

[Speech delivered by Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz during the presentation of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, at the "Chaplin" theater October 3, 1965. \[1\]](#)

Date:

03/10/1965

Distinguished guests;

Comrades of the Central Committee.

Comrades of the provincial, regional and sectional committees.

Comrade Secretaries of the cells of our party.

I am compelled to begin with a topic which has not direct relation with the purpose of this meeting but since it is a topical question and one of a political interest, I cannot refrain from referring to it.

It is the outcome of the proposal made on September 28, with regard to events that had been taking place for the last three years, and which has been treacherously manipulated by the enemy to wage a campaign against our Revolution. It is the case of people who, upon the suspension of flights between Cuba and Miami, were left with one foot here and the other one there.

In order to unmask Yankee imperialism once and for all in this regard, we made the statement on September 28, which you know about. And when they later said that the statement was somewhat vague and ambiguous, and that it had not been delivered through diplomatic channels, we made a second and very clear and very concrete statement so we could settle the dispute once and for all.

Today, the cables carry the news regarding the final reply by the United States Government in this respect.

I am going to read the news brought by these cables.

In short, it reads:

"President Johnson"-this is an AP cable-"President Johnson announced today that he will strive for a diplomatic understanding with Cuba so Cubans who want to leave their country can take asylum in the United States."

This thing about "diplomatic understandings" means an agreement through diplomatic channels with regard to this problem.

It reads: "I have requested the State Department to seek through the Swiss Embassy, entrusted with U.S. affairs, the consent of the Government of Cuba in a request to the president of the International Red Cross." It also says: "I have given instructions to the Departments of State, Justice, Health, Education, and Welfare, to make the necessary arrangements to enable those who seek freedom in Cuba to enter the United States in an orderly manner."

In another cable with more news, it adds: Mr. Johnson also stated:

“Once more this has revealed the mark of defeat of a regime. When many of its citizens freely elect to leave the nation where they were born to go to a home of hope, the future harbors little hope for any government when the present does not permit hopes for its people.” He said that “the refugees would be welcome with the thought that someday they can return to their country to find it rid of terror and free from fear.”

In other words, they apparently did not have any other alternative, nor any other way out. It means, in the first place, that we have won a battle for freedom. (APPLAUSE)

Mr. Johnson, would not be Johnson, nor would he be President of the United States, nor would he be a Yankee, if he did not use this proverbial pharisaic discourse to accompany this statement with all this condiment regarding the hopes of those who will leave for the United States in search of freedom and which can offer nothing to their future when at the present time they only offer the prospect for the citizens of a country of having to abandon their nation of origin. He also talks about the Red Cross. Therefore, we consider it necessary to reply to Mr. Johnson on these matters which have nothing to do with the matter itself which we proposed. And we should make some pertinent remarks on all this.

First of all, the Yankee news agencies and many of that country's officials as well as some news agencies which are not Yankee, but which apparently through hearing these arguments over and over, such as Reuters and France Press, have echoed the statement that this meant a change in the policy with regard to those who wanted to leave the nation—and this is absolutely false. Since its outset of the Revolution, there has been only one policy in regard to this. From the beginning of the Revolution, until the Missile crisis, all who wished to leave this country and who had received permission from the United States were leaving without being stopped.

And when as a result of the Missile crisis they stopped the flights to Cuba there was not a change in the policy of the Revolutionary Government, because through the other routes, that is the route of Spain and the route of Mexico, nearly 300 persons continued to leave monthly, in other words, more than 3,000 persons per year. There has not been the slightest change in the policy about those who wish to leave the country. What we have done is to unmask the bad faith and the hypocrisy of Yankee imperialism, the only responsible for the routes to leave normally being closed in order to promote a certain type of clandestine and risky departures with the only purpose of making propaganda.

Mr. Johnson probably ignores that during the in the United States war of independence to break free from English colonial rule, thousands upon thousands of North Americans left their country after the independence and went to Canada.

In all Revolutions whether it be the French Revolution or the Russian Revolution or the Cuban Revolution, this occurrence of departure or migration of the privileged classes is a historical fact. If the departure from a country, if the departure of men and women who are born in a country to another country could be an indication of the characteristics of a social regime, the best example is the case would be Puerto Rico, an island which the Yankee imperialism took over and which it has maintained under an exploiting, colonial regime and therefore the reason for which more than one million of the men and women born in that country have had to migrate to the United States. And Mr. Johnson forgot about Puerto Rico and the more than one million Puerto Ricans who live in New York under the hardest living conditions in the poorest neighborhoods and doing the most humiliating jobs.

