

“Cuba is a socialist nation”

May Day speech by Fidel Castro, 1 May 1961

Distinguished visitors from Latin American and the entire world, combatants of the armed forces of the people, workers:

We have had fourteen-and-a-half hours of parading. I think that only a people imbued with infinite enthusiasm is capable of enduring such tests. Nevertheless, I will try to be as brief as possible.

We are very happy over this attitude by the people. I believe that today we should outline the course to follow, analyse a little what we have done up to now, and see at what point in our history we are and what we have ahead. We have all had a chance to see the parade. Maybe we who are on this platform could appreciate it better than you in the square, maybe still better than those who have paraded. This May Day tells a lot: it tells a lot about what the Revolution has been so far, what it has achieved so far; but maybe it does not tell us as much as it tells our visitors.

We have been witnesses, all of us Cubans, of every step taken by the Revolution, so maybe we cannot realise how much we have advanced as fully as can be understood by visitors, particularly those visitors from Latin America, where today they are still living in a world very similar to the one we lived in yesterday. It is as if they were suddenly transported from the past to the present of our Revolution, with all its extraordinary progress as compared with the past. We do not intend tonight to stress the merit of what we have done. We merely want to locate ourselves at the point where we are at the present.

We had a chance today to see genuine results of the Revolution on this May Day, so different from the May Days of the past. Formerly that date was the occasion for each sector of labour to set forth its demands, its aspirations for improvement, to men who were deaf to working-class interests, men who could not even accede to those basic demands because they did not govern for the people, for the workers, for the peasants, or for the humble; they governed solely for the privileged, the dominant economic interests. Doing anything for the people would have meant harming the interests that they represented, and so they could not accede to any just demand from the people. The May Day parades of those days marked the complaints and protest of the workers.

How different today's parade has been! How different even from the first parades after the Revolution triumphed! Today's parade shows us how much we have advanced. The workers now do not have to submit themselves to those trials; the workers now do not have to implore deaf executives; the workers now are not subject to the domination of any

exploiting class; the workers no longer live in a country run by men serving exploiting interests. The workers know now that everything the Revolution does, everything the government does or can do, has one goal: helping the workers, helping the people.

Otherwise there would be no explanation for the spontaneous sentiment of support for the Revolutionary Government, that overflowing good will that every man and woman has expressed today.

Fruits of the Revolution are seen everywhere. The first to parade today were the children of the Camilo Cienfuegos School Centre. We saw the Pioneers parade by with the smile of hope, confidence, and affection. We saw the young rebels parade by. We saw the women of the Federation go by. We saw children from numberless schools created by the Revolution parade. We saw a thousand students from the six hundred sugar-cane co-operatives who are studying artificial insemination here in the capital. We saw young people, humble people, parade with their uniforms of the school centre where they are learning to be diplomatic representatives of the future.

We saw the pupils of the schools for young peasants of the Zapata Swamps parade by, the swamps that the mercenaries chose for their attack. We saw thousands and thousands of peasants who are studying in the capital and who come from distant mountain areas or from cane co-operatives or from people's farms parade. We saw the young girls studying for children's club work. And here every one of these groups staged scenes that are worthy of praise. And we saw also what is going into the rural areas. The volunteer teachers paraded and also representatives of the hundred thousand young people on their way to the interior to wipe out illiteracy. Where does this strength come from? It comes from the people, and it is devoted to the people in return.

These young people are truly children of the people. When we saw them today writing *Long live our socialist revolution* with their formations we thought how hard it would have been to have all this without a revolution—how hard for any of these children from the mountains to have paraded here today, or any of these young people from the rural areas to have a chance to get to know the capital, or to study in any of these schools, or to parade with the joy and pride shown here today, or to march with the faith in the future shown today, because schools, university professions, art, culture and honours were never for the children of poor families, in town or in the country. They were never for the peasant of the remote rural areas; they were never for the poor young fellow, black or white, or our countryside and cities.

