution," for the Cuban internationalists who fell while carrying out honorable military and civilian missions.

Comrade President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos and Other
Guests,

Relatives of our Fallen Comrades,
Members of the Armed Services,
Fellow Countrymen:

December 7, the date on which Antonio Maceo, the most illustrious of all our soldiers, and his young aide-de-camp were killed, has always been very meaningful for all Cubans. Their remains lie here, in this sacred site of their homeland.

By choosing this day for laying to rest the remains of our heroic internationalist fighters who have died in different parts of the world—mainly in Africa, the land of birth of Maceo's ancestors and many of our forebears—we make it a day for honoring all Cubans who gave their lives while

FIDEL CASTRO

defending their country and all mankind. Thus, patriotism and internationalism—two of man's most treasured values—will be joined forever in Cuba's history.

Perhaps, someday, a monument will be erected not far from this site to honor them.

The remains of all internationalists who died while carrying out their missions are being laid to rest in their hometowns all over Cuba right now.

The imperialists thought we would conceal the number of our men killed in Angola during that complex, 14-year-long mission—as if it were a dishonor or a discredit for the Revolution. For a long time, they dreamed that the blood shed had been to no purpose, as if those who died for a just cause had died in vain. Even if victory were the ordinary yardstick to measure the value of men's sacrifices in their legitimate struggles, they also returned victorious.

The Spartans used to tell their fighters to return with their shields or on them. Our troops are returning with their shields.

Still, it is not my intention, on this solemn occasion, to boast of our achievements or to humiliate anyone—not even those who were our adversaries. Our country sought neither glory nor military prestige. We always applied the principle of achieving our goals with the lowest possible number of casualties. To do this, we had to be strong, unemotional, and always willing to do our utmost.

All of our soldiers knew that the whole country supported them and that all of us were concerned about their health and safety.

When political and diplomatic efforts became feasible for attaining the final goals, we did not hesitate to use political and diplomatic channels, and, while we always

SOCIALISM OR DEATH

employed the necessary firmness, at no time during the negotiation process were we arrogant, overbearing, or boastful. We were flexible whenever flexibility was advisable and fair.

The final stage of the war in Angola was the most difficult. It demanded all of our country's determination, tenacity and fighting spirit in support of our Angolan brothers.

In fulfilling this duty of solidarity, not only to Angola but also to our own troops fighting under difficult conditions there, the Revolution did not hesitate in risking everything. When the imperialist threats against our own country became very serious, we did not hesitate in sending a large part of our most modern and sophisticated military equipment to the Southern Front of the People's Republic of Angola. Over 50,000 Cuban troops were in that sister nation — a truly impressive figure, in view of the distance and our country's size and resources. It was a veritable feat by our Revolutionary Armed Forces and our people. Such chapters of altruism and international solidarity are very infrequent.

Therefore, we greatly appreciate the fact that Jose Eduardo Dos Santos is attending this ceremony. It was an entirely spontaneous gesture "I want to be with you on this occasion," he said. Also spontaneously, as soon as they learned of this ceremony, only a few days ago, the leaders of Ethiopia, SWAPO and other countries and revolutionary organizations stated that they wanted to send representatives to be here with us today when we laid to rest all of our internationalists who died in Africa and in other lands.

There are historic events that nothing and no one can obliterate. There are revolutionary examples that the best men and women of future generations, both within and

FIDEL CASTRO

outside our country, will always remember. This is one of them, yet we should not be the ones to judge it history will do so.

We will never forget that the soldiers of the Angolan Armed Forces were our comrades in arms. Tens of thousands of the best sons and daughters of that nation lost their lives in the struggle. Our unity and close cooperation made victory possible.

We also had the honor of fighting alongside the courageous sons and daughters of Namibia, the patriots of Guinea Bissau and the unmatched Ethiopian soldiers. Years earlier, in the difficult period immediately following Algeria's independence, our internationalist fighters were at her side—as, later, they helped defend Syria, another sister Arab nation that was a victim of foreign aggression and requested our cooperation.

Every legitimate African cause received our people's support. Che Guevara and a large group of Cuban revolutionaries fought against white mercenaries in the eastern part of what is now Zaire, and doctors and teachers are working in the Saharawi Republic now, helping its people, who are fighting for their freedom.

All of these countries were then or are now independent, and those that have not yet won their independence will do so, sooner, or later.