Naturally, this talk about the Red Cross is a trick of Mr. Johnson in order to dramatize the matter. Now, who really has said that to process passports and grant permission for some planes to land in Miami, the Red Cross must intervene? What does the Red Cross have to do with this? This does not have anything to do with an earthquake, a catastrophe or a war, but simple proceedings to authorize the arrival to the United States, authorizing the landing of the planes or the arrival of the ships.

We do not need the Red Cross at all for this. The Red Cross in any case, could intervene to propose to the United States the lift of the criminal measure through which the sale of medications to Cuba is banned. For that the International Red Cross would be really useful. (APPLAUSE)

In any case, the Red Cross could do a better job in South Vietnam (APPLAUSE) where the Yankee soldiers murder thousands, murder and torture the citizens of that nation by the thousands, or in North Vietnam where the criminal Yankee bombings do not distinguish one thing from another. They bomb cities just like they bomb villages, schools, and hospitals.

The Red Cross could have to do something in Santo Domingo where the invading soldiers commit all kinds of outrages against the people while occupy the students' schools. (APPLAUSE)

The Red Cross could intervene in the United States to prevent the massacres of Negro citizens like the one that took place recently in Los Angeles, California. (APPLAUSE)

However, for this matter, Mr. Johnson, the Red Cross need not be present. It is enough for us to hold discussions with the representatives of the Swiss Embassy, who are the representatives for the U.S. interests in Cuba, and we can perfectly make agreements with them on any proceeding. No one else need be present; we accept the sincerity and responsibility of the Swiss officials. Now, if the U.S. Government does not have confidence or does not believe in the ability of the Swiss Embassy, that is the problem of the U.S. Government. (APPLAUSE)

Now, speaking very seriously, on these questions of freedom, I would like to know if Mr. Johnson would like to answer a couple of questions. Since we have permitted all those who wish to leave Cuba since the beginning of the Revolution to do so, inasmuch as we have never denied permission to those who have wanted to leave to visit their relatives and return, also if there are Cubans who have relatives in the United States and wish to be reunited with them, there are also Cubans who have relatives in the United States and they do not wish to abandon their country. (APPLAUSE) And inasmuch as Mr. Johnson stood by the Statue of Liberty and took the trouble to sprinkle his statements with this nonsense about liberty, I ask him if the United States will allow Cubans in the United States to visit their relatives in Cuba and then return to the United States. (APPLAUSE) If the United States is willing to permit Cubans who do not wish to live in the United States to visit their relatives in the United States and return to Cuba, and finally if the United States is disposed to allow U.S. citizens to visit Cuba. (APPLAUSE)

Because that same government which says that a country travels the wrong path if its citizens leave that nation, we can tell them that a nation could travel a worse path, despite the fact that it is a nation which publicizes a great deal and thinks itself as a nation of liberties. Despite the fact that it has been able to attain the standard of economic development they have reached, they are afraid to grant permission for U.S. citizens to visit this country, which is so slandered about fear and terror-as they call it. (APPLAUSE)

Therefore, here is the second question to the U.S. Government: We call upon you also to permit those Cubans who live in the United States to come to Cuba to visit their relatives who do not wish to go live in the United States, and to permit those relative who live in Cuba and do not want to leave Cuba, to go to the United States and return. Finally, we ask that they permit the students or any U.S. citizens to come to visit Cuba in the same manner that we permit any Cuban citizen to leave or return (APPLAUSE); that the U.S. Government permit the Negro representatives of the U.S. Negro organizations to visit Cuba, or the organizations of the defenders of civil rights to see how, with the disappearance of the exploitation of man, to see how racial discrimination had ended for good in our nation. (APPLAUSE)

And let us see if Mr. Johnson, before the world and the U.S. people has an answer to this call which is not gibberish. We compel him to respond.

We maintain our position, we maintain our declaration and we wait for the relevant meeting on this

matter to be requested by the Swiss representatives from the Swiss Embassy when they receive the pertinent instructions from the U.S. Government. But we hope to see whether Mr. Johnson has a way of reply to this call.

And since they talk so much, since they brag so much about freedom, enough of this talk about false freedoms; enough of this talk about abstract freedoms. The facts have shown that it is here where we are creating a world of freedom, not there. (APPLAUSE) It is such a free world that we do not want to force anyone to live in this society against his will, because our socialist society, our communist society, must be eminently a truly free association of citizens. (APPLAUSE)

And although it is true that certain citizens educated in those ideas of the past and in that way of life of the past prefer to go to the United States, it is also true that this country has become the sanctuary of the Revolutionaries of this continent. (APPLAUSE) It is also true that we consider worthy of the hospitality of this people and this land, not only those born here but also all men and women who share our own tongue and of our own culture—and even when they do not share our own tongue, of similar historical and ethnic origins, or similar history of exploitation. And they have a right to come to this country and, all those who have wanted to, have made use of this right—those pursued by bloody and imperialist oligarchies. Many men and women who were born in other sister nations of this continent have come to this country to live permanently or temporarily. Many technicians and many professionals from various parts of America have come to live and work in this country for many years.