Art, culture, university professions, opportunities, honours, elegant clothes were only the privilege of a small minority, a minority represented today with that grace and humour

shown by some worker federations in their imitations of the rich. It is astounding to think that today more than twenty thousand athletes paraded if one remembers that we are just beginning—and this without touching on the most marvellous thing we had a chance to see today, that is, this armed nation, this united people, which came to attend these ceremonies.

How would it have been possible without a revolution? How can one compare this present with the past? How can one avoid emotion on seeing endless lines of workers, athletes and militiamen parade by? At times all were intermingled. After all, workers, athletes and soldiers are the same thing. Anybody could understand why our people must emerge victorious in any battle. We noted the many women in the ranks of the federations. The men were in the artillery units, mortar units, ack-ack units, or militia battalions. The women were the wives and sisters and sweethearts of the militiamen who marched by later in the battalions and those young men of the basic secondary schools; the Pioneers who paraded by were their sons.

And so one can see today the unity of the humble people who are fighting for the poor. Workers of every profession; manual labourers and intellectual workers—all were marching together: the writer, artist, actor, announcer, doctor, nurse, clinical employer. Marching together in great numbers under the banner of the National Education Workers' Union were the teachers, employees of the Education Ministry.

Today we have had a chance to see everything worthwhile in our country, everything produced in our country. We have understood better than ever that there are two classes of citizens, or rather there *were* two classes of citizens: the citizens who worked, produced and created and the citizens who lived without working or producing. These latter were parasites.

In this young, fervent nation, who did not parade today, who could not parade here today? The parasites! Today the working people paraded, everybody who produces with his hands or his brain. I do not mean that workers who did not have a chance to parade were parasites, because they had to take care of their children, or were ill, or even just did not want to parade today. I am speaking only of those who were not represented here because they could not be represented by those who produce.

This is the people, the true people. He who lives as a parasite does not belong to the people. Only the invalid, the sick, the old and children are entitled to live without working and are entitled to have us work for them and to care for them, and from the work of everyone they can be benefited. For the children, the old, the invalid and the sick we have the duty to work, all of us. What no moral law will be able to justify ever is for the people to work for the parasites.

Those who paraded today were the working people who will never resign themselves to

work for the parasites. In this manner our national community has understood what the Revolution is, and has understood clearly what the meaning of a revolution is in which a nation gets rid of parasites from the outside and those inside. We remember that because of the nationalisation of the largest industries of the nation; and just before the US factories were nationalised some asked: Was not this factory a Cuban factory? Why should a Cuban factory be nationalised? Well, such a factory did not belong to the people, it belonged to some man. Now they belong to the nation.

It was the custom to talk about the motherland; there were some who had a wrong idea of the motherland. There was the motherland of the privileged ones, of a man who has a large house, while the others live in hovels. What motherland did you have in mind, sir? A motherland where a small group lives from the work of others? A motherland of the barefoot child who is asking for alms in the street? What kind of motherland is this? A motherland that belonged to a small minority? Or the motherland of today?—the motherland of today where we have won the right to direct our destiny, where we have learnt to decide our destiny, a motherland that will be, now and for ever—as Martí wanted it—for the well-being of everyone and not a motherland for a few!

The motherland will be a place where such injustices will be eliminated; now we can have the real concept of motherland. We are willing to die for a motherland that belongs to all Cubans. That is why the exploiting classes could not have the real concept of motherland. For them the motherland was a privilege by which they took advantage of the work of others. That is why when a Yankee monopolist, when a leader or a member of the US ruling circles, talks about the motherland they refer to the motherland of monopolies, of the large banking monopolies. And when they talk about the motherland they are thinking about sending the Negroes of the South, the workers, to be killed to defend the motherland of monopolies.

What kind of morality and what reason and what right do they have to make a Negro die to defend the monopolies, the factories and the mines of the dominating classes? What right have they to send the Puerto Rican of Latin blood, of Latin tradition, to the battlefields to defend the policy of large capitalists and monopolies? This concept of motherland and this danger to their security to which they refer is the danger of the monopolies. You can understand what concept they have of morality, law and rights to send the Negroes of the South and the Puerto Ricans to the battlefields to fight for them. This is their concept of motherland. That is why the people receive the real concept of motherland only when the interests of the privileged classes are liquidated, and when a nation with its wealth becomes a nation for everyone, the wealth for everyone, and opportunity and happiness for everybody.

