

CHE GUEVARA :

socialism
and man

6d



Introduction

This work of Che's has not, unfortunately, been available for some time. In making it available, the International Marxist Group (Fourth International) felt it was important that Che Guevara's views on the wider questions of socialism should be known.

In this essay, Che shows the broadness of vision and the deep humanism of the founders of scientific socialism. It is no accident that the man who could write these words was the man who gave his life for revolution in the Bolivian jungle. Che was the complete revolutionary who welded together theory and practice. In complete contrast to stalinist dogmatists, for Che Marxism was an inspiring and creative tool for bringing about revolution today and the man of the 21st century tomorrow.

We hope that this modest pamphlet will be read far and wide and be an introduction to Che's thinking to thousands in Britain who have been inspired by his political example.

CHE GUEVARA SPEAKS

Merit Publishers, New York, announced on December 6th, 1967, that Che Guevara Speaks, a 159-page collection of speeches, statements, interviews and letters by the heroic revolutionary leader would be published shortly.

The topics include the Cuban revolution, problems of revolutionary ideology, guerrilla warfare, economic planning, imperialism, the colonial revolution, selection of revolutionary cadres, the "Alliance for Progress", trade and other relations between industrialised and underdeveloped nations and the transformation of man under socialism.

The book will cost 16/6d (1/- extra for postage and packing) and will be available in January, 1968, from Pioneer Book Service, 8, Toynbee St., London E.1.

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Notes on

Socialism and Man

By Che Guevara

*This article was translated by Gerald Paul from the July 1 issue of the Mexican radical bi-weekly, **Politica**. It was written by Che Guevara during his trip through Africa in the form of a letter to Carlos Quijano of the Uruguayan independent radical weekly **Marcha**.*

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

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

As is well known, the exact date on which the revolutionary struggle began — which would culminate January 1st, 1959 — was the 26th of July, 1953. A group of men commanded by Fidel Castro attacked the Moncada barracks in Oriente Province on the morning of that day. The attack was a failure; the failure became a disaster; and the survivors ended up in prison, beginning the revolutionary struggle again after they were freed by an amnesty.

In this stage, in which there was only the germ of socialism, man was the basic factor. We put our trust in him — individual, specific, with a first and

last name — and the triumph or failure of the mission entrusted to him depended on his capacity for action.

Then came the stage of guerrilla struggle. It developed in two distinct elements, the people, the still sleeping mass which it was necessary to mobilize; and its vanguard, the guerrillas, the motor force of the movement, the generator of revolutionary consciousness and militant enthusiasm. It was this vanguard, this catalyzing agent, which created the subjective conditions necessary for victory.

Here again, in the course of the process of proletarianizing our thinking, in this revolution which took place in our habits and our minds, the individual was the basic factor. Every one of the fighters of the Sierra Maestra who reached an upper rank in the revolutionary forces has a record of outstanding deeds to his credit. They attained their rank on this basis. It was the first heroic period and in it they contended for the heaviest responsibilities, for the greatest dangers, with no other satisfaction than fulfilling a duty.

In our work of revolutionary education we frequently return to this instructive theme. In the attitude of our fighters could be glimpsed the man of the future.

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

In January 1959 the Revolutionary Government was established with the participation of various

members of the treacherous bourgeoisie. The existence of the Rebel Army as the basic factor of force constituted the guarantee of power.

Serious contradictions developed subsequently. In the first instance, in February 1959, these were resolved when Fidel Castro assumed leadership of the government with the post of Prime Minister. This stage culminated in July of the same year with the resignation under mass pressure of President Urrutia.

There now appeared in the history of the Cuban Revolution a force with well-defined characteristics which would systematically reappear — the mass.

This many faceted agency is not, as is claimed, the sum of units of the self-same type, behaving like a tame flock of sheep, and reduced, moreover, to that type by the system imposed from above. It is true that it follows its leaders, basically Fidel Castro, without hesitation; but the degree to which he won this trust corresponds precisely to the degree that he interpreted the people's desires and aspirations correctly, and to the degree that he made a sincere effort to fulfill the promises he made.