This is not just a country of Cubans—this is a country of revolutionaries. (APPLAUSE) The Revolutionaries of the continent have a right to consider themselves our brothers, and they are worthy of this right. This includes North American Revolutionaries (APPLAUSE), because some leaders, like Robert Williams, fiercely persecuted there, found asylum in this land. Thus, just as he, so can those being persecuted by reactionaries and exploiters find asylum here. It does not matter if they speak English and are born in the United States. This is the motherland of the revolutionaries of this continent, just as the United States is the inevitable asylum of all the henchmen, of all the embezzlers (APPLAUSE), of all the exploiters (APPLAUSE), of all the reactionaries of this continent. Because there is not a thief, there is not an exploiter, there is not a reactionary, and there is not a criminal, for whom the United States does not keep its gates open.

And with this, we have replied to Mr. Johnson's words spoken under his discolored Statue of Liberty), which no one knows what it represents, that hodgepodge of stone and hypocrisy, unless it is what Yankee imperialism means to the world today.

Now we are going to turn to our business, to matters of our party. Because I think that the news reports coming from here, those regarding our social successes, our economic successes, and our political successes, are very bad news for the Yankee imperialists.

Naturally, anything which strengthens and advances the Revolution, anything that allows us to make the best progress, is of very high concern to them. Because of this, they will return—yes, some day they will long to come back, repentant, a large portion of the ones that left. But when Johnson talks about returning here as liberators we could tell him that this is an “autumn night's dream.” (laughs)

All the nation has received with joy and enthusiasm the news of the constitution of our Central Committee. The names of the comrades which make up this committee as well as their history are well known. If all of them are not known by all our people, all are known by a large and important part of the nation. We have committed ourselves to choosing those who in our judgment represent in the most complete manner the history of our Revolution. Those who in addition to the struggle for the Revolution, as well as the struggle for the consolidation, defense, and development of the Revolution have worked and have fought with determination and tirelessly.

There is no heroic episode in the history of our country during the last years where they have not been present. There is no sacrifice, there is no fight, there is no prowess, civilian or military, heroic or

creative, in which they are not represented. There is no social revolutionary sector which is not represented. I do not speak about organizations.

There are men who for a long time were bearers of the socialist ideas, just like founder of the first communist party, Comrade Fabio Grobart. (APPLAUSE) Cases like that of Comrade Helena Gil, (APPLAUSE) whose extraordinary work leading the schools, were more than 40,000 peasant women from the mountain have studied, and where thousands of teachers have been trained, where today more than 50,000 youths and children study, and which we consider a truly exemplary job. Or the case of comrade Arteaga (APPLAUSE), who besides his history of struggle, has worked for seven years in the agriculture sector and has developed successful plans, in some cases successful plans like the Escambray agricultural plan. (APPLAUSE) Cases of comrades like Lieutenant Tarrao, whom many have not heard of, but who is a comrade the Ministry of Interior placed at the head of the rehabilitation plans at the Isle of Pines (APPLAUSE) where he has developed with an exemplary and unselfish attitude, a brilliant job about which a lot will be said and written someday.

I have mentioned cases of comrades, some well-known and other less known. The list of the comrades from the Revolutionary Armed Forces would be endless. (APPLAUSE) For their history before and after the triumph, as an example of model revolutionaries, of tireless workers, as an example of excellent students, in the development of culture, in improving the standards in education and general culture and of the political preparedness, comrades of extraordinary modesty, in whose hands the defense of the motherland has fundamentally been placed during the last seven years of dangers and of threats.

It is not necessary to talk about the best known comrades. This does not mean that the only valuable people of the nation are here, far from that. Our nation has many outstanding people, and above all, a promotion of new comrades in full progress, which one day without a doubt will come to hold that responsibility and that honor.

It we ask ourselves who is missing, without a doubt we would say that there are some comrades missing. It would be impossible to constitute a Central Committee with 100 revolutionary comrades without many cadres who are not included. However, what matters is not those who are missing—they will come later. What matters is those who are here and what they represent. We know that the party and the people have welcomed with satisfaction the Central Committee which has been constituted. (APPLAUSE)

This committee, meeting yesterday, adopted several agreements.