This happiness now belongs to those youths who paraded and the families who know that their children can have a school, receive scholarships, and go to the best universities abroad, a privilege enjoyed only by the richest families. And today any family, regardless of how poor, has the opportunity to send its children to schools in the nation and abroad. Any family knows that thanks to the Revolution its children have all the opportunities that formerly belonged only to the rich. A nation that works for itself, whether it be in defence of or in achieving wealth, can achieve what the minorities cannot.

The Revolution can win the people with its fervour and enthusiasm. The Revolution can utilise all intelligence and creative spirit and take everyone towards a path of well-being and progress. The people who spent fifteen hours here today are the same people who formerly could not spend even one hour at a public rally, or who were paid or forced to go to a public rally. These enthusiastic people are the discouraged people of yesterday. The difference is that yesterday they worked for others and today they work for themselves.

Think of the men who died in recent battles, and decide whether a single drop of blood was worth being lost to defend the past. Consider that these workers and youths, the children of workers, fell ten or twelve days ago to defend what we have seen today. They fell to defend this enthusiasm, this hope and this joy of today. That is why when today we saw a happy face or a smile full of hope we thought that each smile of today was a flower over the grave of the fallen hero. It was like giving thanks to those who gave their lives in the battle against imperialism. Without them we would not have had the May Day parade. We would not have been able to see what passed in front of us today. What would have happened to our anti-aircraft batteries, what would have happened to our cannons and our soldiers who marched here? What would have happened to our workers, wives, sisters, and factories? What would have happened if imperialism had established even a single beach-head on our territory? What would have happened if the imperialists succeeded in taking one part of our territory, and from there, with Yankee bombs, machine-guns, and planes, would have launched an armed attack against us?

Let us not talk about what would have happened if the imperialist had won. There is no sadder picture than a defeated revolution. The uprising of slaves in Rome and their defeat should give us an idea of what a defeated revolution is. The Paris Commune should give us an idea of what a defeated revolution is. History tells us that a defeated revolution must pay the victors in blood. The victors not only collect the past debts but also try to collect future debts. But under certain circumstances it is impossible to crush a revolution.

It has never happened in history that a revolutionary people who have really taken over

power have been defeated. What would have happened this May Day if imperialism had won its game? That is why we were thinking of all we owed those who fell. That is why we were thinking that every smile today was like a tribute to those who made possible this hopeful day. The blood that was shed was the blood of workers and peasants, the blood of humble sons of the people, not blood of landowners, millionaires, thieves, criminals, or exploiters. The blood shed was the blood of the exploited of yesterday, the free men of today. The blood shed was humble, honest, working, creative blood—the blood of patriots, not the blood of mercenaries. It was the blood of militiamen who voluntarily came to defend the Revolution. It was spontaneously offered blood to defend an ideal.

This ideal was not the ideal with which the Yankees inculcated their mercenaries. It was not an ideal of parrots. It was not an ideal of the tongue, but of the heart. It was not an ideal of those who came to recover their lost wealth. It was not the ideal of those who always lived at the expense of others. It was not the ideal of those who sell their soul for the gold of a powerful empire. It was the ideal of the peasant who does not want to lose his land, the Negro who does not want discrimination, the humble, those who never lived from the sweat of others, and of those who never robbed from others, an ideal that a poor man of the people can feel.

The Revolution is all for him because he was mistreated and humiliated. He defends the Revolution because the Revolution is his life. Before sacrificing this he prefers to lose his life. He knows that he may fall, but never in vain, and that the cause for which he falls will serve for millions of his brothers.

Humble, honest blood was shed by the fatherland in the struggle against the mercenaries of imperialism. But what blood, what men did imperialism send here to establish that beachhead, to bleed our revolution dry, to destroy our achievements, to burn our cane? It was to be a war of destruction.

We can tell the people right here that at the same instant that three of our airports were being bombed the Yankee agencies were telling the world that our airports had been attacked by planes from our own air force. They cold-bloodedly bombed our nation and told the world that the bombing was done by Cuban pilots with Cuban planes. This was done with planes on which they painted our insignia.