The mass participated in the agrarian reform and in the difficult task of the administration of state enterprises; it went through the heroic experience of Playa Giron; it was hardened in the battles against various bands of bandits armed by the CIA; it lived through one of the most important decisions of modern times during the October crisis; and today it continues to work for the building of socialism.

Viewed superficially, it might appear that those who speak of the subordination of the individual to the state are right. The mass carries out with matchless enthusiasm and discipline the tasks set by the government, whether economic in character, cultural, defensive, athletic, or whatever.

The initiative generally comes from Fidel or from the Revolutionary High Command, and is explained to the people who adopt it as theirs. In some cases the party and government utilize a local experience which may be of general value to the people, and follow the same procedure.

Nevertheless, the state sometimes makes mistakes. When one of these mistakes occurs, a decline in collective enthusiasm is reflected by a resulting quantitative decrease of the contribution of each individual, each of the elements forming the whole of the masses. Work is so paralyzed that insignificant quantities are produced. It is time to make a correction. That is what happened in March 1962 as a result of the sectarian policy imposed on the party by Anibal Escalante.

Clearly this mechanism is not adequate for insuring a succession of judicious measures. A more structured connection with the masses is needed and we must improve it in the course of the next years. But as far as initiatives originating in the upper strata of the government are concerned, we are presently utilizing the almost intuitive method of sounding out general reactions to the great problems we confront.

In this Fidel is a master, whose own special way of fusing himself with the people can be appreciated only by seeing him in action. At the great public mass meetings one can observe something like a counterpoint between two musical melodies whose

vibrations provoke still newer notes. Fidel and the mass begin to vibrate together in a dialogue of growing intensity until they reach the climax in an abrupt conclusion culminating in our cry of struggle and victory.

The difficult thing for someone not living the experience of the revolution to understand is this close dialectical unity between the individual and the mass in which the mass, as an aggregate of individuals, is interconnected with its leaders.

Some phenomena of this kind can be seen under capitalism, when politicians capable of mobilizing popular opinion appear, but these phenomena are not really genuine social movements. (If they were it would not be entirely correct to call them capitalist.) These movements only live as long as the persons who inspire them, or until the harshness of capitalist society puts an end to the popular illusions which made them possible.

Under capitalism man is controlled by a pitiless code of laws which are usually beyond his comprehension. The alienated human individual is tied to society in its aggregate by an invisible umbilical cord — the law of value. It is operative in all aspects of his life, shaping its course and destiny.

The laws of capitalism, invisible and blind to the majority, act upon the individual without his thinking about it. He sees only the vastness of a seemingly infinite horizon before him. That is how it is painted by capitalist propagandists who purport to draw a lesson from the example of Rockefeller — whether or not it is true — about the possibilities of success.

The amount of poverty and suffering required for the emergence of a Rockefeller, and the amount of depravity that the accumulation of a fortune of such magnitude entails, are left out of the picture and it is not always possible to make the people in general see this.

(A discussion of how the workers in the imperialist countries are losing the spirit of working-class internationalism due to a certain degree of complicity in the exploitation of the dependent countries, and how this weakens the combativity of the masses in the imperialist countries, would be appropriate here; but that is a theme which goes beyond the aim of these notes.)

The Individual Defined

In any case the road to success is pictured as one beset with perils but one which, it would seem, an individual with the proper qualities can overcome to attain the goal. The reward is seen in the distance, the way is lonely. Further it is a route for wolves, one can succeed only at the cost of failure to others.

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

I think it makes the most sense to recognize his quality of incompleteness, of being an unfinished product. The sermons of the past have been transposed to the present in the individual consciousness and a continual labor is necessary to eradicate them.

The process is two-sided: On the one side, society acts through direct and indirect education; on the other, the individual subjects himself to a process of conscious self-education.