In just a few years, our fighters wrote an outstanding chapter of solidarity of which our people can be proud. Men from other countries also fought at our side in our own struggles for independence. Maximo Gomez, who was born in the Dominican Republic, was the most outstanding of all and due to his extraordinary merits, became the chief of our Liberation Army. In the years prior to our Revolution, a

SOCIALISM OR DEATH

thousand Cubans organized by the first Communist Party fought in Spain to defend the Republic. They wrote memorable chapters of heroism which Pablo de la Torriente Brau recorded for history until death put an early end to the life of that brilliant revolutionary journalist.

That was how our gallant internationalist spirit was forged. It reached its zenith with the Socialist Revolution. Wherever Cuban internationalists have gone, they have set examples of respect for the dignity and sovereignty of those countries. The trust that those peoples have placed in them is the result of their irreproachable behavior. Their exemplary selflessness and altruism is remembered everywhere.

A prominent African statesman once said in a meeting of leaders of the region: "Cuban fighters are ready to give their lives for the liberation of our countries. The only things they will take back with them, in exchange for that assistance to our freedom and our peoples' progress are the bodies of those who died fighting for freedom." That continent, which experienced centuries of exploitation and plunder, has recognized the full extent of the unselfish nature of our internationalist contribution.

Now, our battle-seasoned troops are returning victoriously. The joyful, happy, proud faces of mothers, wives, brothers, sisters, sons, and daughters—of all our people—welcome them with affection and love. Peace has been achieved with honor, and their sacrifices and efforts have been amply rewarded. Our sleep is no longer disturbed by constant concern over the fate of our troops fighting thousands of kilometers away from their land.

The enemy thought that our troops' return would cause social problems, since it would be impossible to provide jobs for them all. Most of those men—aside from those who

FIDEL CASTRO

have made the military career—had jobs here in Cuba and will go back to their old jobs or be given better ones. None of them has been forgotten. Many of them already knew where they would be working even before returning home.

Of all the young men in military service who shortly after being graduated from high school, volunteered for the honor of going to Angola on an internationalist mission, none have had to wait before going back to school or joining the ranks of our working people.

Our country is working hard, implementing ambitious socioeconomic development programs. The irrational laws of capitalism do not guide our actions, and every man and woman in our country has a place in education, production, or services.

No close relatives of those who died while fulfilling their missions or who suffered serious injuries have been forgotten. They have received, are receiving and will continue to receive all the care and consideration due them for the sacrifices made by their loved ones and for their own devoted, selfless, generous, even heroic behavior.

The hundreds of thousands of Cubans who carried out military or civilian internationalist missions have earned the respect of present and future generations. They have honorably upheld our people's glorious fighting and internationalist traditions.

On their return, they have found their country engaged in a tremendous struggle for development while continuing to confront the criminal imperialist blockade with exemplary dignity. This is in addition to the current crisis in the socialist camp, from which we can only expect negative economic consequences for our country.

SOCIALISM OR DEATH

People in most of those countries aren't talking about the anti-imperialist struggle or the principles of internationalism. Those words aren't even mentioned in their press. Such concepts have been virtually removed from their political dictionaries. Meanwhile, capitalist values are gaining unheard-of strength in those societies.

Capitalism means unequal terms of trade with the peoples of the Third World, the exacerbation of individual selfishness and national chauvinism, the reign of irrationality and chaos in investment and production, the ruthless sacrifice of the peoples on behalf of blind economic laws, the survival of the fittest, the exploitation of man by man, a situation of everybody for himself. In the social sphere, capitalism implies many more things: prostitution; drugs; gambling; begging; unemployment; abysmal inequalities among citizens; the depletion of natural resources; the poisoning of the air, seas, rivers, and forests; and especially the plundering of the underdeveloped nations by the industrialized capitalist countries. In the past, it meant colonialism; now, it means neo-colonizing billions of human beings, using the most sophisticated—and cheapest, most effective, and most ruthless—economic and political methods.

Capitalism, its market economy, its values, its categories, and its methods can never pull socialism out of its present difficulties or rectify whatever mistakes have been made. Most of those difficulties are the result not just of errors but also of the tight blockade and isolation imposed on the socialist countries by imperialism and the major capitalist powers, which have monopolized most of the world's wealth and the most advanced technologies by plundering their colonies, exploiting the working class, and

FIDEL CASTRO

promoting a large-scale brain drain from countries that had not yet developed.

Devastating wars were unleashed against the first socialist state, taking a toll of millions of lives, and destroying most of the means of production. Like a phoenix, the first socialist state had to rise more than once from its ashes. It has performed great services to mankind by defeating fascism and decisively supporting the liberation movements in countries still under colonial rule. Now, all this is being forgotten.