If nothing else, this deed should be enough to demonstrate how miserable are the actions of imperialism. It should be enough for us to realise what Yankee imperialism really is and what its press and its government is. It is possible that millions have heard only the report that Cuban planes piloted by defectors had attacked our airports. This was planned, because

the imperialist studied the plan to bomb and the way to deceive the entire world. This should serve to keep us alert and to understand that the imperialists are capable of the most monstrous lies to cover the most monstrous deeds.

US leaders publicly confessed their participation—without any explanation that they owe the world for the statements made by Kennedy that they would never participate in aggression—and save us the effort of finding proof. Who were those who fought against those workers and peasants? We will explain.

Of the first mercenaries captured we can say that, without counting ships' crews, there were nearly a thousand prisoners. Among that thousand we have the following: about eight hundred came from well-to-do families. They had a total of 27,556 caballerias of land, 9,666 houses, 70 industries, 10 sugar centrals, 2 banks, and 5 mines. So eight hundred out of a thousand had all that. Moreover, many belonged to exclusive clubs, and many were former soldiers for Batista.

Remember during the prisoner interrogation that I asked who was a cane-cutter, and only one said that he had cut cane once. That is the social composition of the invaders.

We are sure that if we ask all those here how many owned sugar centrals there would not be even one. If we asked the combatants who died, members of the militia or soldiers of the revolutionary army, if we compared the wealth of those who fell, surely there would be no land, no banks, no sugar centrals or the like listed. And some of the shameless invaders said that they came to fight for ideals!

The invaders came to fight for free enterprise! Imagine, at this time for an idiot to come here to say that he fought for free enterprise! As if this people did not know what free enterprise is! It was slums, unemployment, begging; one hundred thousand families working the land to turn over 25 per cent of their production to shareholders who never saw that land. How can they come to speak about free enterprise to a country where there was unemployment, illiteracy, and where one had to beg to get into a hospital? The people knew that free enterprise was social clubs, and bathing in mud for the children, because the beaches were fenced; the beaches were for the wealthy. One could never dream of going to Varadero, for that was for a few wealthy families. One could never dream of having a son study law. That was only for the privileged. A worker could never dream that his son might become a teacher or lawyer. Ninety per cent of the sons of workers, or at least 75 per cent of those who lived in places where there were no secondary schools, had no chance to send their children to study. Not even in a dream could the daughters of the peasants dance here or parade here.

How can one of those who never knew labour say that he came to shed the people's blood to defend free enterprise? And they did not stop at their fathers' mention of free enterprise: they included the United Fruit and the electrical company. Those were not free enterprises: they were monopolies. So when they came here they were not fighting for free enterprise, they came for the monopolies, for monopolies do not want free enterprise: they were defending the monopolistic interests of the Yankees, here and abroad. How can they tell the Cuban people that they were coming to defend free enterprise?

They also say that they came to defend the 1940 constitution. How curious! That constitution was being torn into bits with the complicity of the US embassy, the reactionary church, and the politicians. So it is cynical for this group of privileged and Batista-type tyrants, criminals and torturers to tell the people that they were coming to defend the constitution of 1940, which has been advanced by the Revolutionary Government.

Who represented you in the Congress? The corrupt politicians, the rich, the big landholders. There was only a handful of workers in Congress. They were always in the minority. The means of disseminating ideas were all in the hands of the rich. It was hard to learn about the horrible conditions because of that. The death of thousands of children for lack of medicine and doctors did not bother the free-enterprise men. There was never an agrarian reform law, because Congress was in the hands of the rich. Even though the constitution said the land must be returned to the Cubans, and even though in 1959 the 1940 constitution had been in effect nineteen years, no law took land from the Yankee monopolies, which had huge expanses.

Up to 200,000 hectares were held by some foreign monopolies. The constitution, which said that land must be returned to the Cubans, and the law setting a limit on landholdings were never enforced. There were teachers without employment while children lacked schooling.