The new society being formed has to compete fiercely with the past. The latter makes itself felt in the consciousness in which the residue of an education systematically oriented towards isolating the individual still weighs heavily, and also through the very character of the transitional period in which the market relationships of the past still persist. The commodity is the economic cell of capitalist society; so long as it exists its effects will make themselves felt in the organization of production and, consequently, in consciousness.

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

In these countries capitalism had developed to a degree sufficient to make its effects felt by the people in one way or another; but, having exhausted all its possibilities, it was not its internal contradictions which caused these systems to explode. The struggle for liberation from a foreign oppressor, the misery caused by external events like war whose consequences make the privileged classes bear down more heavily on the oppressed, liberation movements aimed at the overthrow of neo-colonial regimes — these are the usual factors in this kind of explosion. Conscious action does the rest.

In these countries a complete education for social labor has not yet taken place and wealth is far from being within the reach of the masses, simply through the process of appropriation. Underdevelopment on the one hand, and the inevitable flight of capital on the other, make a rapid transition impossible without sacrifices. There remains a long way to go in constructing the economic base, and the temptation to follow the beaten track of material interest as the moving lever of accelerated development is very great.

There is the danger that the forest won't be seen for the trees. Following the will-o'-the-wisp method of achieving socialism with the help of the dull instruments which link us to capitalism (the commodity as the economic cell, profitability, individual material interest as a lever, etc.) can lead into a blind alley.

Further, you get there after having traveled a long distance in which there were many crossroads and it is hard to figure out just where it was that you took the wrong turn. The economic foundation which has been formed has already done its work of undermining the development of consciousness. To build communism, you must build new men, as well as the new economic base.

Hence it is very important to choose correctly the instrument for mobilizing the masses. Basically, this instrument must be moral in character, without neglecting, however, a correct utilization of the material stimulus — especially of a social character.

As I have already said, in moments of great peril it is easy to muster a powerful response to moral

stimuli; but for them to retain their effect requires the development of a consciousness in which there is a new priority of values. Society as a whole must be converted into a gigantic school.

In rough outline this phenomenon is similar to the process by which capitalist consciousness was formed in its initial epoch. Capitalism uses force but it also educates the people to its system. Direct propaganda is carried out by those entrusted with explaining the inevitability of class society, either through some theory of divine origin or through a mechanical theory of natural selection.

This lulls the masses since they see themselves as being oppressed by an evil against which it is impossible to struggle. Immediately following comes hope of improvement — and in this, capitalism differed from the preceding caste systems which offered no possibilities for advancement.

For some people, the ideology of the caste system will remain in effect: The reward for the obedient after death is to be transported to some fabulous other world where in accordance with the old belief good people are rewarded. For other people there is this innovation: The division of society is predestined, but through work, initiative, etc., individuals can rise out of the class to which they belong.

These two ideologies and the myth of the self-made man have to be profoundly hypocritical: They consist in self-interested demonstrations that the lie of permanent class divisions is a truth.

In our case direct education acquires a much greater importance. The explanation is convincing because it is true; no subterfuge is needed. It is carried on by the state's educational apparatus as a function of general, technical and ideological culture through such agencies as the Ministry of Education and the party's informational apparatus.

Education takes hold of the masses and the new attitude tends to become a habit; the masses continue to absorb it and to influence those who have not yet educated themselves. This is the indirect form of educating the masses, as powerful as the other.

Shaping of the New Man

But the process is a conscious one; the individual continually feels the impact of the new social power and perceives that he does not entirely measure up to its standards. Under the pressure of indirect education, he tries to adjust himself to a norm which he feels is just and which his own lack of development had prevented him from reaching theretofore. He educates himself.

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

Leaving out of consideration those whose lack of education makes them take the solitary road toward satisfying their own personal ambitions, there are those, even within this new panorama of a unified march forward, who have a tendency to remain isolated from the masses accompanying them. But what is important is that everyday men are continuing to acquire more consciousness of the need for

their incorporation into society and, at the same time, of their importance as the movers of society.