It's disgusting to see how many people, even in the USSR itself, are engaged in denying and destroying the history-making feats and extraordinary merits of that heroic people. That is not the way to rectify and overcome the undeniable errors made by a revolution that emerged from Tsarist authoritarianism in an enormous, backward, poor country. We shouldn't blame Lenin now for having chosen Tsarist Russia as the place for the biggest revolution in history.

Thus, we didn't hesitate to stop the circulation of certain Soviet publications that are full of poison against the USSR itself and socialism. You can see that imperialism, reactionary forces, and the counterrevolution are behind them. Some of those publications have already started calling for an end to the fair and equitable trade relations that were established between the USSR and Cuba during the Cuban revolutionary process. In one word: they want the USSR to begin practicing unequal trade with Cuba by selling its products to us at ever higher prices and buying our agricultural produce and raw materials at ever lower prices, just as the United States does with other Third World countries—

SOCIALISM OR DEATH

in short, they want the USSR to join the US blockade against Cuba.

Imperialism's undermining actions and the systematic destruction of the values of socialism, combined with the mistakes that have been made, have accelerated the destabilizing process in the Eastern European socialist countries. The United States designed and implemented a long-term policy of treating each country differently and undermining socialism from within.

Imperialism and capitalist powers cannot hide their glee over the way things are turning out. They are convinced—not without reason—that, at this point, the socialist bloc has virtually ceased to exist. Groups of US citizens, including US presidential advisers, are programming capitalist development in some of those Eastern European countries right now. A recent news dispatch reported that they were fascinated by that "exciting experience." One of them, a US government official, favored the application in Poland of a program similar to the New Deal, with which Roosevelt tried to alleviate capitalism's severe crisis. This would be to help the 600,000 Polish workers who will lose their jobs in 1990 and half of the country's 17.8 million workers, who will have to be retrained and change jobs as a result of the implementation of a market economy.

Imperialism and the NATO capitalist powers are persuaded not without reason—that, at this point, the Warsaw Pact no longer exists and is but a fiction, and that societies which are corroded and undermined from within will not be able to resist.

It has been stated that socialism must be improved. No one can deny this principle, which is inherent and permanently applicable to every human endeavor. But can

FIDEL CASTRO

socialism be improved by forsaking Marxism-Leninism's most basic principles? Why must the so-called reforms be along capitalist lines? If those ideas are truly revolutionary, as some claim, why do they receive the imperialist leaders' unanimous, enthusiastic support?

In an amazing statement, the President of the United States described himself as the number-one advocate of the doctrines currently being applied in many countries in the socialist camp.

History has never recorded an instance of a truly revolutionary idea receiving the enthusiastic support of the leader of the most powerful, aggressive, and greedy empire known to mankind.

During Comrade Gorbachev's visit to Cuba in April this year—a visit during which we had a frank, in-depth exchange of views—I publicly expressed my opinion to the National Assembly that, if any socialist country wants to build capitalism, its right to do so should be respected, just as we demand complete respect for any capitalist country's right to build socialism.

I believe that revolution cannot be imported or exported; a socialist state cannot be founded through artificial insemination or by means of an embryo transplant. A revolution requires certain conditions within society, and the people in each individual nation are the only ones who can create it. These ideas don't run counter to the solidarity that all revolutionaries can and should extend to one another. Moreover, a revolution is a process that may advance or regress, a process that may even be frustrated. But, above all, Communists must be courageous and revolutionary. Communists are dutybound to struggle under all circumstances, no matter how adverse they may be. The Paris

SOCIALISM OR DEATH

Communards struggled and died in the defense of their ideas. The banners of revolution and of socialism are not surrendered without a fight. Only cowards and the demoralized surrender—never Communists and other revolutionaries.

Now, imperialism is urging the European socialist countries to become recipients of its surplus capital, to develop capitalism, and to join in plundering the Third World countries.

It is a well-known fact that a large part of the developed capitalist world's wealth comes from the unequal terms of trade it maintains with the Third World countries. For centuries, those nations were plundered as colonies. Millions of their sons and daughters were enslaved; their gold, silver and other mineral resources were exhausted; they were pitilessly exploited; and underdevelopment was imposed on them. Underdevelopment was the most direct and clearest consequence of colonialism. Now, those nations are being squeezed dry by means of interest payments on an endless, unpayable debt, while ridiculously low prices are paid for their commodities, and they are forced to pay ever higher prices for the industrial goods they import. Financial and human resources are constantly being drawn away from those nations through the flight of capital and the brain drain. Their trade is blocked by dumping, high tariffs, import quotas, synthetic substitutes produced through advanced technological processes, and subsidies for the developed capitalist countries' products when they aren't competitive.