The Batista group took over through a coup sponsored by imperialism and the exploiting class; they needed such a man as Batista so that the rural guard would serve the landowners against the peasants. It did not matter to them that the nation was being plundered. The landowners did not give anybody modern weapons to fight that regime; they gave arms to that bloody regime itself, not caring about how it violated the constitution. The Yankees did not give arms to anybody to fight Batista. None of the fine little gentlemen fought, because they still had their Cadillacs; they had a regime that guaranteed their frivolous life. They cared nothing about politics, for they had a very good life. Now that their privileges have ended they found a Yankee government willing to give them arms to come here and shed the blood of workers and peasants.

Those gentlemen spoke of elections. What elections did they want? The ones of the corrupt politicians who bought votes? Those elections in which a poor person had to turn over his ballot in return for work? Those fake elections that were just a means for the exploiting class to stay in power? Those elections that were not a military coup? There are many pseudo-democracies in Latin America; what laws have they passed for the peasants? Where is the nationalisation of industry? Where is their agrarian reform?

A revolution expressing the will of the people is an election every day, not every four years; it is a constant meeting with the people, like this meeting. The old politicians could never have gathered as many votes as there are people here tonight to support the Revolution. Revolution means a thorough change.

What do they want? Elections with pictures on the posts. The Revolution has changed the conception of pseudo-democracy for direct government by the people.

There had to be a period for abolition of the privileges. Do the people have time now for elections? No! What were the political parties? Just an expression of class interests. Here there is just one class, the humble; that class is in power, and so it is not interested in the ambition of an exploiting minority to get back in power. Those people would have no chance at all in an election.

The Revolution has no time to waste in such foolishness. There is no chance for the exploiting class to regain power. The Revolution and the people know that the Revolution expressed their will; the Revolution does not come to power with Yankee arms, it comes to power through the will of the people fighting against arms of all kinds, Yankee arms.

The Revolution keeps in power through the people. What are the people interested in? In having the Revolution go ahead without losing a minute. Can any government in America claim to have more popular support than this one? Why should democracy be the pedantic, false democracy of the others, rather than this direct expression of the will of the people? The people go to die fighting instead of going to a poll to scratch names on paper. The Revolution has given every citizen a weapon, a weapon to every man who wanted to enter the militia. So some fool comes along to ask if, since we have a majority, why don't we hold elections? Because the people do not care to please fools and fine little gentlemen! The people are interested in moving forward.

They have no time to waste. The people must spend tremendous amounts of energy in preparing to meet aggression, when everybody knows we want to be building schools, houses, and factories. We are not warlike. The Yankees spend half their budget on armaments; we are not warlike. We are obliged to spend that energy because of the imperialists. We have no

expansionist ambitions. We do not want to exploit any worker of another country. We are not interested in aggressive plans; we have been forced to have tanks, planes, machine-guns and a military force to defend ourselves.

The recent invasion shows how right we were to arm. At Playa Girón they came to kill peasants and workers. Imperialism forced us to arm for defence. We have been forced to put energy and material and resources into that, although we would prefer to put them into more schools, so that in future parades there can be more athletes and schoolchildren. If our people were not armed they could not crush mercenaries coming with modern equipment.

The imperialists would have hurled themselves on us long ago if we had not been armed. But we prefer to die rather than surrender the country we have now. They know that. They know they will meet resistance, and so the aggressive circles of imperialism have to stop and think.

So we are forced by the threat of aggression to proclaim to the four corners of the world: All the peoples of America should rise in indignation after the statement that a country can intervene in another just because the first is strong. Such a policy would mean that the powerful neighbour takes the right to intervene to keep a people from governing themselves according to their own choice. It is inconceivable that there should be such miserable governments; after the aggression that killed peasants and workers it is inconceivable that they have even begun a policy of breaking with Cuba, instead of breaking with Somoza, Guatemala, or the government in Washington that pays for planes, tanks and arms to come here and kill peasants.

The Costa Rican government has said that if mercenaries are executed it will break with us. It has no reason at all for a break, so it seeks some pretext and hits on the idea of "if there are executions." That government, in insolent intervention, stated its disposal to break with us if any of the mercenaries are executed. It does not break with Kennedy, who organised the expedition, or with Guatemala, or Nicaragua. We did not break with it: we merely answered the note.