They no longer travel completely alone over trackless routes toward distant desires. They follow their vanguard, consisting of the party, the advanced workers, the advanced men who walk in unity with the masses and in close communion with them. The vanguard has its eyes fixed on the future and its rewards, but this is not seen as something personal. The reward is the new society in which men will have attained new features: the society of communist man.

The road is long and full of difficulties. At times we wander from the path and must turn back; at other times we go too fast and separate ourselves from the masses; on occasions we go too slow and feel the hot breath of those treading on our heels. In our zeal as revolutionists we try to move ahead as fast as possible, clearing the way, but knowing we must draw our sustenance from the mass and that it can advance more rapidly only if we inspire it by our example.

The fact that there remains a division into two main groups (excluding, of course, that minority not participating for one reason or another in the building of socialism), despite the importance given to moral stimuli, indicates the relative lack of development of social consciousness.

The vanguard group is ideologically more advanced than the mass; the latter understands the new values, but not sufficiently. While among the former there has been a qualitative change which enables them to make sacrifices to carry out their function as an advance guard, the latter go only half way and must be subjected to stimuli and pressures of a certain intensity. That is the dictatorship of the proletarian operating not only on the defeated class but also on individuals of the victorious class.

All of this means that for total success a series of mechanisms, of revolutionary institutions, is needed. Fitted into the pattern of the multitudes marching towards the future is the concept of a harmonious aggregate of channels, steps, restraints, and smoothly working mechanisms which would facilitate that advance by ensuring the efficient selection of those destined to march in the vanguard which, itself, bestows rewards on those who fulfill their duties, and punishments on those who attempt to obstruct the development of the new society.

This institutionalization of the revolution has not yet been achieved. We are looking for something which will permit a perfect identification between the government and the community in its entirety, something appropriate to the special conditions of the building of socialism, while avoiding to the maximum degree a mere transplanting of the commonplaces of bourgeois democracy - like legislative chambers - into the society in formation.

Some experiments aimed at the gradual development of institutionalized forms of the revolution have been made, but without undue haste. The greatest obstacle has been our fear lest any appearance of formality might separate us from the masses and from the individual, might make us lose sight of the ultimate and most important revolutionary aspira-

tion, which is to see man liberated from his alienation.

Despite the lack of institutions, which must be corrected gradually, the masses are now making history as a conscious aggregate of individuals fighting for the same cause. Man under socialism, despite his apparent standardization, is more complete; despite the lack of perfect machinery for it, his opportunities for expressing himself and making himself felt in the social organism are infinitely greater.

Development of Consciousness

It is still necessary to strengthen his conscious participation, individual and collective, in all the mechanisms of management and production, and to link it to the idea of the need for technical and ideological education, so that he sees how closely interdependent these processes are and how their advancement is parallel. In this way he will reach total consciousness of his social function, which is equivalent to his full realization as a human being, once the chains of alienation are broken.

This will be translated concretely into the regaining of his true nature through liberated labor and the expression of his proper human condition through culture and art.

In order for him to develop in the first of the above categories labor must acquire a new status. Man dominated by commodity relationships will cease to exist and a system will be created which establishes a quota for the fulfillment of his social duty. The means of production belong to society and the machine will merely be the trench where duty is fulfilled.

Man will begin to see himself mirrored in his work and to realize his full stature as a human being through the object created, through the work accomplished. Work will no longer entail surrendering a part of his being in the form of labor-power sold, which no longer belongs to him, but will represent an emanation of himself, which would reflect his contribution to the common life, the fulfillment of his social duty.

We are doing everything possible to give labor this new status of social duty and to link it, on the one side, with the development of a technology which will create the conditions for greater freedom, and, on the other side, with voluntary work based on a Marxist appreciation of the fact that man truly reaches a full human condition when he produces without being driven by the physical need to sell his labor as a commodity.

