

[Remarks by Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz at the Second National Assembly of the People of Cuba held at the Revolution Square on February 4, 1962](#) **[1]**

Date:

04/02/1962

Comrades of the Second National General Assembly of the People:

This General Assembly is meeting for the second time today, as the sovereign organ of the Cuban people's will and it is meeting to give a full response to the maneuver, the conspiracy, the plot of our enemies in Punta del Este.

The eyes of the whole world are on our people today; the peoples of all continents are waiting for this response from our homeland. The messages that have been read this afternoon show how much interest, how much attention, how much solidarity today's act has awakened.

Of course, our people knew perfectly well what the Yankee imperialists were up to. Our peoples are perfectly well informed of their intentions. Our people, who have been under incessant harassment by Yankee imperialism for three years, knew what they went to Punta del Este for; they knew that this conference had no other purpose than to promote new aggressions and new plots against our country. And, of course, imperialism has already taken new aggressive steps. As our President explained when he spoke this afternoon, the imperialists have already agreed to one more embargo, another one!, on our trade relations.

There still remained trade, mainly in tobacco and fruit, with the United States, amounting to several million dollars. When the Yankee delegation proposed in Punta del Este economic and political sanctions, cessation of trade and cessation of diplomatic relations with the governments that still have relations with us, those that have not yet given in, those that have resisted the pressures of imperialism, so they would break with us. The United States, already in full crisis, was not able to do so even though it achieved part of its goal and we must carefully analyze and consider the agreements reached there and the purposes of those agreements. However, it did not obtain everything it wanted, even when it managed to get condemnatory declarations against Cuba, as a result of the enormous pressures exerted on all the foreign ministers.

Its demand was so shameless, so irrational, so unjustified, so depressing, so demoralizing for the governments represented there, that some of them resisted accepting the full extent of the Yankee demands. And because of their resistance and their unwillingness to break relations simply because Washington ordered it; and because in the end those governors would either have to comply with agreements they did not consider just, or to flout those agreements, the United States, it seems, did not think it prudent to take things so far in this meeting as to impose with its mechanical majority of 14 puppets an agreement that could be flouted by the minority which, despite being a minority, represents 70% of the population of Latin America.

The United States, I say, could not impose the agreement on the cessation of trade relations. What it was trying to do, on the return of its delegation, was to carry out this new embargo on U.S. trade with Cuba. It failed to reach an agreement. And as further proof that the United States does not give care

about the OAS and the OAS is nothing more than a ministry of U.S. colonies, a military bloc against the peoples of Latin America, when the delegation returned from Punta del Este, the first thing they did was to announce this new measure and absolutely prohibit all purchases of products from Cuba, that is, the purchase of tobacco, the purchase of our fruits and of those products that amounted to some considerable sums.

It is clear that since imperialism could not but be cynical, since Mr. Kennedy could not but be shameless (EXCLAMATIONS AND WHISTLES): as he has been since he took office, since he rejected any possibility of pursuing a peaceful policy with our people, since he organized his criminal and cowardly invasion of our coasts and all the events that have cost the blood and lives of the children of our people; he could not but accompany his latest felony with hypocrisy. The most unprecedented hypocrisy is the hallmark that accompanies all acts of imperialism.

What did he do? He prohibited all purchases of products from Cuba, that is, to deprive us of more than 20 million dollars and, together with that measure, to declare that they, the "good", the "noble", the "eternally humanitarian," did not prohibit us from buying from them, from buying food and medicines from them. That is to say that while they take away our trade dollars, the few that remained with the United States after they took away our quota of hundreds of millions of dollars, they say that, on the other hand, they do not prohibit us from selling to them. That is to say that they take away our resources to buy, they take away the dollars destined precisely for raw materials, machinery, food, medicines and while on the one hand they announce this criminal, unilateral and shameful measure -one more against our people-, they declare that, on the other hand, they would be willing to sell merchandise and foodstuffs.

It would be good to ask them -since they are so "good"- why they do not sell them on credit, too. Since they are willing to sell medicines and food, why don't they sell them on credit? Because they take away our dollars for expenditures, and then they say that, on the other hand, that they do not prohibit sales. But that is the eternal seal of hypocrisy that accompanies the United States, in order to cause our people to stumble, to endure hardships, shortages, queues and difficulties of all kinds, in order to subdue our people through all the sacrifices, through the imposition of all the sacrifices, of all the tripping, of all the traps, of all the artful and cowardly attacks against our homeland.

Of course, Cuba would not be where it is today, nor would our homeland occupy the place it does today in the minds of the other peoples of the world, if behind the homeland, if behind the sovereign flag of the homeland, if this people were not behind the Revolution, if this people were not behind the Revolution (APPLAUSE). And our Revolution would not have become what it is today, and Cuba would not be the standard bearer of the freedom of America, if behind this historical fact of the Revolution there were not a people worthy of the place of honor it occupies today in the hearts of the 200 million brothers and sisters of Latin America (APPLAUSE). If behind the sovereign homeland, if behind the sovereign homeland, if behind the free flag, if behind the redeeming Revolution there were not a firm and heroic people like this one, the homeland would neither be free nor the flag would be sovereign, nor would the Revolution march forward with the unwavering firmness with which it marches.

The word of Cuba is backed by an entire people. The word of the Cuban representation, where it spoke for the peoples and for history, was backed by an entire people. That is why our word is worthwhile, that is why it is worthwhile in the eyes of the world, which is why it is worthwhile in the eyes of history! Because those who spoke their lies against our homeland there, did nothing more than repeat the criminal slogans of their masters. Behind the empty words of the objectors of the Cuban homeland, there was no people; behind them were the murderers of workers and students, of peasants; behind them were the most corrupt, the worst of our sister nations. Not the people, but the absence of people, the emptiness of people! How long will they have the shamelessness and cynicism to speak of democracy? How long will they be using, to the point of wearing out, that poor little word, that unhappy word of "representative democracy"? It is representative only of the will of imperialism, representative only of exploitation, representative only of betrayal; democracy which is the democracy of the absence of the people. Because all those governments that voted against Cuba, summon the people, and the

14 do not gather as many people as the Cuban Revolution gathers here (APPLAUSE).

If that is democracy, what is this? If democracy is that where there is exploitation of man, if that where men are discriminated against because of their race, if that where the poor are miserably exploited and mistreated, then what is this? If democracy means people, if democracy means government of the people, then what is this? If democracy is the expression of the will of the people, the only thing that can be said is that the country, the people and the most democratic regime in America is this regime that can gather the people in a gigantic square like this one (APPLAUSE), that can gather hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of thousands, that can gather a million, that can gather who knows how many, because more and more, more and more people are gathering, and already the multitude reaches the very slopes of the Castillo del Príncipe (APPLAUSE).

It is this people, whose presence demonstrates their dignity and their stance, the one the imperialists want to subjugate, it is the people that the imperialists want to divide and disintegrate, it is the people that the imperialists want to crush so that the sovereign will of the people would never again rule, so that the multitudes would never again congregate as they do here, and so that the destiny and wealth of the homeland would be squandered, and the course of its history diverted by the will of the cliques that meet in the shadows, behind the backs of the peoples; so that never again would gigantic multitudes be seen in the streets of the homeland and in the squares of the homeland, proudly raising their flags and proclaiming their beautiful slogans to the world.

It is to the people that the imperialists want to put the boot on, to oppress us, to outrage us, to shatter our national dignity, as they have shattered the dignity of many brother peoples of this continent. It is this people, rebellious and heroic, that they want to crush. And that is their mistake, which is their great mistake, which is the cause of their failure; because imperialism will never crush the Cuban Revolution (APPLAUSE), imperialism will never defeat the Cuban Revolution (APPLAUSE).