Those who promote the policy of isolating Cuba on the orders of imperialism are miserable traitors to the interests and feelings of America. These facts show us the rotten politics that prevail in many Latin American countries, and how the Cuban Revolution has turned those corrupt forms upside down to establish new forms in this country.

To those who talk to us about the 1940 constitution we say that the 1940 constitution is already too outdated and old for us. We have advanced too far for that short section of the 1940 constitution that was good for its time but that was never carried out. That constitution

has been left behind by this revolution, which, as we have said, is a socialist revolution.

We must talk of a new constitution—yes, a new constitution but not a bourgeois constitution, not a constitution corresponding to the domination of certain classes by exploiting classes but a constitution corresponding to a new social system without the exploitation of man by man. That new social system is called socialism, and this constitution will therefore be a socialist constitution.

If Mr Kennedy does not like socialism—well, we do not like imperialism! We do not like capitalism! We have as much right to protest over the existence of an imperialist-capitalist regime ninety miles from our coast as he feels he has to protest over the existence of a socialist regime ninety miles from his coast.

Now then, we would not think of protesting over that, because that is the business of the people of the United States. It would be absurd for us to try to tell the people of the United States what system of government they must have, for in that case we would be considering that the United States is not a sovereign nation and that we have rights over the domestic life of the United States.

Rights do not come from size. Right does not come from one country being bigger than another. That does not matter. We have only limited territory, a small nation, but our right is as respectable as that of any country, regardless of its size. It does not occur to us to tell the people of the United States what system of government they must have. Therefore it is absurd for Mr Kennedy to take it into his head to tell us what kind of government he wants us to have here. That is absurd. It occurs to Mr Kennedy to do that only because he does not have a clear concept of international law or sovereignty.

Who had those notions before Kennedy? Hitler and Mussolini! They spoke the same language of force; it is the fascist language. We heard it in the years before Germany's attack on Czechoslovakia. Hitler split it up because it was governed by a reactionary government. The bourgeoisie, reactionary and pro-fascist, afraid of the advance of a socialist system, preferred even domination by Hitler. We heard that language on the eve of the invasion of Denmark, Belgium, Poland, and so forth. It is the right of might. This is the only right Kennedy advances in claiming the right to interfere in our country.

This is a socialist regime, yes! Yes, this is a socialist regime. It is here, but the fault is not ours, the blame belongs to Columbus, the English colonisers, the Spanish colonisers. The people of the United States will some day get tired.

The US government says that a socialist regime here threatens US security. But what

threatens the security of the North American people is the aggressive policy of the warmongers of the United States. What threatens the security of the North American family and people is the violence, that aggressive policy, that policy that ignores the sovereignty and the rights of other peoples. The one who is threatening the security of the United States is Kennedy, with that aggressive policy. That aggressive policy can give rise to a world war; and that world war can cost the lives of tens of millions of North Americans. Therefore, the one who threatens the security of the United States is not the Cuban Revolutionary Government but the aggressor and aggressive government of the United States.

We do not endanger the security of a single North American. We do not endanger the life or security of a single North American family. We, making co-operatives, agrarian reform, people's ranches, houses, schools, literacy campaigns, and sending thousands and thousands of teachers to the interior, building hospitals, sending doctors, giving scholarships, building factories, increasing the productive capacity of our country, creating public beaches, converting fortresses into schools, and giving the people the right to a better future—we do not endanger a single US family or a single US citizen.

The ones who endanger the lives of millions of families, of tens of millions of North Americans, are those who are playing with atomic war. It is those who, as General Cardenas said, are playing with the possibility of New York becoming a Hiroshima. The ones who are playing with atomic war, with their aggressive war, with their policy that violated the rights of people, are the ones who are endangering the security of the North American nation, the security of the lives of unknown millions of North Americans.

What do the monopolists fear? Why do they say that they are not secure with the socialist revolution nearby? They are, as Khrushchev says, proving that they know their system is inferior. They do not even believe in their own system. Why don't they leave us alone when all our government wants is peace?