Of course there are other factors involved even when labor is voluntary: Man has not transformed all the coercive factors around him into conditioned reflexes of a social character and he still produces under the pressures of his society. (Fidel calls this moral compulsion.)

Man still needs to undergo a complete spiritual rebirth in his attitude towards his work, freed from the direct pressure of his social environment though linked to it by his new habits. That will be communism.

The change in consciousness will not take place automatically, just as it doesn't take place automati-

cally in the economy. The alterations are slow and are not harmonious; there are periods of acceleration, pauses and even retrogressions.

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

If we add to this the scholasticism which has hindered the development of Marxist philosophy and impeded the systematic development of the theory of the transition period, we must agree that we are still in diapers and that it is necessary to devote ourselves to investigating all the principal characteristics of this period before elaborating an economic and political theory of greater scope.

The resulting theory will, no doubt, put great stress on the two pillars of the construction of socialism: the education of the new man and the development of technology. There is much for us to do in regard to both but delay is least excusable in regard to the concepts of technology, since here it is not a question of going forward blindly but of following over a long stretch of road already opened up by the world's more advanced countries. This is why Fidel pounds away with such insistence on the need for the technological training of our people and especially of its vanguard.

In the field of ideas not involving productive activities it is easier to distinguish the division between material and spiritual necessity. For a long time man has been trying to free himself from alienation through culture and art. While he dies every day during the eight or more hours that he sells his labor, he comes to life afterwards in his spiritual activities.

But this remedy bears the germs of the same sickness; it is as a solitary individual that he seeks communion with his environment. He defends his oppressed individuality through the artistic medium and reacts to esthetic ideas as a unique being whose aspiration is to remain untarnished.

All that he is doing, however, is attempting to escape. The law of value is not simply a naked reflection of productive relations: The monopoly capitalists — even while employing purely empirical methods — weave around art a complicated web which converts it into a willing tool. The superstructure of society ordains the type of art in which the artist has to be educated. Rebels are subdued by its machinery and only rare talents may create their own work. The rest become shameless hacks or are crushed.

A school of artistic "freedom" is created, but its values also have limits, even if they are imperceptible until we come into conflict with them — that is to say, until the real problem of man and his alienation arises. Meaningless anguish and vulgar amusement thus become convenient safety valves for human anxiety. The idea of using art as a weapon of protest is combatted.

If one plays by the rules, he gets all the honors:

such honors as a monkey might get for performing pirouettes. The condition that has been imposed is that one cannot try to escape from the invisible cage.

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

Effect of "Socialist Realism"

In those countries which had gone through a similar process, they tried to combat such tendencies by an exaggerated dogmatism. General culture was virtually tabooed and it was declared that the acme of cultural aspiration was the formally exact representation of nature. This was later transformed into a mechanical representation of the social reality they wanted to show: the ideal society almost without conflicts or contradictions which they sought to create.

Socialism is young and has made errors. Many times revolutionaries lack the knowledge and intellectual courage needed to meet the task of developing the new man with methods different from the conventional ones — and the conventional methods suffer from the influences of the society which created them.

(Again we raise the theme of the relationship between form and content.)

Disorientation is widespread, and the problems of material construction preoccupy us. There are no artists of great authority who, at the same time, have great revolutionary authority. The men of the party must take this task to hand and seek attainment of the main goal, the education of the people.

But then they sought simplification. They sought an art that would be understood by everyone — the kind of "art" *functionaries* understand. True artistic values were disregarded and the problem of general culture was reduced to taking some things from the socialist present and some from the dead past (since dead, not dangerous). Thus Socialist Realism arose upon the foundations of the art of the last century.

But the realistic art of the 19th Century is also a class art, more purely capitalist perhaps than this decadent art of the 20th Century which reveals the anguish of alienated man. In the field of culture capitalism has given all that it had to give and nothing of it remains but the offensive stench of a decaying corpse, today's decadence in art.