If the henchmen of the United States, if the taskmasters and foremen of the United States and the counterrevolutionaries who accompany them (EXCLAMATIONS AND WHISTLES) could see for no more than a minute what our eyes and the eyes of the visitors that accompany us are seeing today, perhaps, perhaps if they would realize, perhaps if they could even appreciate the outlines of their size and the enormous error of the impossible that they pretend, perhaps they would realize how weak and powerless they are. Perhaps if they would reflect, because up to now they have done nothing but err and persist in error; up to now, with their aggressions, they have done nothing but strengthen Cuba.

And our people, in the face of these aggressions, must redouble their spirit of work, must redouble the strength of their revolutionary conscience.

What should we do in the face of those who want to surrender our homeland by dint of deprivation, by dint of aggressions and blockades? What should we do? Well, it is quite simply, we must work harder, we must take more interest in everything, we must triple the care and attention we put in production, in the factories, in the cooperatives, in the farms, in the fields, everywhere (APPLAUSE); to triple the effort to extract the maximum of our wealth with what we have, to extract all that we need, to resist the blockade in these months, and perhaps in long years of struggle and sacrifices that imperialism imposes on us; to use all the resources we have to produce, to resist and, at the same time, to better distribute what we have, to better distribute what we produce.

Therefore, it is the duty of the Revolutionary Government to study all the necessary measures so that our people can properly distribute what they have, so that what we have under the blockade reaches everyone, so that we all share unselfishly what we have (APPLAUSE).

It does not matter that cars will not come here for many years; it does not even matter that many luxury items will not come to Cuba for many years; it does not matter if that is the price of freedom; it does not matter if that is the price of dignity; it does not matter if that is the price our homeland demands of us! (APPLAUSE).

After all, the people never had luxuries; after all, the people never had anything but exploitation, humiliation, discrimination, servitude, unemployment and hunger; after all, the luxuries were for the minorities, for the people were the sacrifices.

And what does imperialism achieve? What will it achieve, if the people are deprived for a few years of those things of which they have always been deprived? But the people, who have today what they never had, who have equality, who have dignity, who have justice, who are the owners of their country, who are the owners of their factories and their wealth, who are the owners of their destiny, who are free; the people, the true people, the people who have always suffered, these people gladly exchange what they never had for what they will have tomorrow, for everything they will have forever (APPLAUSE).

We will resist in all fields: we will resist in the field of economy; we will continue to advance in the field of culture. There, behind the gigantic crowd, another crowd can be seen, whose clothes are of a different color, of a uniform color: they are the 50,000 scholarship holders who are studying (APPLAUSE), who are studying in our capital; they are the promising tomorrow of the homeland, they are the future engineers of our future factories, the technicians, those who will raise the productivity of our people's work to the highest levels; they are the future, they are the promise, they are the future, they are the world of tomorrow that the homeland is forging, because the homeland does not work for today, the mother and works for tomorrow. And no one will be able to take that tomorrow full of promise away from us, no one will be able to prevent it, because with the fortitude of our people we are going to conquer it, with the courage and heroism of our people we are going to conquer it.

And we will continue strengthening ourselves not only in the field of economy and culture, resisting, but we will continue resisting where it hurts the imperialists even more; we will continue strengthening our combat forces, our revolutionary armed units (APPLAUSE). We will continue to increase the defensive capacity of the homeland, we will continue to harden ourselves more and more every day, so that if the imperialists, deaf and blind, launch themselves again, they will receive an even greater beating than the one they received at Playa Girón! (PROLONGED APPLAUSE), come their mercenaries, or come their puppets, or come them. Because, is anybody here afraid of imperialism? (EXCLAMATIONS OF: "No!") Who is afraid of imperialism? (EXCLAMATIONS OF: "Nobody!") And when we think of the threats and maneuvers of the imperialists, what do we do? (EXCLAMATIONS OF: "We laugh at them!") We laugh at the imperialists! We laugh at their desperation because we are very sorry, but we are not afraid of them; we are very sorry, but we are not afraid of those thugs of imperialism, we are not afraid of those criminals of imperialism, because we know -and if they do not know, let them know- that if they invade our country, while there is still a rifle here, while there is still a man or woman here, we are going to be fighting against them! (PROLONGED APPLAUSE AND EXCLAMATIONS OF: "We shall overcome!")

Furthermore, we are not going to be alone. First of all, our Latin American brothers will be with us (APPLAUSE); the peoples who so gallantly, so courageously, fought in the streets of many oppressed nations, who so worthily, and en masse, supported the Revolution while the Punta del Este conference was taking place; the peoples who sent their best representatives to Cuba and to Punta del Este to speak on behalf of the peoples, not of the oligarchies. And we are going to have the solidarity of all the liberated peoples of the world with us, and we are going to have the solidarity of all the worthy men and women of the world with us (APPLAUSE).

Therefore, standing firm, without hesitation, we are ready to resist whatever comes! (APPLAUSE). We are ready to face whatever comes! (APPLAUSE). Without losing sleep, but let the imperialists also prepare themselves to wait, in that case, for whatever comes! (APPLAUSE)

And it is good that the imperialists get used to the idea that what is so terrible, that what they fear so much, that what makes them lose sleep, which is called the revolution of the peoples exploited by imperialism, will also come inexorably, by the law of history! (APPLAUSE).

Let us go, then, to the most important thing this afternoon, which is the Second Declaration of Havana (APPLAUSE), our message to the peoples of America and the world, the word of our people in this historic minute, backed by this people, backed by their presence, in such a way that no word, no message, has ever been backed in America.

There are many Latin Americans visiting our country or participating in the Peoples' Conference in Havana with us (APPLAUSE), but they should not be just spectators. We propose to the National General Assembly of the People that the Latin Americans should not be spectators, but should also have the right to vote together with the people of Cuba on the Havana Declaration (PROLONGED APPLAUSE AND EXCLAMATIONS OF: "Fidel, Fidel!").

Someday they will also be able to gather their peoples, as we do today, and they will also be able to express their thoughts as freely as we do today.

Let the people pay attention to every word, every sentence of this document, of this Second Declaration, which we propose, on behalf of the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations and the Revolutionary Government, to the people of Cuba:

FROM THE PEOPLE OF CUBA TO THE PEOPLES

OF THE AMERICAS and OF THE WORLD

On the eve of his death, in an unfinished letter because a Spanish bullet pierced his heart, on May 18, 1895 José Martí, Apostle of our independence (APPLAUSE), wrote to his friend Manuel Mercado: "I can now write... I am in daily danger of giving my life for my country, and for my duty, to prevent, with the timely independence of Cuba, the United States from spreading through the Antilles and falling, with this additional force, on our lands of America. What I have done so far, and will do, is for that.... The same minor and public obligations of the peoples, more vitally interested in preventing Cuba from opening, by the annexation of the imperialists, the road that will be blocked, and we are blocking with our blood, of the annexation of the peoples of our America to the turbulent and brutal North that despises them, prevented them from adhering and helping this sacrifice that is made for their immediate benefit. I lived in the monster and I know its entrails; and my sling is that of David's."

Martí already pointed out, in 1895, the danger that loomed over America and called imperialism by its name: imperialism. He warned the peoples of America to be more interested than anyone else in Cuba not succumbing to the greed of the United States, who despises the Latin American peoples. And with his own blood, shed for Cuba and for America, he signed the posthumous words that, in homage to his memory, the people of Cuba subscribe today at the head of this Declaration.

Sixty-seven years have passed. Puerto Rico was turned into a colony and is still a colony saturated with military bases. Cuba also fell into the clutches of imperialism. Its troops occupied our territory. The Platt Amendment was imposed on our first Constitution, as a humiliating clause enshrining the hateful right of foreign intervention. Our riches passed into their hands, our history falsified, our administration and our politics entirely molded to the interests of the interveners; the nation subjected to 60 years of political, economic and cultural asphyxiation.