Recently, our government issued a statement that we were willing to negotiate. Why? Because we are afraid? No! We are convinced that they fear the Revolution more than we fear them. They have a mentality that does not permit them to sleep when they know that there is a revolution nearby.

Fear? No-one has fear here. The people who struggle for their liberty are never frightened. The frightened ones are the wealthy—the ones who have been wealthy. We are not interested in having imperialism commit suicide at our expense. They do not care about the death of Negroes, Puerto Ricans, or Americans. But we do care about every Cuban life. We are interested in peace.

We are ready to negotiate. They say that economic conditions can be discussed, but no communism. Well, where did they get the idea we would discuss that? We would discuss economic problems. But we are not even ready to admit that these talks so much as brush a petal of a rose here. The Cuban people are capable of establishing the regime they want here. We have never even thought of the possibility of discussing our regime. We will discuss only things that will not affect our sovereignty. We do want to negotiate on behalf of peace.

Those who do not worry about taking American people to war are being led by emotions. We have no fear. If they think so, let them get over that idea. No Cuban is afraid. If they think we will discuss internal politics, let them forget that, for no-one will do that here. Let them discuss all topics they want to discuss. We discussed things with invaders, did we not? Well, we will debate with anyone. We are willing to talk. We are willing to debate. But does that mean we are aching to negotiate? Of course not. We are just taking a sensible step. Does that mean the Revolution will slow down? Of course not! We will continue, picking up speed as we can.

If they want to say that that they do not care about the sovereignty of countries, let them. But we are ready to defend as well as to negotiate. We are ready to fire a million shots at the first Yankee parachutist that tries to land here. From the first moment they land on our soil they can be sure that they have begun the most difficult war they ever heard of. That war would be the beginning of the end for imperialism. With the same willingness to negotiate, we will fight. Even the Pioneers will fight. Each man, woman and child has one duty in case of foreign attack: kill! If we were attacked by foreigners there would be no prisoners. The invading foreigners must know they must kill us all! While one lives, he has an enemy! Death struggle! There is no middle ground! It would be a war without prisoners!

If the invaders land on Cuban soil we will not want our lives. We will fight to the last man against whoever sets foot on our land. All men and women must know their duty. This duty will be fulfilled in a simple and natural manner as peoples fight in a righteous war.

It is a crime that our people are not left in peace to complete our work of justice for those who once lived in humiliation and misery. It is too bad that illegitimate interests have determined to harm our country. While they tried to cut off our supplies, they were supplying mercenaries with weapons to invade our country and shed the people's blood. And in this shameful task, who participated?

I have already told you of the social composition. Well, the priests were not missing either. Three of them came. None were Cubans: they were Spanish. You remember that when we asked them they said they came on a purely spiritual mission; they said they came on a

Christian mission. But reviewing their books we find this: *An Appeal to the People* by Ismael de Lugo. “Attention, Cuban Catholics: liberating forces have landed on Cuban beaches. We come in the name of God” (as if Calvino came in the name of God), “justice and democracy to re-establish trampled freedom” (this must be a lie). “We come because of love, not hate. We come with thousands of Cubans, all of whom are Catholics and Christians” (what a lie!); “their spirit is the spirit of the crusades.” [. . .]

And that gentleman is not even a Cuban: he is a Falangist Spaniard. He could have saved all those appeals and warlike energy by fighting against the Moorish guard of Franco. Why should he come here with three other Falangist Spanish priests instead of going to Spain to fight for freedom against Franco, who has been oppressing Spanish people for twenty-odd years and who has sold out to Yankee imperialism? The Yankees are not fighting for freedom in Spain, or Nicaragua, or Guatemala. They are great friends of Franco. And these Falangist priests came here, when it is in Spain they should fight for freedom for peasants and workers. That Falangist priest comes here instead to preach against workers and peasants who have thrown off exploitation. And there were three, not just one; and the fourth, in the Escambray, is a Spanish priest too.