Firstly, it ratified the measures adopted by the former national leadership, ratified the politburo, the secretariat, and the working commissions, as well as the comrade elected to the office of organization secretary. (APPLAUSE) Moreover, it adapted to important agreements, which had also been suggested by the former national leadership.

One of them relates to our official newspaper: instead of two newspapers or a political nature, as were being published, we will concentrate the human resources, concentrate machinery and paper, in order to publish a new, single morning newspaper of a political nature, in addition to the newspaper EL MUNDO, which is not precisely a political orientation newspaper; to combine all these resources and to make a new daily newspaper which will bear the name of GRANMA, (APPLAUSE) the symbol of our Revolutionary concept and of our path.

The other agreement is even more important, dealing with the name of our party. First we were the ORI (Spanish language acronym for Integrated Revolutionary Organizations), during the first stages in the unification of the Revolutionary forces, with its positive and negative aspects. Then we were the United Party of the Socialist Revolution, which represented extraordinary progress, an extraordinary advance in the creation of our political apparatus, an effort of three years in which, from the unlimited pool militants from our people, countless new party members coming from within the ranks of our workers, enabling us to become today what we represent in numbers, but, above all, what we represent in terms

of quality. The name United Party of the Socialist Revolution says much, but it does not say it all. The name still gives the idea of something that had to be united, that still recalls the origins of each one. Since we felt that we have already reached a stage in which all types of labels and things that distinguish some Revolutionaries from others must disappear once and for all and forever and that we have already reached the fortunate point in the history of our Revolution in which we can say that there is only one kind of Revolutionary, and since it is necessary that the name of our party say, not what we were yesterday, but what we are today and what we will be tomorrow, what, in your opinion, is the name our party should have? (Crows make tumultuous indistinct response of Communist)

What is it, what is, comrades? what is it a comrade from here, ? The comrades from there, the comrades over there, the comrades over there? The Cuban Communist Party! (APPLAUSE)

Well, that is the name which, by interpreting the development of our Party, the revolutionary conscience of its members, and the objectives of our Revolution, our first Central Committee adopted yesterday.

And that is quite proper, as we explained to the comrades of the committee yesterday; the word "communist" has been much slued and much denigrated throughout centuries. There have been communists throughout history, men of communist ideas, men who conceived a way of living different from the society in which they were born. Those who thought in a communist manner in other times were considered, for example, utopian communists who 500 years ago because in their idealistic approach aspired for a type of society which was not possible at that time given the very poor stage of development of productive forces. Of course man could not return to the communist from which primitive man originated, to live in a primitive form of communism, unless there was such a degree of development of his productive forces and such a method for the utilization of those forces, a social mode of using those forces, so that material goods and services could be produced in more than sufficient quantities to satisfy the needs of man.

All the exploiters, all the privileged always hated the word "communist" as if it were a crime. They anathematized the word "communist" and that is why when Marx and Engels wrote their Communist Manifesto which gave origin to a new Revolutionary theory, to a scientific interpretation of human society, human history, they said "a phantom is sweeping Europe, and that is the phantom of communism," because privileged classes viewed those ideas as a phantom, with true fear. Moreover the privileged classes in any era of history always viewed new ideas with extraordinary fear.

Roman society was also terrorized in its era by the Christian ideas when these ideas rose in the world. And they were at one time the ideas of the poor and the slaves of those times. It was as a result of their hatred against these new ideas the Roman society casted countless numbers of human beings into the flames, and into the circus. In like fashion, during the Middle Ages, in the era of feudalism, new ideas were persecuted and their originators slandered and treated in the worst possible manner. The new ideas that came to exist with the emergence of bourgeoisie during feudalism, whether those ideas adopted political, philosophical, or religious positions, they were cruelly anathematized and persecuted. The reactionary classes have used all means to anathematize and slander new ideas.

Thus all the power and all the means at their disposal are not enough for their purposes of slandering communist ideas, as if the desire for a society where man will not be an exploiter of man but a true brother of man, as if the dream of a society in which all human beings are equal in fact and in law, not just a simple constitutional clause such as those contained in the bourgeois constitutions where they say that all men are born free and equal, as if that could be said equally of a child born in a slum, in a poor cradle, and of a child born in a golden cradle, as if it could ever be said in a society of exploiters and exploited, or rich and poor, that all men are born free and equal, as if all those men were called upon in life to have the same opportunity.

The perennial dream of men, a dream possible today, of a society-without exploiters or exploited, has drawn the hate and the acrimony of all the exploiters.