But Cuba rose up, Cuba was able to redeem itself from the bastard tutelage. Cuba broke the chains that tied its fate to the oppressive empire, rescued its wealth, reclaimed its culture, and unfurled its sovereign flag as a territory and free people of America (APPLAUSE).

The United States will never be able to fall upon America with the force of Cuba, but on the other hand, by dominating the majority of the States of Latin America, the United States intends to fall upon Cuba with the force of America.

What is the history of Cuba if not the history of Latin America? And what is the history of Latin America if

not the history of Asia, Africa and Oceania? And what is the history of all these peoples if not the history of the most ruthless and cruel exploitation of imperialism in the whole world?

At the end of the last century and the beginning of the present, a handful of economically developed nations had divided up the world, subjecting two thirds of humanity to their economic and political domination, which, in this way, was forced to work for the ruling classes of the group of countries with developed capitalist economies.

The historical circumstances that allowed certain European countries and the United States of America a high level of industrial development placed them in a position to subject the rest of the world to their domination and exploitation.

What were the motives behind this expansion of the industrialized powers? Were they moral, "civilizing" reasons, as they claimed? They weren't, they were economic reasons.

Since the discovery of America, which launched the European conquerors across the seas to occupy and exploit the lands and inhabitants of other continents, the lust for wealth was the fundamental motive for their conduct. The discovery of America itself was made in search of shorter routes to the Orient, whose goods were highly paid for in Europe.

A new social class, merchants and producers of manufactured goods for trade, emerged from the heart of the feudal society of lords and serfs in the late Middle Ages.

The thirst for gold was the driving force behind the efforts of this new class. The thirst for profit was the incentive for their behavior throughout their history. Their social influence grew with the development of manufacturing industry and commerce. The new productive forces that developed within feudal society clashed more and more with the servile relations of feudalism, its laws, its institutions, its philosophy, its morals, its art and its political ideology.

New philosophical and political ideas, new concepts of law and the state were proclaimed by the intellectual representatives of the bourgeois class, which, responding to the new needs of social life gradually became the conscience of the exploited masses. They were revolutionary ideas as opposed to the outdated ideas of feudal society. The peasants, artisans and manufacturing workers, led by the bourgeoisie, overthrew the feudal order, its philosophy, its ideas, its institutions, its laws and the privileges of the ruling class, that is, the hereditary nobility.

Then the bourgeoisie considered the revolution just and necessary. It did not think that the feudal order could and should be eternal, as it now thinks of its capitalist social order. It encouraged the peasants to free themselves from feudal serfdom; it encouraged the artisans against guild relations, and claimed the right to political power. The absolute monarchs, the nobility and the high clergy tenaciously defended their class privileges, proclaiming the divine right of the crown and the intangibility of the social order. To be liberal, to proclaim the ideas of Voltaire, Diderot or Jean-Jacques Rousseau, spokesmen of bourgeois philosophy, was then considered a serious crime for the ruling classes as it is for the bourgeoisie today to be socialist and proclaim the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin (APPLAUSE).

When the bourgeoisie conquered political power and established its capitalist mode of production on the ruins of feudal society, it erected its State, its laws, its ideas and institutions on that mode of production.

These institutions enshrined, in the first place, private property, the essence of its class domination. The new society, based on private ownership of the means of production and free competition, was thus divided into two fundamental classes: one, possessing the means of production, increasingly modern and efficient; the other, devoid of all wealth, possessing only its labor force, forced to sell it on the market as just another commodity in order to survive.

The shackles of feudalism were broken, the productive forces developed extraordinarily. Large factories

arose, where an ever-increasing number of workers accumulated.

The most modern and technically efficient factories were displacing less efficient competitors from the market. The cost of industrial equipment was increasing; it was necessary to accumulate ever greater sums of capital. An important part of production was accumulated in a smaller number of hands. Thus the great capitalist enterprises arose and, later, the associations of great enterprises through cartels, syndicates, trusts and consortiums, according to the degree and character of the association, controlled by the holders of the majority of the shares, that is to say, by the most powerful gentlemen of industry. Free competition, characteristic of capitalism in its first phase, gave way to monopolies that concluded agreements among themselves and controlled the markets.

Where did the colossal sums of resources come from to allow a handful of monopolists to accumulate billions of dollars? Quite simply, it came from the exploitation of human labor. Millions of men, forced to work for a subsistence wage, produced the gigantic capitals of the monopolies with their efforts. The workers accumulated the fortunes of the privileged classes, ever richer, ever more powerful. Through the banking institutions they came to dispose not only of their own money, but also of the money of the whole of society. Thus the merger of the banks with big industry came about and finance capital was born. What to do then with the large surpluses of capital that were accumulating in greater quantities? Invade the world with them. Always in pursuit of profit, they began to seize the natural wealth of all the economically weak countries and to exploit the human labor of their inhabitants at wages much more paltry than those they were forced to pay the workers of the metropolis itself. Thus began the territorial and economic division of the world. In 1914, eight or ten imperialist countries had subjected to their economic and political domination, outside their borders, territories whose extension amounted to 83,700,000 square kilometers, with a population of 970 million inhabitants. They had simply divided up the world.

But as the world was limited in extension, already distributed to the last corner of the globe, the clash between the different monopolist countries and the struggles for new distributions arose, originated in the distribution, which was not proportional to the industrial and economic power that the different monopolist countries had reached in unequal development. Imperialist wars broke out, which would cost humanity 50 million dead, tens of millions of disabled people and incalculable material and cultural wealth destroyed. This had not yet happened when Marx wrote that "the newborn capitalism comes dripping blood and dirt from its pores, from head to toe" (APPLAUSE).

The capitalist system of production, once it had been exhausted, became an abysmal obstacle to the progress of humanity. But the bourgeoisie, from its origin, carried within itself its opposite. In its bosom, gigantic instruments of production were developed, but at the same time a new and vigorous social force was developed: the proletariat (APPLAUSE), called upon to change the old and outdated social system of capitalism for a superior economic-social form in accordance with the historical possibilities of human society, converting into the property of all society those gigantic means of production which the peoples, and nothing else but the peoples with their labor, had created and accumulated. At such a degree of development of the productive forces, a regime that postulated private ownership and, with it, the subordination of the economy of millions and millions of human beings to the dictates of a small social minority was absolutely obsolete and anachronistic.

The interests of humanity demanded an end to the anarchy of production, waste, economic crises and predatory wars typical of the capitalist system. The growing needs of mankind and the possibility of satisfying them demanded the planned development of the economy and the rational use of its means of production and natural resources.

It was inevitable that imperialism and colonialism would enter into a deep and insurmountable crisis. The general crisis began in the wake of the First World War, with the revolution of the workers and peasants that overthrew the tsarist empire of Russia (APPLAUSE) and established, in very difficult conditions of siege and capitalist aggression, the first socialist state in the world, initiating a new era in the history of mankind (APPLAUSE). From then until today, the crisis and decomposition of the

imperialist system have been incessantly accentuated.

The Second World War unleashed by the imperialist powers, which dragged the Soviet Union and other criminally invaded peoples of Europe and Asia into a bloody liberation struggle, culminated in the defeat of fascism, the formation of the Socialist bloc, and the struggle of the colonial and dependent peoples for their sovereignty. Between 1945 and 1957, more than 1.2 billion human beings won their independence in Asia and Africa. The blood shed by the peoples was not in vain (APPLAUSE).

The movement of the dependent and colonized peoples is a phenomenon of universal character that shakes the world and marks the final crisis of imperialism.