Why then should we try to find the only valid prescription for art in the frozen forms of Socialist Realism? We cannot counterpose the concept of Socialist Realism to that of freedom, because the latter does not yet exist and will not exist until the complete development of the new society. Let us not attempt, from the pontifical throne of realism-at-any-cost, to condemn all the art forms which have evolved since the first half of the 19th Century for we would then fall into the Proudhonian mistake of returning to the past, of putting a straitjacket on the artistic ex-

pression of the man who is being born and is in the process of making himself.

What is needed is the development of an ideological-cultural mechanism which permits both free inquiry and the uprooting of the weeds which multiply so easily in the fertile soil of state subsidies.

In our country we don't find the error of mechanical realism but rather its opposite, and that is so because the need for the creation of a new man has not been understood, a new man who would represent neither the ideas of the 19th Century nor those of our own decadent and morbid century.

What we must create is the man of the 21st Century, although this is still a subjective and not a realized aspiration. It is precisely this man of the next century who is one of the fundamental objectives of our work and, to the extent that we achieve concrete successes on a theoretical plane — or vice versa — to the extent we draw theoretical conclusions of a broad character on the basis of our concrete research, we shall have made an important contribution to Marxism-Leninism, to the cause of humanity.

Reaction against the man of the 19th Century has brought us a relapse into the decadence of the 20th Century; it is not a fatal error, but we must overcome it, lest we open a breach for revisionism.

The great multitudes continue to develop; the new ideas continue to attain their proper force within society; the material possibilities for the full development of all members of society make the task much more fruitful. The present is a time for struggle; the future is ours.

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

Our task is to prevent the present generation, torn asunder by its conflicts, from becoming perverted and from perverting new generations. We must not bring into being either docile servants of official thought, or scholarship students who live at the expense of the state — practicing "freedom." Already there are revolutionaries coming who will sing the song of the new man in the true voice of the people. This is a process which takes time.

In our society the youth and the party play an important role.

The former is especially important because it is the malleable clay from which the new man can be shaped without any of the old faults. The youth is treated in accordance with our aspirations. Its education steadily grows more full and we are not forgetting about its integration into the labor force from the beginning. Our scholarship students do physical work during their vacations or along with their studying. Work is a reward in some cases, a means of education in others, but it is never a punishment. A new generation is being born.

The party is a vanguard organization. The best workers are proposed by their fellow workers for

admission into it. It is a minority but it has great authority because of the quality of its cadres. Our aspiration is that the party will become a mass party, but only when the masses have reached the level of the vanguard, that is, when they are educated for communism.

Our work constantly aims at this education. The party is the living example; its cadres should be teachers of hard work and sacrifice. They should lead the masses by their deeds to the completion of the revolutionary task which involves years of hard struggle against the difficulties of construction, class enemies, the sicknesses of the past, imperialism.

Now I would like to explain the role played by personality, by man as the individual leader of the masses which make history. This has been our experience; it is not a prescription.

Fidel gave the revolution its impulse in the first years, and also its leadership. He always strengthened it, but there is a good group who are developing in the same way as the outstanding leader and there is a great mass which follows its leaders because it has faith in them, and it has faith in them because they have been able to interpret its desires.

This is not a matter of how many pounds of meat one might be able to eat, nor of how many times a year someone can go to the beach, nor how many ornaments from abroad you might be able to buy with present salaries. What is really involved is that the individual feels more complete, with much more internal richness and much more responsibility.

The individual in our country knows that the illustrious epoch in which it was determined that he live is one of sacrifice; he is familiar with sacrifice. The first came to know it in the Sierra Maestra and wherever else they fought; afterwards all of Cuba came to know it. Cuba is the vanguard of the Americas and must make sacrifices because it occupies the post of the advanced guard, because it shows the road to full freedom to the masses of Latin America.