The imperialists, as if they were offending us, as if it were an offense, speak of the communist Government of Cuba just as the work "Mambi"(as the Cuban independence fighters were called) was used against our liberators as an offense, in like fashion they attempt to use the work "communist" as an offense. And the work "communist" is not an offense for us but an honor. (APPLAUSE)

It is the word which symbolizes the aspiration of a large party of humanity and hundreds and hundreds of millions of human beings are concretely working for it today, within 100-years, there will be no greater honor nor will there be anything more natural and logical than to be called "communists." (APPLAUSE)

We are headed toward a communist society and if the imperialists were asking for it, well now they got it. (APPLAUSE) From now on, gentlemen of the UP and AP, when you call us "communists" you know you are calling us the most honorable thing you can call us. (APPLAUSE)

There is an absence in our Central Committee of one who possess all the merits and all the virtues in the highest degree to belong to it and who, however, is not among the members of the Central Committee.

Around this the enemy had weave a thousand conjectures. The enemy has tried to confuse and to instill discord and doubt. And patiently, because it was necessary to wait, we have waited.

That is the difference between the Revolutionary and the counterrevolutionary, between the Revolutionary and the imperialist. We Revolutionaries know how to wait. We know how to be patient. We never despair and the reactionaries, the counterrevolutionaries, the imperialists continue in perennial desperation. They live in perennial anguish, in a perennial lying of the most ridiculous, of the most childish manner.

When we read some of the things said by those officials, some of those Yankee Senators, one wanders: "How is it possible that this gentlemen is not in a stable instead of being a member of what is called "Congress." (APPLAUSE) Some of them speak real nonsense. Any they have an incredible appetite for lying. They cannot live without lying. They live in anguish.

If the Revolutionary government states something, which is what it has always been doing, such as that to which I referred at the beginning, they see truculent things, terrible things, and a plan behind all that.

How ludicrous. How can they live in such fear? One asks oneself: "Do they believe that? "Do they believe that other thing?: "Could they believe all they say?" "Or is it that they have a need to believe all they say? Or is it that they cannot live without believing all they say or is it that they say all that they do not believe?"

It is difficult to understand. It would be a question for doctors and psychologists. What do they have in this minds? What anguish is that? They see a maneuver in everything, a truculent, dark, terrible plan. It seems they do not know that there is not better tactic, nor a better strategy than to fight with clean weapons, than to fight with the truth, because those are the only weapons which inspire trust. These are the only weapons which inspire faith. These are the only weapons which inspire safety, moral dignity. And it has been with those weapons that we Revolutionaries have been vanquishing and crushing our enemies.

You will never here a lie from the mouth of a Revolutionary. There are weapons which do not benefit any revolutionary, and no serious Revolutionary needs to resort to lies-ever. His weapon is reason, the truth, and the ability to have an idea, a purpose, and a position.

In short, the moral spectacle of our adversaries is truly lamentable. And thus, the diviners, the interpreters, the specialists on Cuban affairs, and the electronic brains have been working incessantly to solve this mystery, whether Ernesto Guevara has been purges, (APPLAUSE) whether Ernesto Guevara

was ill, whether Ernesto Guevara had had differences, and other questions of the same ilk.

Naturally, the people have confidence. The people have faith, but enemies will say these things, especially abroad, to slander him. Behold, the communist regime, dark, terrible things, men disappear, they do not leave a trace; they do not leave prints; there is no explanation; and we told the people at this time, when the people began to notice this absence, that in due time we would talk. We would have some reasons to wait,

We are living surrounded by imperialist forces. The world is not operating in normal conditions. As long as the criminal bombs of Yankee imperialists are falling on the people of Vietnam, we cannot say that we are living under normal circumstances. When more than 100,000 Yankee soldiers land there to try to smash the liberation movement, when the soldiers of imperialism land in a republic which has equality of rights, just as legally, as do all the rest of the republics of the world, as is the case in Santo Domingo, when imperialism intervenes to trample its sovereignty, (APPLAUSE) the world is not living under normal conditions. When around our country, the imperialists are training mercenaries and organizing vandalistic attacks, in the most unpunished manner, as in the case of Sierra Aránzazu, when the imperialists threatens to intervene in any country of Latin America or the world, we are not living under normal circumstances.

And when we were fighting in clandestine conditions against the Batista tyranny, we Revolutionaries did not live in normal conditions. We had to adjust to the struggle. In the same way, although the Revolutionary power exists in our country, in regard to the realities of the world, we do not live in normal conditions, and we shall have to adjust to this situation.