Cuba and Latin America are part of the world. Our problems are part of the problems that are engendered by the general crisis of imperialism and the struggle of the subjugated peoples; the clash between the world that is born and the world that dies. The hateful and brutal campaign unleashed against our homeland expresses the desperate and futile effort of the imperialists to prevent the liberation of the peoples. Cuba hurts the imperialists in a special way. What is hidden behind the US hatred of the Cuban Revolution? What rationally explains the conspiracy that brings together in the same aggressive purpose the richest and most powerful imperialist power in the contemporary world and the oligarchies of an entire continent, which together represent a population of 350 million human beings, against a small people of only 7 million inhabitants, economically underdeveloped, without financial or military resources to threaten the security or the economy of any country? They are united and brought together by fear. Fear explains it. Not fear of the Cuban Revolution; fear of the Latin American revolution (APPLAUSE). Not the fear of the workers, peasants, students, intellectuals and progressive sectors of the middle strata who have revolutionarily seized power in Cuba, but the fear that the workers, peasants, students, intellectuals and progressive sectors of the middle strata will revolutionarily seize power in the oppressed peoples, starving and exploited by the US monopolies and the reactionary oligarchy of America (APPLAUSE). The fear that the plundered peoples of the continent will seize power in the countries of the Americas (APPLAUSE).

By crushing the Cuban Revolution, they believe they are dispelling the fear that torments them, the ghost of the revolution that threatens them. By liquidating the Cuban Revolution, they believe they are liquidating the revolutionary spirit of the peoples.

They pretend, in their delirium, that Cuba is an exporter of revolutions. In their minds of insomniac businessmen and usurers there is room for the idea that revolutions can be bought or sold, rented, lent, exported or imported like any other merchandise.

Ignorant of the objective laws governing the development of human societies, they believe that their monopolistic, capitalist and semi-feudal regimes are eternal.

Educated in their own reactionary ideology, a mixture of superstition, ignorance, subjectivism, pragmatism, and other aberrations of thought, they have an image of the world and of the course of history that suits their interests as exploiting classes.

They suppose that revolutions are born or die in the brains of individuals or by the effect of divine laws and that the gods are on their side. They have always believed the same thing, from the devout pagan patricians in slave Rome, who threw the primitive Christians to the lions of the circus, and the inquisitors in the Middle Ages who, as guardians of feudalism and absolute monarchy, immolated at the stake the first representatives of the liberal thought of the nascent bourgeoisie, to the bishops who today, in defense of the bourgeois and monopolist regime, anathematize the proletarian revolutions.

All reactionary classes in all historical epochs, when the antagonism between exploiters and exploited reaches its maximum tension and presages the advent of a new social regime, have resorted to the worst weapons of repression and slander against their adversaries.

Accused of burning Rome and sacrificing children on their altars, the early Christians were led to martyrdom. Accused of being heretics, philosophers like Giordano Bruno, reformers like Huss and thousands of other non-conformists with the feudal order were led to the stake by the inquisitors. The proletarian fighters are taught today persecution and crime, preceded by the worst calumnies in the monopolist and bourgeois press.

Always, in every historical epoch, the ruling classes have assassinated invoking the defense of society, of order, of the homeland: "their society" of privileged minorities over exploited majorities, "their class order" which they maintain with blood and fire over the dispossessed, "the homeland" which they alone enjoy, depriving the rest of the people of that enjoyment, to repress the revolutionaries who aspire to a new society, a just order, a true homeland for all.

But the development of history, the upward march of humanity, does not and cannot stop. The forces that impel the peoples - who are the true builders of history - determined by the material conditions of their existence and the aspiration to higher goals of well-being and freedom, which arise when man's progress in the fields of science, technology and culture make it possible, are superior to the will and terror unleashed by the dominant oligarchies.

The subjective conditions of each country -that is to say, the factor of consciousness, organization, leadership- can accelerate or delay the revolution according to its greater or lesser degree of development; but sooner or later, in each historical epoch, when the objective conditions mature, consciousness is acquired, organization is achieved, leadership emerges and the revolution takes place (APPLAUSE).

Whether it takes place peacefully or is born into the world after a painful birth, does not depend on the revolutionaries; it depends on the reactionary forces of the old society, which resist allowing the birth of the new society that is engendered by the contradictions that the old society carries in its bosom. The revolution is in history like the doctor who attends the birth of a new life. It does not use the apparatuses of force without necessity, but it uses them without hesitation whenever necessary to assist the birth (APPLAUSE); a birth that brings to the enslaved and exploited masses the hope of a better life.

In many countries of Latin America, revolution is today inevitable. This fact is not determined by anyone's will; it is determined by the dreadful conditions of exploitation in which the Latin American people live, the development of the revolutionary consciousness of the masses, the world crisis of imperialism and the universal movement of struggle of the subjugated peoples.

Today's unrest is an unmistakable symptom of rebellion. The entrails of a continent that has witnessed four centuries of slave, semi-slave and feudal exploitation of man, from its aboriginal inhabitants and the slaves brought from Africa, to the national nuclei that emerged later; whites, blacks, mulattos, mestizos and Indians who today are joined by contempt, humiliation and the US yoke, like the hope of a better tomorrow.

The peoples of the Americas freed themselves from Spanish colonialism at the beginning of the last century, but they did not free themselves from exploitation. The feudal landowners assumed the authority of the Spanish rulers, the Indians continued in painful servitude, the Latin American man in one form or another remained a slave and the minimal hopes of the peoples succumbed under the power of the oligarchies and the strap of foreign capital. This has been the truth of America, with one or the other nuance, with one or the other slope. Today Latin America lies under a fiercer, more powerful and more ruthless imperialism than the Spanish colonial empire.

And in the face of the objective and historically inexorable reality of the Latin American revolution, what is the attitude of US imperialism? To prepare to wage a colonial war with the peoples of Latin America; to create the apparatus of force, the political pretexts and the pseudo-legal instruments signed with the representatives of the reactionary oligarchies to repress with blood and fire the struggle of the Latin

American peoples.

The intervention of the U.S. government in the internal politics of Latin American countries has become increasingly open and unbridled.

The Inter-American Defense Board, for example, has been and is the nest where the most reactionary and pro-US officers of the Latin American armies are incubated, later used as instruments of coups in the service of the monopolies.

The U.S. military missions in Latin America constitute a permanent espionage apparatus in each nation, closely linked to the Central Intelligence Agency, inculcating in the officers the most reactionary sentiments and trying to convert the armies into instruments of their political and economic interests.

At present, in the Panama Canal Zone, the U.S. high command has organized special training courses for Latin American officers in the fight against revolutionary guerrillas, aimed at repressing the armed action of the peasant masses against the feudal exploitation to which they are subjected.

In the United States, the Central Intelligence Agency has organized special schools to train Latin American agents in the most subtle forms of assassination, and it is agreed policy of the US military services to physically liquidate anti-imperialist leaders.

It is notorious that the U.S. embassies in different Latin American countries are organizing, instructing and equipping fascist bands to sow terror and attack workers', students' and intellectual organizations. These gangs, where they recruit the children of the oligarchy, the lumpen and people of the worst moral character, have already perpetrated a series of aggressive acts against the movements of the masses.

Nothing is more evident and unequivocal of the purposes of imperialism than its conduct in the recent events of Santo Domingo. Without any justification whatsoever, without even mediating diplomatic relations with that republic, the United States, after placing its warships in front of the Dominican capital, declared, with its usual insolence, that if the Balaguer government requested military aid, it would land its troops in Santo Domingo against the insurgency of the Dominican people. That Balaguer's power was absolutely spurious, that every sovereign people in America should have the right to solve its internal problems without foreign intervention, that there were international norms and world opinion, that there was even an OAS, counted for nothing in the considerations of the United States. What did count were their designs to prevent the Dominican revolution, the reintroduction of the odious landings of their marines; with no other basis or requirement to base this new filibustering concept of law, than the simple request of a tyrannical, illegitimate and crisis-ridden ruler. What this means should not escape the peoples. In Latin America there are plenty of such rulers, ready to use US troops against their respective peoples when they find themselves in crisis.

This declared policy of U.S. imperialism, of sending soldiers to combat the revolutionary movement in any Latin American country, that is, to kill workers, students, peasants, Latin American men and women, has no other objective than to continue maintaining its monopoly interests and the privileges of the traitorous oligarchy that supports them.