Now, imperialism is inviting the European socialist countries to join it in this colossal plunder—an invitation which seems not to displease the theoreticians of capitalist

reforms. Thus, in many of those countries, no one speaks about the tragedy of the Third World, and their discontented multitudes are guided toward capitalism and anti-communism—and, in one country, toward Pan-Germanism. Such developments may even lead to fascist trends. The prize promised by imperialism is a share of the plunder wrested from our peoples, the only way of building capitalist consumer societies.

Right now, the United States and the other capitalist powers are much more interested in investing in Eastern Europe than in any other part of the world. What resources can the Third World—in which billions of people live in sub-human conditions—expect from such developments?

They speak to us of peace, but what kind of peace? Of peace between the major powers, while imperialism reserves the right to intervene in and attack the Third World countries. There are many examples of this.

The imperialist government of the United States demands that no one help the Salvadoran revolutionaries and tries to blackmail the USSR into ending its economic and military assistance to Nicaragua and Cuba because we express solidarity with the Salvadoran revolutionaries, even though we abide strictly by our commitments concerning the weapons supplied by the USSR, in accord with the agreements signed between our sovereign nations. Meanwhile, that same imperialist government which is demanding an end to solidarity with the Salvadoran revolutionaries is helping the genocidal Salvadoran government and sending special combat units to El Salvador; supporting the counter-revolution in Nicaragua; organizing coups d'état and the assassination of leaders in Panama; sending military aid to UNITA in Angola—in spite of the successful peace

SOCIALISM OR DEATH

agreements in south western Africa—and continuing to supply the rebel forces in Afghanistan with large amounts of weapons, ignoring the Geneva Accords and the fact that the Soviet troops have withdrawn.

Only a few days ago, US Air Force planes insolently intervened in the internal conflict in the Philippines. Regardless of whether or not the rebel forces had good cause for their action—which it is not our place to judge — the US intervention in that country is a very serious matter and is an accurate reflection of the current world situation, showing that the United States has taken upon itself the role of gendarme, not only in Latin America—a region it has always considered as its backyard but also in any other Third World country.

The consecration of the principle of universal intervention by a major power spells an end to independence and sovereignty in the world. What kind of peace and security can our peoples have other than that which we ourselves achieve through our own heroism?

The elimination of nuclear weapons is an excellent idea. If it were more than simply utopian and could be achieved some day, it would be of unquestionable benefit and would increase world security—but only for a part of mankind. It would not bring peace, security or hope to the Third World countries. Imperialism doesn't need nuclear weapons to attack our people. Its powerful fleets, which are stationed all over the world; its military bases everywhere; and its ever more sophisticated and lethal conventional weapons are enough to ensure its role as the world's master and gendarme. Moreover, 40,000 children who could be saved die every day in our world because of underdevelopment and poverty. As I've said before—and this is worth

FIDEL CASTRO

repeating—it's as if a bomb similar to the ones dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were dropped every three days on the poor children in the world. If these developments continue on their present course and the United States isn't forced to renounce these concepts, what new way of thinking can we speak of? Following this course, the bipolar world which emerged in the postwar period will inexorably become a unipolar world under US hegemony.

In Cuba, we are engaged in a process of rectification. No revolution or truly socialist rectification is possible without a strong, disciplined, respected Party. Such a process cannot be advanced by slandering socialism, destroying its values, casting slurs on the Party, demoralizing its vanguard, abandoning the Party's guiding role, eliminating social discipline, and sowing chaos and anarchy everywhere. This may foster a counter-revolution, but not revolutionary changes.

The US imperialists think that Cuba won't be able to hold out and that the new situation in the socialist community will inexorably help them to bring our Revolution to its knees.

Cuba is not a country in which socialism came in the wake of the victorious divisions of the Red Army. In Cuba, our people created our socialist society in the course of a legitimate, heroic struggle. The 30 years in which we have stood firm against the most powerful empire on earth, that sought to destroy our Revolution, bear witness to our political and moral strength.

Those of us in our country's leadership aren't a bunch of bumbling parvenus, new to our positions of responsibility. We come from the ranks of the old anti-imperialist fighters who followed Melia and Guiteras; who attacked the

SOCIALISM OR DEATH

Moncada and came on the Granma; who fought in the Sierra Maestra, in the underground struggle and at the Bay of Pigs; who were unshaken by the October Missile Crisis; who have stood firm against imperialist aggression for 30 years; who have performed great labor feats and have carried out glorious internationalist missions. Men and women from three generations of Cubans are members and hold posts of responsibility in our battle-seasoned Party, our marvelous vanguard young people's organization, our powerful mass organizations, our glorious Revolutionary Armed Forces, and our Ministry of the Interior.