And to explain this, we are going to read a letter here, it is handwritten, here copied by typewriter, from Comrade Ernesto Guevara, (APPLAUSE) which is self-explanatory. I was trying to decide whether to tell the story of our friendship and our comradeship, how it began and under what conditions it began and how it developed, but it is not necessary. I am going to limit myself to reading the letter.

It says:

Havana—The date was not written down because this letter was to be read at the moment we felt it most convenient, but keeping to strict reality, it was delivered on April 1st this year, exactly six months and two days ago, and it reads:

HAVANA

Year of Agriculture

Fidel:

I remember many things in this hour—how I met you in the house of Maria Antonia, and how you proposed that I come along with you, and all the tensions involved in the preparations.

One day they came by and asked who should be notified in case of death, and the real possibility of it struck us all. Later we learned that it was true, that in a Revolution one triumphs or dies (if it be a true one). Many comrades fell along the road to victory.

Today everything has a less dramatic tone, for we are more mature, but the event repeats itself. I feel that I have fulfilled the part of my duty that bound me to the Cuban Revolution on its territory, and I say farewell to you, my comrades and your people who are now my people.

I formally renounce my posts in the leadership of the Party, my post as Minister, my rank as Major, my status as a Cuban citizen. Nothing legal binds me to Cuba, only ties of another kind that cannot be broken, as can official appointments. Looking back over my past life, I believe that I have worked with

sufficient faithfulness and dedication in order to consolidate the revolutionary triumph. My only deficiency of any importance is not to have trusted you more from those first moments in the Sierra Maestra and in not having understood soon enough your qualities of leader and revolutionary.

I have lived through magnificent days and at your side I felt the pride of belonging to our people in the luminous and sad days of the Caribbean Crisis. Rarely has any statesman shone more brilliantly than you did in those days. I feel pride, too, in having followed you without hesitation, identifying myself with your way of thinking and seeing and of judging dangers and motives.

Other regions of the world claim the support of my modest efforts. I can do what is forbidden to you because of your responsibility to Cuba, and the time has come for us to separate.

Let it be known that I do it with a mixture of joy and sorrow: I am leaving here the purest of my hopes as a builder and the most loved among my beloved creatures, and I leave a people who accepted me as a son; this rends a part of my spirit. On new battlefields I will carry with me the faith that you inculcated in me, the revolutionary spirit of my people, the feeling of having fulfilled the most sacred of duties: to fight against imperialism wherever it may be; this comforts and heals any wound to a great extent.

I say once more that I free Cuba of any responsibility save that which stems from its example: that if the final hour comes upon me under other skies, my last thought will be for this people and especially for you, that I am thankful to you for your teachings and your example, and that I will try to be faithful up to the final consequences of my acts; that I have at all times been identified with the foreign policy of our Revolution, and I continue to be so; that wherever I may end up I will feel the responsibility of being a Cuban revolutionary, and I will act as one; that I leave nothing material to my children and my wife, and this does not grieve me: I am glad that it be so; that I ask nothing for them, since the State will give them sufficient to live and will educate them.

I would have many things to say to you and to our people, but I feel that they are unnecessary; words cannot express what I would want them to, and it isn't worthwhile wasting more sheets of paper with my scribbling.

To victory forever.

Homeland or Death!

I embrace you with all my revolutionary fervor!

Che"

Those who talk about the revolutionaries, those who consider revolutionaries as cold men, men without feelings, or men without a heart, will have in this letter the example of all the sentiment, of all the feeling, of all the purity a revolutionary heart can hold,

And we could answer, all of us: Comrade Guevara, it is not responsibility wheat we are concerned about. We have a responsibility to the Revolution and we are responsible for assisting the revolutionary movement to the best of our strength (APPLAUSE) and we assume the responsibility and the consequences and the risks. For almost seven years it has been that way and we know that as long as imperialism exists and while there are exploited and colonized peoples, we shall continue running these risks, and we shall continue serenely assuming these responsibilities.

And we had the duty to conform; we had the duty to respect this sentiment of this comrade, that freedom and that right, and this is indeed freedom, not that of those who are going to take on chains but that of those who are going to take up a rifle against the chains of slavery. (APPLAUSE)

And that is another of the freedom, Mr. Johnson, which our Revolution proclaims. And if those who want

to leave to go live with the imperialists are at times recruited by the imperialists to fight in Vietnam and the Congo, let it be known also that all the citizens of this country, when they ask for permission, not to go fight alongside the imperialists, but to fight alongside the Revolutionaries will not be denied permission by this Revolution. (APPLAUSE)

This country is free, Mr. Johnson; really free for everybody!