Now it can be seen with complete clarity that the military pacts signed by the government of the United States with Latin American governments -secret pacts made many times and always behind the backs of the peoples- invoking hypothetical external dangers that nobody ever saw anywhere, had the sole and exclusive objective of preventing the struggle of the peoples; they were pacts against the peoples, against the only danger: the internal danger of the liberation movement that would put US interests at risk. It was not without reason that the peoples asked themselves: Why so many military agreements? Why the shipments of arms which, although technically inadequate for modern warfare, are on the other hand effective in crushing strikes, repressing popular demonstrations and bloodying the country? Why the military missions, the Pact of Rio de Janeiro and the thousand and one international conferences?

Since the end of World War II, the nations of Latin America have become increasingly impoverished; their exports have less and less value; their imports have higher and higher prices; per capita income is decreasing; the dreadful rates of infant mortality are not decreasing; the number of illiterates is higher; the people lack work, land, adequate housing, schools, hospitals, roads and means of livelihood. On the other hand, U.S. investments exceed 10 billion dollars. Latin America is also a supplier of cheap raw materials and a buyer of expensive manufactured goods. Like the first Spanish conquistadors, who traded mirrors and trinkets to the Indians for gold and silver, the United States trades with Latin America in the same way. To conserve this torrent of wealth, to seize more and more of America's resources and to exploit its suffering peoples: this is what was behind the military pacts, the military missions and the diplomatic lobbying in Washington.

This policy of gradually strangling the sovereignty of Latin American nations and giving them a free hand to intervene in their internal affairs reached its climax at the last meeting of foreign ministers. In Punta del Este, US imperialism brought together the foreign ministers to wrest from them, by means of unprecedented political pressure and economic blackmail, with the complicity of a group of the most discredited rulers of this continent, the renunciation of the national sovereignty of our peoples and the consecration of the hated US right of intervention in the internal affairs of America; the subjection of the peoples to the omnipotent will of the United States of America, against which all the heroes, from Bolivar to Sandino, fought. And neither the government of the United States, nor the representatives of the exploiting oligarchies, nor the great reactionary press sold out to the monopolies and feudal lords, did not hide to openly demand agreements that are equivalent to the formal suppression of the right of self-determination of our peoples, erasing it with the stroke of a pen, in the most infamous conspiracy in the history of this continent.

Behind closed doors, between repugnant councils where the US minister of colonies devoted entire days to overcome the resistance and scruples of some foreign ministers, putting at stake the millions of the US treasury in an undisguised vote buying and selling, a handful of representatives of the oligarchies of countries that together account for barely a third of the population of the continent, imposed agreements that serve on a silver platter to the US master the head of a principle that cost all the blood of our peoples since the wars of independence. The pyrrhic character of such sad and fraudulent achievements of imperialism, of its moral failure, the broken unanimity and the universal scandal, do not diminish the gravity for the peoples of Latin America of the agreements imposed at that price. In that immoral conclave, the titanic voice of Cuba rose without weakness or fear to accuse before all the peoples of America and the world the monstrous attack, and to defend virilely, and with dignity that will be recorded in the annals of history, not only the right of Cuba, but the unprotected right of all the sister nations of the American continent (APPLAUSE). Cuba's words could not be echoed by that trained majority, but neither could they be answered; there could only be impotent silence before their demolishing arguments, before the transparency and courage of their words. But Cuba did not speak for the foreign ministers; Cuba spoke for the peoples and for history, where its words will have echo and answers (APPLAUSE).

In Punta del Este a great ideological battle was fought between the Cuban Revolution and the US imperialism. What was represented there, for whom did each of them speak? Cuba represented the peoples; the United States represented the monopolies. Cuba spoke for the exploited masses of America; the United States for the exploiting and imperialist oligarchic interests. Cuba spoke for sovereignty (APPLAUSE); the United States; for intervention. Cuba for the nationalization of foreign enterprises; the United States for new investments of foreign capital. Cuba for culture; United States for ignorance. Cuba for agrarian reform; United States for landowning of large estates. Cuba for the industrialization of America; the United States for underdevelopment. Cuba for creative work; the United States for the sabotage and counterrevolutionary terror practiced by its agents, the destruction of sugar cane fields and factories, the bombing of the work of a peaceful people by its pirate planes. Cuba for the murdered literacy workers (APPLAUSE); the United States for the assassins. Cuba for bread; United States for hunger. Cuba for equality; United States for privilege and discrimination. Cuba for truth (APPLAUSE); United States for lies. Cuba for liberation; the United States for oppression. Cuba for the luminous future of humanity; the United States for the hopeless past. Cuba for the heroes who fell at the

Bay of Pigs to save the homeland from foreign domination (APPLAUSE AND EXCLAMATIONS OF: "Fidel, sure, give the Yankees a hard time!"); United States for the mercenaries and traitors who serve the foreigners against their homeland (BOOING). Cuba for peace among peoples; United States for aggression and war. Cuba for socialism (PROLONGED APPLAUSE); United States for capitalism.

The agreements obtained by the United States with such shameful methods that the whole world criticizes, do not reduce but rather increase the morale and reason of Cuba; they demonstrate the surrender and betrayal of the oligarchies to national interests and teach the peoples the road to liberation; they reveal the rottenness of the exploiting classes, in whose name their representatives spoke in Punta del Este. The OAS was unmasked for what it is; a ministry of US colonies, a military alliance, an apparatus of repression against the liberation movement of the Latin American peoples.

Cuba has lived three years of Revolution under incessant harassment by Yankee US intervention in our internal affairs.

Pirate planes from the United States, dropping flammable materials, have burned millions of tons of sugar cane; acts of international sabotage perpetrated by US agents, such as the explosion of the steamship La Coubre, have cost dozens of Cuban lives; thousands of American weapons of all kinds have been parachuted by the U.S. military services over our territory to promote subversion; hundreds of tons of explosive materials and infernal machines have been surreptitiously disembarked on our coasts by US boats to promote sabotage and terrorism; a Cuban worker was tortured at the Guantanamo naval base and deprived of his life without any prior trial or explanation (BOOING).;

Our sugar quota was abruptly suppressed, and the embargo of parts and raw materials for US factories and construction machinery was proclaimed to ruin our economy; artillery ships and bombing planes, coming from bases prepared by the US government, have surprisingly attacked Cuban ports and installations; mercenary troops, organized and trained in Central American countries by the government itself, have invaded our territory in a show of war, escorted by Yankee fleet ships and with air support from foreign bases, causing the loss of numerous lives and the destruction of material goods.

Cuban counterrevolutionaries are being trained in the U.S. army and new plans of aggression are being carried out against Cuba. All this has been going on incessantly for three years, in full view of the entire continent, and the OAS is not aware of it. The foreign ministers meet in Punta del Este, and they do not even admonish the U.S. government or the governments that are material accomplices of these aggressions. They expel Cuba, the Latin American victim country, the attacked country.

The United States has military pacts with countries on every continent; military blocs with every fascist, militarist and reactionary government in the world: NATO, SEATO and CENTO, to which we must now add the OAS.

It intervenes in Laos, in Vietnam, in Korea, in Formosa, in Berlin; it openly sends ships to Santo Domingo to impose its law, its will, and announces its intention to use its NATO allies to block trade with Cuba, and the OAS is not even aware of it. The foreign ministers meet and expel Cuba, which has no military pacts with any country. Thus, the government that organizes subversion all over the world and forges military alliances on four continents, has Cuba expelled, accusing it of subversion with extra-continental links.