In Cuba, the Revolution, socialism, and national independence are indissolubly linked.

We owe everything we are today to the Revolution and socialism. If Cuba were ever to return to capitalism, our independence and sovereignty would be lost forever; we would be an extension of Miami, a mere appendage of US imperialism; and the repugnant prediction that a US president made in the 19th century—when that country was considering the annexation of Cuba—that our island would fall into its hands like a ripe fruit, would prove true. Our people are and will always be willing to give their lives to prevent this. Here, at Maceo's tomb, we recall his immortal phrase: "Whoever tries to take power over Cuba will get only the dust of its soil, drenched in blood, if he does not perish in the struggle."

We Cuban Communists and the millions of our people's revolutionary soldiers will carry out the role assigned to us in history, not only as the first socialist state in the western hemisphere but also as staunch front-line defenders of the noble cause of all the destitute, exploited people in the world.

FIDEL CASTRO

We have never aspired to having custody of the banners and principles which the revolutionary movement has defended throughout its heroic and inspiring history. However, if fate were to decree that, one day, we would be among the last defenders of socialism in a world in which US imperialism had realized Hitler's dreams of world domination, we would defend this bulwark to the last drop of our blood.

These men and women whom we are honorably laying to rest today in the land of their birth gave their lives for the most treasured values of our history and our Revolution.

They died fighting against colonialism and neo-colonialism.

They died fighting against racism and apartheid.

They died fighting against the plunder and exploitation to which the Third World peoples are subjected.

They died fighting for the independence and sovereignty of those peoples.

They died fighting for the right of all peoples in the world to well-being and development.

They died fighting so there would be no hunger or begging; so that all sick people would have doctors, all children would have schools, and all human beings would have jobs, shelter, and food.

They died so there would be no oppressors or oppressed, no exploiters or exploited.

They died fighting for the dignity and freedom of all men and women.

They died fighting for true peace and security for all nations.

They died defending the ideals of Cespedes and Maximo Gomez.

SOCIALISM OR DEATH

They died defending the ideals of Martí and Maceo.

They died defending the ideals of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

They died defending the ideals of the October Revolution and the example it set throughout the world.

They died for socialism.

They died for internationalism.

They died for the proud, revolutionary homeland that is today's Cuba.

We will follow their example!

Eternal glory to them!

Socialism or death!

Homeland or Death!

We Shall Overcome!



THE PARTY OF COMMUNISTS USA

The Party of Communists USA (PCUSA) traces its roots to the dropped clubs from the revisionist Communist Party USA (CPUSA). The PCUSA is the political party of the working class and is dedicated to the interests of all working people, and all oppressed peoples. Its aim is a socialist society, on the road to building communism.

The PCUSA is dedicated to upholding of Marxism-Leninism, scientific socialism, proletarian internationalism, and socialism-communism. Our focus is on class struggle, workers' rights, and creating the conditions for a socialist revolution. The PCUSA follows the model created by Comrade Lenin of the *Party of a New Type*, adhering to the principles of Democratic Centralism.





LEAGUE OF YOUNG COMMUNISTS USA

The League of Young Communists USA (LYCUSA) is the communist youth organization of the PCUSA. The League is politically united with the PCUSA, and yet is organizationally autonomous with our own constitution, membership, and publications. We call for a stronger, more active, and more united youth and student movement.

The purpose of our communist youth organization is to prepare young cadre to become full members of the PCUSA. The LYCUSA's main task is to give our members the most learning and experience possible. However, the LYCUSA is specifically tasked with creating a generation of Marxist-Leninists, dedicated to internationalism, scientific socialism, and the class struggle to build socialism into communism.





PEOPLE'S SCHOOL FOR MARXIST-LENINIST STUDIES

Tuesdays & Thursdays / 8:00 – 9:40 PM EST

The sole goal of the People's School for Marxist-Leninist Studies (PSMLS) is to educate the working class to prepare to build socialism in the United States.

The PSMLS is the current manifestation in the long line of Party-sponsored schools in the US. Today, the People's School continues the task of ideologically educating workers, including those who are unemployed, oppressed peoples, women, and youth in the science of Marxism-Leninism and its application in various struggles.





US FRIENDS OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE

US Friends of the Soviet People is dedicated to supporting struggles to restore socialism in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. USFSP is the US affiliate of the International Council for Friendship and Solidarity with the Soviet People.

USFSP acts as a unifying force to help consolidate and coordinate the anti-imperialist forces of the world with the ongoing movement to restore the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as socialist states. The people of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe themselves will choose their paths toward socialism.