Within the country, the leadership has to carry out its vanguard role, and it must be said with all sincerity that, in a real revolution to which one gives himself entirely and from which he expects no material remuneration, the task of the revolutionary vanguard is at one and the same time glorious and agonizing.

At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality. Perhaps it is one of the great dramas of the leader that he must combine a passionate spirit with a cold intelligence and make painful decisions without contracting a muscle. Our vanguard revolutionaries must idealize this love of the people, the most sacred cause, and make it one and indivisible. They cannot descend to the level of the ordinary man's daily expenditure of sentimentality even though little.

The leaders of the revolution have children just beginning to talk who are not learning to call their fathers by name; wives from whom they have to be

separated as part of the general sacrifice of their lives to bring the revolution to its fulfillment; the circle of their friends is strictly limited to the number of fellow revolutionists. There is no life outside of the revolution.

In these circumstances one must have a great deal of humanity and a strong sense of justice and truth in order not to fall into extreme dogmatism and cold scholasticism, into an isolation from the masses. We must strive every day so that this love of living humanity will be transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force.

The revolutionary, the ideological motor force of the revolution, is consumed by his uninterrupted activity, which can have no other end than death until the building of socialism on a world scale has been accomplished. If his revolutionary zeal is blunted when the most urgent tasks are being accomplished on a local scale and if he forgets his proletarian internationalism, the revolution which he leads will cease to be an inspiring force and he will sink into a comfortable lethargy which imperialism, our irreconcilable enemy, will utilize well. Proletarian internationalism is a duty, but it is also a revolutionary necessity. So we educate our people.

Of course there are dangers in the present situation, and not only that of dogmatism, not only that of weakening the ties with the masses in the midst of the great task. There is also the danger of weaknesses. If a man thinks that dedicating his entire life to the revolution means that he cannot allow his mind to be disturbed by the fact that his son lacks certain things, or that his children's shoes are worn out, or that his family lacks some necessity, then he is entering into rationalizations which open his mind to infection by the seeds of future corruption.

In our case we have maintained that our children should have or should lack those things that the children of the average man have or lack, and that our families should understand this and strive for it. The revolution is made through man, but man must forge his revolutionary spirit day by day.

Thus we march on. At the head of the immense column — we are neither afraid nor ashamed to say it — is Fidel. After him come the best cadres of the party, and immediately behind them, so close that we feel its tremendous force, comes the people in its entirety, a solid mass of individualities moving toward a common goal, individuals who have at-

tained consciousness of what must be done, men who fight to escape from the realm of necessity and to enter that of freedom.

This great throng becomes organized; its clarity of program corresponds to its consciousness of the necessity of organization. It is no longer a dispersed force divisible into thousands of fragments thrown into space like splinters from a hand grenade, trying by any means to achieve some protection against an uncertain future, in desperate struggle with their fellows.

We know that sacrifices lie before us and that we must pay a price for the heroic act of being a vanguard nation. We leaders know that we must pay a price for the right to say that we are at the head of a people which is at the head of the Americas. Each and every one of us must pay his exact quota of sacrifice, conscious that he will get his reward in the satisfaction of fulfilling a duty, conscious that he will advance with all toward the image of the new man dimly visible on the horizon.

Let me attempt some conclusions:

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

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

Our freedom and its daily maintenance are paid for in blood and sacrifice.

Our sacrifice is conscious: an installment payment on the freedom that we are building.

The road is long and in part unknown. We understand our limitations. We will create the man of the 21st Century — we, ourselves.

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

Individual personality plays a role in mobilizing and leading the masses insofar as it embodies the highest virtues and aspirations of the people and does not wander from the path.

It is the vanguard group which clears the way, the best among the good, the party.

The basic clay of our work is the youth. We place our hope in them and prepare them to take the banner from our hands.

If this inarticulate letter clarifies anything it has accomplished the objective which motivated it. I close with our greeting, which is as much of a ritual as a handshake or an "Ave Maria Purissima." — FATHERLAND OR DEATH!