Cuba, the Latin American country which has turned more than 100,000 small farmers into landowners (APPLAUSE), assured year-round employment in farms and cooperatives to all agricultural workers, transformed barracks into schools (APPLAUSE), granted 60,000 scholarships to university, secondary and technological students, created classrooms for the entire infant population, totally eradicated illiteracy (APPLAUSE), quadrupled medical services, nationalized monopolistic enterprises (APPLAUSE), abolished the abusive system that turned housing into a means of exploitation for the people, virtually

eliminated unemployment, abolished discrimination on the basis of race or sex (APPLAUSE), swept away gambling, vice and administrative corruption (APPLAUSE), armed the people (APPLAUSE), made the enjoyment of human rights a living reality by freeing men and women from exploitation, uneducation and social inequality (APPLAUSE).

Cuba has freed itself from all foreign tutelage, acquired full sovereignty and established the bases for the development of its economy so as to no longer be a single producer and exporter of raw materials, is expelled from the Organization of American States by governments that have not achieved a single one of these demands for their peoples (APPLAUSE).

How can they justify their conduct before the peoples of the Americas and the world? How can they deny that in their concept the policy of land, bread, work, health, freedom, equality and culture, accelerated development of the economy, national dignity, full self-determination and sovereignty, is incompatible with the hemisphere?

The peoples think very differently. The peoples think that the only thing incompatible with the destiny of Latin America is misery, feudal exploitation, illiteracy, starvation wages, unemployment, the policy of repression against the masses of workers, peasants and students, discrimination against women, blacks, indigenous people and mestizos, the oppression of the oligarchies, the plundering of their wealth by the US monopolies, the moral suffocation of their intellectuals and artists, the ruin of their small producers by foreign competition, the economic underdevelopment, the peoples without roads, without hospitals, without housing, without schools, without industries, the submission to imperialism, the renunciation of national sovereignty and the betrayal of the homeland.

How will the imperialists be able to make their conduct, their condemnatory attitude towards Cuba, understand? With what words will they speak to those whom they have ignored, although they have exploited, for such a long time?

Those who study the problems of America usually ask which country, who have correctly approached the situation of the indigent, of the poor, of the indigenous people, of the blacks, of the helpless children, that immense childhood of 30 million in 1950 -which will be 50 million in eight more years. Yes, who, what country?

Thirty-two million indigenous people vertebrate -as much as the Andes Mountains themselves- the entire American continent. Of course, for those who have considered it almost as a thing, rather than as a person, this humanity does not count, did not count and believed it would never count. As it was, however, a blind force of work, it had to be used, as a yoke of oxen or a tractor is used.

How can one believe in any benefit, in any alliance for progress, with imperialism; under what oath, if under its holy protection, its massacres, its persecutions, the indigenous people of the south of the continent, like those of Patagonia, still live in awnings, as their ancestors lived at the coming of the discoverers, almost five hundred years ago.

Where those who were great races that populated the north of Argentina, Paraguay and Bolivia, like the Guarani, who have been ferociously decimated, like those who hunt animals and who have been buried in the interior of the jungles; where that native reserve, which could have served as the basis of a great American civilization - and whose extinction is being hastened by instants - and which has been pushed into America through the Paraguayan marshes and the Bolivian altiplanos, sad, rudimentary, melancholic races, brutalized by alcohol and narcotics, to which they take refuge to at least survive in the subhuman conditions (not only in terms of food) in which they live.

Where a chain of hands stretches - almost uselessly, still -, has been stretching for centuries uselessly, over the backs of the mountain range, its skirts, along the great rivers and through the shadows of the forests, to unite their miseries with the others who are slowly perishing, the Brazilian tribes and those of the north of the continent and its coasts, until reaching the 100,000 motilones of Venezuela, in the most

incredible backwardness and savagely confined in the Amazonian jungles or the Perijá mountains. The solitary vapichanas that in the hot lands of the Guianas await their end, already almost definitively lost to the fate of humans? Yes, to all these 32 million indigenous peoples that extend from the border with the United States to the confines of the southern hemisphere and 45 million mestizos, who in great part differ little from the indigenous; to all these indigenous peoples, to this formidable wealth of labor, of trampled rights, yes, what can imperialism offer them?

How can these ignored people believe in any benefit that comes from such bloody hands? Entire tribes that still live naked; others that are supposed to be anthropophagous; others that, at the first contact with the conquering civilization, die like insects; others that are banished, that is to say, driven from their lands, pushed until they are dumped in the forests or in the mountains or in the depths of the plains where not even the slightest atom of culture, of light, of bread, of anything reaches them.

In what "alliance" - other than one for their quicker death - will these indigenous races, beaten for centuries, shot to death to occupy their lands, beaten to death by the thousands, for not working faster in their services of exploitation, by imperialism, believe in?

And what about black people? What "alliance" can the system of lynching and the brutal preterition of the black man in the United States offer to the fifteen million blacks and fourteen million Latin American mulattos who know with horror and anger that their brothers in the North cannot ride in the same vehicles as their white compatriots, nor attend the same schools, nor even die in the same hospitals?

How can they believe in this imperialism, in its benefits, in its "alliances" (except to lynch them and exploit them as slaves), these ethnic groups that have not been able to enjoy even the slightest cultural, social or professional benefit; that even where they are in the majority, or form millions, they are mistreated by the imperialists disguised as Ku-Klux-Klan; are imprisoned in the most unhealthy slums, in the least comfortable collective houses, made by them; pushed into the most ignoble trades, the hardest jobs and the least lucrative professions, which do not involve contact with universities, high academies or private schools?

What Alliance for Progress can serve as a stimulus to those one hundred and seven million men and women of our America, the marrow of labor in cities and fields, whose dark skin -black, mestizo, mulatto, indigenous- inspires contempt in the new colonizers? How can those who in Panama have seen with ill-contained impotence that there is one salary for the US citizen and another salary for the Panamanian, whom they consider an inferior race, trust in the supposed alliance?

What can the workers expect with their starvation wages, the roughest jobs, the most miserable conditions, malnutrition, disease and all the evils that misery incubates?

What can the imperialists say, what words, what benefits can they offer to the miners of copper, tin, iron, coal, who leave their lungs for the benefit of distant and inclement owners; to the fathers and sons of the timber, rubber and grass plantations, of the fruit plantations, of the coffee and sugar mills, of the laborers in the pampas and on the plains who amass with their health and with their lives the fortune of the exploiters?

What can these immense masses that produce the wealth, that create the values, that help to give birth to a new world everywhere expect from imperialism, that insatiable mouth, that insatiable hand, with no other immediate horizon than misery, the most absolute helplessness, cold death and without history at last?

What can this class, which has changed the course of history in other parts of the world, which has revolutionized the world, which is the vanguard of all the humble and exploited, expect from imperialism, its most irreconcilable enemy?

What can imperialism offer, what kind of benefit, what kind of better and fairer life, what motive, what

incentive, what interest to improve oneself, to transcend its simple and primary steps, to teachers, professors, professionals, intellectuals, poets and artists; to those who jealously guard the generations of children and young people so that imperialism can then prey on them; to those who live with humiliating salaries in most countries; to those who suffer the limitations of their political and social expression almost everywhere; who do not exceed, in their economic possibilities, more than the simple line of their precarious resources and compensations, buried in a gray life without horizons that ends in a retirement that then no longer covers even half of the expenses?

What "benefits" or "alliances" will imperialism be able to offer them, other than those that are of total benefit to them?

If it creates sources of support for their professions, their arts, their publications, it is always with the understanding that their productions must reflect their interests, their objectives, their "nothingness".

The novels that try to reflect the reality of the world of their rapacious adventures; the poems that want to translate protests for their subjugation, for their interference in the life, in the mind, in the viscera of their countries and peoples; the combative arts that try to capture in their expressions the forms and the content of their aggression and constant pressure on everything that lives and encourages progressively.

Everything that is revolutionary, that teaches, that tries to guide, full of light and conscience, of clarity and beauty, men and peoples to better destinies, to higher summits of thought, of life and of justice, meets the most fierce reprobation of imperialism; it meets the fence, the condemnation, the McCarthyist persecution.