And this was not the only letter. Along with this letter, and for the occasion when this letter should be used, various other letters were left with us, of greetings to various comrades, and in addition, as it says here, "to my children, to my parents, and other comrades," a letter written by him for his children, and for his parents. We will pass these letters on to the comrades and family; and we ask them to donate them to the Revolution, for we consider them to be documents worthy of a place in history.

And we feel that this explains everything. As for the rest, let the enemies worry. We have enough tasks, enough things to do, in our country and in connection with the world; enough duties to fulfill and we will fulfill them.

We will carry on our path, we will develop our ideas, we will develop our methods, and we will develop our system. We will utilize all experiences that may prove useful to us, and we will develop fresh experiences.

A completely new era is arising in the history of our country, a different form of society, a different system of government, the government of a party, the party of the workers, made up of the best workers, formed with the full participation of the masses, so it can justly and rightly be said that it is the vanguard of the workers and represent the workers, in our workers' Revolutionary democracy. And it will be a thousand time more democratic than bourgeois democracy, for we will progress toward administrative and political forms that will imply the masses' constant involvement in solving the problems of society through the suitable organizations, through the party, at all levels. And we will go on developing these new forms as only a Revolution can. We will continue creating the conscience and habits of these new forms. And we will not stop, our people will not stop until they have attained their ultimate goals.

This step means a great deal. It represents one of the most vitally significant steps in the history of our country. It is a historic moment when the unifying forces were superior to the forces that diffuse and divide. It represents the historic moment when a whole revolutionary nation united strongly, when the sense of duty prevailed over everything else, when the collective spirit triumphed over all individualisms, when the interests of the motherland prevailed fully and definitively over all individual or group interest. It means having attained the highest degree of union and organization, with the most modern, most scientific, and most Revolutionary and human of political concepts.

And we are the first country of this continent, in addition to being, in the view of the imperialist U.S. Government, the only independent country. For if the House of Representatives proclaims a right to intervene in any country to avert the danger of a communist Revolution. Well, here there is a communist Revolution in power. (APPLAUSE) So we are considered the only independent country. To be sure, when the monopolies' representatives gave that slap in the face to all the republics in America by issuing the declaration of non-independence, a few- or rather, many- persons reddened with shame. Many were scandalized when the United States declared its right to intervene unilaterally.

They should be reminded of the agreements they entered into against Cuba; they should be reminded of their complicity in the evil deeds concocted against our country by imperialism. At that time we were the only ones; we stood firm, ready to die, and we said we were defending not just Cuba's rights, but the independence of the other peoples of Latin America. (APPLAUSE) They who sow the wind reap the

whirlwind, and they who sowed interventionism against Cuba, collective breaks with Cuba, blockades of Cuba, are reaping the whirlwind of interventionism and threats directed at them.

They are astonished, they are panic-stricken, and the parliaments meet, and the bourgeois parties cry to the heavens. There they have the results of complicity with the imperialists. There they see what imperialism is. And so, with every passing day, the people will see more clearly who is right, who during these historic years defended true independence, true freedom, true sovereignty, defended it with her blood, and defended it against imperialism and all its accomplices. The imperialists themselves are teaching the peoples. The scarecrow of communism was constantly brandished, and in the name of the battle against that scarecrow the Yankee imperialists have declared their right to land in any country of this continent, except Cuba. (APPLAUSE)

The progress we have made, but above all the progress we will make in the years to come, utilizing all our country's potential, utilizing the tremendous forces we have organized and created, utilizing them in organized, efficient fashion—that is our party's task.

We will forge ahead tremendously. We will move at dazzling speed toward the future with a party that must lead, that must see to every front, because our party must attend to all fronts, all problems must be studied; and for this purpose we have created the committees, and new ones will be created. And there will not be a single problem that fails to get thorough study and analysis by the party, so that each analysis may provide guidance, the proper guidance, the best guidance.

I was saying we will make our way toward communism, and we will attain communism. We are as sure of that as of having come this far.

And amid the difficulties of every kind that accompany this moment in the history of the world, faced with an ever-mightier enemy, faced with the sad fact of the split in world revolutionary ranks, our policy will be one of the closer unity. Our policy will be that of a small but free and independent nation.

Our party will educate the masses; our party will educate its militants. Let it be well understood; our party—no other party, but our party, and its Central Committee. (APPLAUSE) And the prerogative of educating and guiding the revolutionary masses in an unwavering prerogative of our party. We will be very zealous guardians of that right.