Their presses are closed to them; their name is erased from the columns and the most atrocious slab of silence is applied to them, which is, then -one more contradiction of imperialism-, when the writer, the poet, the painter, the sculptor, the creator in any material, the scientist, begin to really live, to live in the language of the people, in the hearts of millions of men of the world. Imperialism distorts everything, deforms it, and channels it through its channels, to its advantage, towards the multiplication of its dollar, buying words, or pictures, or dumbness, or transforming into silence the expression of the revolutionaries, of the progressive men, of those who fight for the people and their problems.

We could not forget in this sad picture the helpless, neglected childhood; the childhood without a future in America.

America, which is a continent with a high birth rate, also has a high mortality rate. A few years ago, the mortality rate of children under one year of age was 125 per 1,000 in 11 countries and 90 in 17 others.

In 102 countries of the world, on the other hand, this rate is 51. In the Americas, therefore, 74 children out of every 1,000 die in the first year of life. There are Latin American countries in which this rate reaches, in some places, 300 per 1,000; thousands and thousands of children up to seven years of age die in America of incredible diseases: diarrhea, pneumonia, malnutrition, hunger; thousands and thousands of other diseases without attention in hospitals, without medicines; thousands and thousands wander, wounded by endemic cretinism, malaria, trachoma and other diseases caused by pollution, lack of water and other necessities.

Ills of this nature are a chain in the American countries where thousands and thousands of children, children of outcasts, children of the poor and petty bourgeoisie with a hard life and precarious means, are dying. The data, which will be redundant, are shocking. Any official publication of international organizations gathers them by the hundreds.

In educational aspects, it is outrageous to think of the level of ignorance that this America suffers from. While the United States achieves a level of eight and nine years of schooling in the population 19 years of age and older, Latin America, plundered and plundered by them, has less than one year of schooling

approved as a level, in those same ages. And it is even more outrageous when we know that only 20% of children between 5 and 14 years of age are enrolled in some countries, and 60% in the highest level.

In other words, more than half of Latin America's children do not attend school. But the pain continues to grow when we see that enrollment in the first three grades comprises more than 80% of those enrolled; and that in the 6th grade, enrollment fluctuates between only 6 and 22 students out of every 100 who started in the first grade. Even in countries that believe they have taken care of their children, this percentage of school abandonment between the 1st and 6th grades is 73% on average. In Cuba, before the Revolution, it was 74%. In the Colombia of the "representative democracy" it is 78%. And if you look at the countryside, only 1% of the children reach the fifth grade, in the best of cases.

When one investigates this disaster of school absenteeism, one cause explains it: the economy of misery, lack of schools, lack of teachers, lack of family resources, child labor. In short, imperialism and its work of oppression and backwardness.

The summary of this nightmare that America has lived, from one extreme to another, is that in this continent of almost 200 million human beings, formed in its two thirds by indigenous peoples, mestizos and blacks, by the "discriminated;" in this continent of semi-colonies, die of hunger, curable diseases or premature old age, about four people per minute, 5,500 per day, 2 million per year, 10 million every five years. These deaths could easily be prevented, but nevertheless, they occur. Two thirds of the Latin American population live short lives and live under the permanent threat of death. A holocaust of lives that in 15 years has caused twice as many deaths as the war of 1914, and continues. Meanwhile, a continuous torrent of money flows from Latin America to the United States: some \$4,000 per minute, \$5 million per day, \$2 billion per year, \$10 billion every five years. For every 1,000 dollars that leave us, we are left with one dead person. 1,000 dollars per dead person: that is the price of what is called imperialism! 1,000 dollars per dead person, four times per minute!

But in spite of this American reality, why did they meet in Punta del Este, perhaps to bring a single drop of relief to these evils? No!

The peoples know that in Punta del Este, the foreign ministers who expelled Cuba met to renounce national sovereignty; that there the government of the United States went to lay the foundations not only for aggression against Cuba, but also to intervene in any country of America against the liberating movement of the peoples; that the United States is preparing a bloody drama for Latin America; that the exploiting oligarchies, just as they now renounce the principle of sovereignty, will not hesitate to request the intervention of US troops against their own peoples, and that to this end the U.S. delegation proposed a vigilance committee against subversion in the Inter-American Defense Board, with executive powers, and the adoption of collective measures.

Subversion for the US imperialists is the struggle of the peoples hungry for bread, the struggle of the peoples against imperialist exploitation. Vigilance Committee in the Inter-American Defense Board with executive powers means a force of continental repression against the peoples under the orders of the Pentagon. Collective measures mean landings of US marines in any country in the Americas.

Faced with the accusation that Cuba wants to export its revolution, we reply: revolutions are not exported; they are made by the peoples (APPLAUSE). What Cuba can give to the peoples, and has already given, is its example (APPLAUSE).

And what does the Cuban Revolution teach? That revolution is possible, that the peoples can make it (APPLAUSE); that in the contemporary world there are no forces capable of preventing the liberation movement of the peoples.

Our triumph would never have been feasible if the revolution itself had not been inexorably destined to emerge from the conditions existing in our economic-social reality, a reality that exists to an even greater degree in a good number of Latin American countries.

It inevitably happens that in the nations where the control of the US monopolies is stronger, the exploitation of the oligarchy more ruthless and the situation of the masses of workers and peasants more unbearable. The political power becomes more ironclad, states of siege become habitual, any manifestation of discontent of the masses is repressed by force, and the democratic channel is completely closed, revealing with more evidence than ever the character of brutal dictatorship that assumes the power of the ruling classes. It is then that the revolutionary outbreak of the peoples becomes inevitable.

And although it is true that in the underdeveloped countries of America the working class is in general relatively small, there is a social class which, because of the subhuman conditions in which it lives, constitutes a potential force which, led by the workers and revolutionary intellectuals, has a decisive importance in the struggle for national liberation: the peasants (APPLAUSE).

In our countries the circumstances of an underdeveloped industry are combined with an agrarian regime of feudal character. That is why, as hard as the living conditions of urban workers are, the rural population lives in even more horrible conditions of oppression and exploitation; but it is also, with some exceptions, the absolute majority sector in proportions that sometimes exceed 70% of the Latin American populations.

Apart from the landowners, who often live in the cities, the rest of this great mass earns its livelihood working as laborers on the estates for miserable wages, or working the land in conditions of exploitation that have nothing to envy to the Middle Ages. These circumstances are what determine that in Latin America the rural poor constitute a tremendous potential revolutionary force.

The armies, structured and equipped for conventional warfare, which are the force on which the power of the exploiting classes is based, when they have to confront the irregular struggle of the peasants in their natural scenario, are absolutely impotent; They lose 10 men for each revolutionary combatant who falls, and demoralization quickly spreads among them when they have to face a visible and invincible enemy that does not offer them the opportunity to show off their academy tactics and their war fanfares, of which they make so much boast to repress the workers and the students in the cities.

The initial struggle of reduced combatant nuclei is incessantly nourished by new forces. The mass movement begins to unleash itself, the old order cracks little by little into 1,000 pieces, and it is then that the working class and the urban masses decide the battle.

What is it that from the very beginning of the struggle of these first nuclei makes them invincible, regardless of the number, power and resources of their enemies? The support of the people. And with that support of the masses they will count on an ever-increasing degree.

But the peasantry is a class which, because of the state of ignorance in which it is kept and the isolation in which it lives, needs the revolutionary and political leadership of the working class and the revolutionary intellectuals, without which it could not launch by itself into the struggle and conquer victory (APPLAUSE).

In the present historical conditions of Latin America, the national bourgeoisie cannot lead the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist struggle. Experience shows that, in our nations, that class, even when its interests are contradictory to those of US imperialism, has been incapable of confronting the latter, paralyzed by the fear of social revolution and frightened by the clamor of the exploited masses. Faced with the dilemma of imperialism or revolution, only its most progressive layers will stand with the people.

The present world correlation of forces, and the universal movement for the liberation of the colonial and dependent peoples, point out to the working class and the revolutionary intellectuals of Latin America their true role, which is to place themselves resolutely at the forefront of the struggle against imperialism and feudalism (APPLAUSE).

Imperialism, using the big film monopolies, its cable agencies, its reactionary magazines, books and newspapers, resorts to the most subtle lies to sow divisionism, and instill among the most ignorant people the fear and superstition of revolutionary ideas, which only the interests of the powerful exploiters and their secular privileges can and should frighten.

Divisionism-product of all kinds of prejudices, false ideas and lies -, sectarianism, dogmatism, lack of breadth to analyze the role that corresponds to each social layer, to their parties, organizations and leaders, hinder the essential unity of action among the democratic and progressive forces of our peoples.

These are vices of growth, diseases of the infancy of the revolutionary movement that must be left behind. In the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal struggle it is possible to unite the immense majority of the people behind goals of liberation that unite the efforts of the working class, the peasants, the intellectual workers, the petty bourgeoisie and the most progressive layers of the national bourgeoisie.

These sectors comprise the immense majority of the population, and unite great social forces capable of sweeping away imperialist domination and feudal reaction. In that broad movement they can and must fight together, for the good of their nations, for the good of their peoples and for the good of America, from the old Marxist militant to the sincere Catholic who has nothing to do with the US monopolies and the feudal lords of the earth (APPLAUSE).

That movement could drag along the progressive elements of the armed forces, humiliated also by the US military missions, the betrayal of the national interests of the feudal oligarchies and the immolation of national sovereignty to the dictates of Washington.

Where the roads of the peoples are closed, where the repression of the workers and peasants is fierce, where the domination of the Yankee monopolies is stronger, the first and most important thing is to understand that it is neither just nor correct to entertain the peoples with the vain and accommodating illusion of pulling out, by legal means that do not exist and will not exist, from the dominant classes, entrenched in all the positions of the State, monopolizers of instruction, owners of all the vehicles of dissemination and possessors of infinite financial resources, a power that the monopolies and the oligarchies will defend with blood and fire with the force of their police forces and their armies.

The duty of every revolutionary is to make the revolution (APPLAUSE). It is known that in America and in the world the revolution will win, but it is not for revolutionaries to sit at the door of their house to see the corpse of imperialism pass by (APPLAUSE). Job's role does not fit that of a revolutionary. Every year that the liberation of America is accelerated will mean millions of children saved for life, millions of intelligences saved for culture, infinite flows of pain that the peoples would be spared. Even if the US imperialists prepare a drama of blood for America, they will not succeed in crushing the struggle of the peoples, they will arouse universal hatred against them, and it will also be the drama that will mark the decline of their voracious and caveman system (APPLAUSE).

No people of Latin America is weak, because it is part of a family of 200 million brothers who suffer the same miseries, harbor the same feelings, have the same enemy, all dream of the same better destiny, and count on the solidarity of all the honest men and women of the whole world (APPLAUSE).

As great as the epic of Latin American independence was, as heroic as that struggle was, today's generation of Latin Americans has been given an even greater and more decisive epic for humanity. That struggle was to free themselves from Spanish colonial power, from a decadent Spain, invaded by Napoleon's armies. Today it is your turn to fight for liberation against the most powerful imperial metropolis in the world, against the most important force in the world imperialist system, and to render to humanity an even greater service than that rendered by our ancestors.

But this struggle, more than that one, will be waged by the masses, by the peoples (APPLAUSE); the

peoples are going to play a much more important role than then; the men, the leaders, matter and will matter in this struggle less than they did in that one.

This epic that lies before us will be written by the hungry masses of indigenous people, of landless peasants, of exploited workers; it will be written by the progressive masses, by the honest and brilliant intellectuals that abound so much in our suffering lands of Latin America (APPLAUSE). A struggle of the masses and of ideas; an epic that will be carried forward by our peoples mistreated and despised by imperialism, our peoples unknown until today, who are already beginning to lose sleep over it. It considered us an impotent and submissive flock, and it is already beginning to be frightened of that flock; a giant flock of 200 million Latin Americans in which the US monopoly capital is already warning its gravediggers (APPLAUSE).

With this working humanity, with these subhuman, impoverished exploited, managed by the methods of the whip and the foreman, has not been counted or has been counted little. Since the dawn of independence, their destinies have been the same: indigenous peoples, gauchos, mestizos, zambos, quarterons, whites without goods or income, all that human mass that was formed in the ranks of the "homeland" that it never enjoyed, that fell by millions, that was torn to pieces, that won independence from its metropolis for the bourgeoisie; that one, that was banished from the distributions, continued occupying the last rung of the social benefits, continued dying of hunger, of curable diseases, of neglect, because for it the saving goods never reached: the simple bread, the hospital bed, the medicine that saves, the helping hand.

But the hour of their vindication, the hour that they have chosen for themselves, is now also being signaled with precision from one end of the continent to the other.

Now, this anonymous mass, this America of color, somber, taciturn, that sings in all the continent with the same sadness and disappointment, now this mass is the one that begins to enter definitively in its own history, it begins to write it with its blood, it begins to suffer and to die.

Now, in the fields and mountains of America, in the foothills of its sierras, in its plains and jungles, in solitude, or in the traffic of the cities, or on the coasts of the great oceans and rivers, this world full of reasons begins to tremble, with its fists hot with the desire to die for what is theirs, to conquer their rights almost 500 years mocked by some and by others.

Now, yes, history will have to reckon with the poor of America, with the exploited and vilified of Latin America, who have decided to begin to write their own history forever (APPLAUSE). They are already seen on the roads, day after day, on foot, in endless marches, hundreds of kilometers long, to reach the governing "olympuses" to demand their rights.

They are already seen, armed with stones, sticks, machetes, from one side to the other, every day, occupying the lands, setting their hooks in the land that belongs to them and defending it with their lives; they are seen carrying their banners, their flags, their slogans, making them run in the wind through the mountains or along the plains. And that wave of shuddering resentment, of justice claimed, of trampled rights, which is beginning to rise in the lands of Latin America, that wave will not stop anymore. That wave will grow every day that passes, because that wave is formed by the most, the majority in all aspects, those who accumulate wealth with their work, create values, make the wheels of history run, and who are now waking up from the long stultifying sleep to which they have been subjected.

For this great mass of humanity has said, "Enough!" and has begun to march. And their march of giants will not stop until they conquer true independence, for which they have already died more than once in vain (APPLAUSE). Now, in any case, those who die, will die like those of Cuba, those of Playa Girón, will die for their only, true, unrenounceable independence! (APPLAUSE PROLONGED).

Homeland or Death!

We shall overcome!

The people of Cuba

Havana, Cuba,

Free Territory of America,

February 4, 1962

The National General Assembly of the People of Cuba resolves that this Declaration be known as the Second Declaration of Havana, translated into the principal languages and distributed throughout the world. It also resolves to request from all the friends of the Cuban Revolution in Latin America that it be widely disseminated among the masses of workers, peasants, students and intellectuals of the brotherly peoples of this continent (APPLAUSE).

This Declaration is submitted for the approval of the people and all citizens in agreement are asked to raise their hands.

(The crowd raises its hands with a prolonged ovation and sings the Cuban national anthem and The internationale anthem).

The Second Declaration of Havana is hereby approved by the people of Cuba, and this assembly is adjourned.

Homeland or Death!

We shall overcome!

(OVATION)

SHORTHAND VERSIONS

Source URL: <http://www.comandanteenjefe.org/en/discursos/remarks-second-national-assembly-people-cuba-held-revolution-square>

Links

[1] <http://www.comandanteenjefe.org/en/discursos/remarks-second-national-assembly-people-cuba-held-revolution-square>