In ideological matters it will be the party which will say what must be said. And if we do not accede, do not want, and just do not feel like letting the differences that divide the socialist block divide us, no one will be able to impose such a thing upon us. (APPLAUSE)

And all material of a political nature, unless it has to do with enemies, will only be able to reach the people through our party at the time and on the occasion that our party decides. (APPLAUSE)

We know quite well where the enemy is, who the only and true enemy is. We know this quite well. We more than know it. We have had to struggle against the enemy under difficult conditions. In order to confront that enemy, we have needed the solidarity and aid of many. In order to defeat the aggressive policy of that enemy, to continue to oppose it, we need resources and weapons because here, thousands of miles away from any other socialist country, thousands of miles away from any other socialist country, thousands of miles away without being able to depend on anything other than our own forces and our own weapons in the decisive moments, and since we were aware of the risks we are running today and of the risks we will continue to run, we must be armed to the teeth (APPLAUSE) and fully prepared.

We can disagree with any party on any issue. It is impossible to hope that in such a heterogeneous world, under such diverse circumstance—a world made of countries in the most dissimilar situations and having the most unequal levels of material, technical, and cultural development—that we could conceive Marxism as something similar to a church, a religious doctrine with its Rome, its Pope, and its

Ecumenical Council.

This is a revolutionary and dialectic doctrine, not a philosophical doctrine. It is a guide for revolutionary action, not a dogma. Trying to frame Marxism as a type of catechism in anti-Marxist.

The diversity of situations will inevitably produce an infinite number of interpretations. Those who make the correct interpretations will be able to call themselves Revolutionaries. Those who make the right interpretations and apply them in a responsible manner will triumph. Those who make mistakes or do not abide by revolutionary thinking will fail. They will be defeated and even replaced, because Marxism is not copyrighted private property. It is a doctrine of revolutionaries written by a revolutionary, developed by other revolutionaries, for revolutionaries.

We will know how to distinguish ourselves by our self-confidence, by our confidence in our ability to continue and advance our evolutionary path. We may disagree with any party on one matter, on one issue, or on several issues. Disagreements, when honest, are bound to be temporary. What we will never do is to insult with one hand and ask with another. And we will know how to maintain any disagreement within the confines of decency with any party, and we will know how to be friends to those who know how to be friends. We will know to respect those who respect us.

These norms will always determine our most free conduct, and we will never ask anyone's permission to do anything. We will never ask anyone for permission to go anywhere. We will never ask permission from anyone to become the friend of any party or country.

We know the transitory nature of problems, and problems pass. Peoples live on, peoples remain; men pass, peoples remain; leadership passes, Revolutions persist. We see something more than temporary relations in the relations between parties and revolutionary people, we see durable relations and permanent relations. Nothing will ever come from us that tends to create differences between men, let alone countries.

We will be guided by that elementary principle because we know that it is the right thing to do, that it is a just principle, and nothing will prevent us from devoting all our energy to the fight against the enemy of humanity, imperialism, Because we will never say that those who have helped us defeat the imperialists are accomplices of the imperialists. (APPLAUSE)

We aspire not only to a communist society but to a communist world in which all nations will have equal rights. We aspire to a communist world in which no nation will have the right to veto. And we aspire that the communist world of tomorrow will never display the same picture of a bourgeois world torn by internal squabbles. We aspire to a free society of free nations in which all the countries, large and small, will have equal rights.

We will defend our points of view as we have defended them up to now, as well as our positions and our path and we will stand firm to be measured by our actions and our deeds. And nothing can turn us away from that path.

It is not an easy thing to do in the midst of today's problems complexities in the world today. It is difficult to maintain that inflexible opinion, maintain this inflexible independence, but we will maintain it. This Revolution was not imported from anywhere. It is a genuine product of this country. Nobody told us how we must do it, and we have carried it out. (APPLAUSE) And nobody will have to tell us how we must continue to carry it out, and we will continue to carry it out. We have learned to write history and we will continue to write it. Let no one doubt it.

We live in a complex and dangerous world. The risks of this world we will face with dignity and serenity. Our fate will be the fate of the other countries and our fate will be the fate of the world.

I ask all the comrades here present, all the representatives of our party, all the secretaries of the cells of

this type of extensive congress, I ask those who are here to represent the will of the party, the party which represents the workers, I ask the ratification of the agreements of the national leadership. (APPLAUSE) I ask you for the full and unanimous ratification of the Central Committee of our party. (APPLAUSE) I ask for your full support for the line followed by the revolutionary leadership up to here. (APPLAUSE)

Long live the Cuban Communist Party! (Shouts of "Long live")

Long live the Central Committee! (Shouts of "Long live")

Long live our socialist, communist Revolution! (Shouts of "Long live")

Motherland or death!

We will be victorious!

Standing ovation

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