We are going to announce here to the people that in the next few days the Revolutionary Government will pass a law declaring void any permit to remain in Cuba held by any foreign priest in our country. And this law will have only one exception; do you know for whom? A foreign priest can remain with special permission, provided the government approves, if he has not been combating the Cuban Revolution—that is, if he has not displayed an attitude opposed to the Revolution; that is, there will be exceptions if a priest has been honest, has not been combating the Revolution, has not been carrying out counter-revolutionary activities. He can request permission, and the government can grant it if it deems proper, because there are some foreign priests, by way of exception, that have not taken a stand against the Revolution, although the general rule has been otherwise.

Of course they will say we are impious, enemies of religion. Can they say that after a leader of the ecclesiastical service, while proclaiming that he is coming to give spiritual service, also signs a manifesto like this one—of this political nature? Can the Revolution go on allowing these acts to go on with impunity?

And let these gentlemen come to bring hell here, to bring hell on earth here, with their war criminals, their Calvinos, their Soler Puigs, their big landowners, and their privileged sons, to bring hell on earth here to the peasants and workers? Can we let the Spanish Falange go on promoting bloodshed and conspiracy here through its priests? No, we are not disposed

to allow it. The Falangist priests know now, they can begin packing.

They have been waging counter-revolutionary activities in the schools too, poisoning the minds of pupils. They have found fertile soil in schools usually attended by children of the rich. There they have been promoting counter-revolutionary poison in the minds of the young. They have been forming terrorist minds. They have been teaching hatred for the country. Why should the Revolution stand for that? We would be guilty if we let that go on.

We announce here that in the next few days the Revolutionary Government will pass a law nationalising the private schools. This law cannot be a law for one sector: it will be general. That means the private schools will be nationalised—of course not a little school where one teacher gives classes but private schools with several teachers.

Directors of private schools have displayed different types of conduct. Many private school directors have not been instilling counter-revolutionary poison. The Revolution feels it is its duty to organise and establish the principle of free education for all citizens. The people feel they have the duty of training future generations in a spirit of love for the country, for justice, for the Revolution.

What shall be done in the case of private schools that have not displayed counter-revolutionary conduct? The Revolutionary Government will indemnify those directors or owners of schools whose attitude has not been counter-revolutionary, whose attitude has been favourable to the Revolution; and the Revolution will *not* indemnify any school whose directors have been waging a counter-revolutionary campaign, who have been against the Revolution. That is, there will be indemnity for those schools that have displayed a patriotic, decent attitude toward the Revolution. They will be indemnified, and their directors will be invited to work with the Revolutionary Government in directing that school or another school. That is to say, these directors will be called on to help in the field of education, besides being indemnified.

The teachers and employees of all these schools, of a lay nature, will be given work. That is, the employees and teachers of these schools will have their work guaranteed. The pupils of these schools can go on attending them, the educational standards will be kept up and even improved, and furthermore they will have to pay absolutely nothing to attend these schools.

Villanueva is included in this nationalisation, of course. They will say this impious government opposes religious instruction. No, sir. What we oppose are those shameless acts they have been committing, and this crime against our country. They can teach religion, yes: in the churches they can teach religion.

Religion is one thing, politics another. If those gentlemen were not against the political interests of the people we would not care at all about their pastorals, their discussions of religious matters. The churches can remain open; religion can be taught there. Would it not be much better if they had stuck to their religious teaching? Would it not be much better to have peace? They can have peace, within strict limits of the respect due the revolutionary people and government. But they cannot make war on the people in the service of the exploiters. That has nothing to do with religion: it has to do with blood, with gold, with material interests. They can have the consideration of the people, in the limits of that mutual respect for rights.

Christianity arose as a religion of the poor, the slaves, and the oppressed of Rome—the religion that flourished in the catacombs. It was the religion of the poor, and it obtained the respect of the laws. It coexisted with the Roman Empire. Then came feudalism. That church co-existed with feudalism, later with absolute monarchies, later with bourgeois republics. Here the bourgeois republic disappears; why should not that same church co-exist with a system of social justice that is far superior to those previous forms of government? This system is much more like Christianity than Yankee imperialism or bourgeois republics, or the Roman Empire. We believe co-existence is perfectly possible. The Revolution does not oppose religion. They have used religion as a pretext to combat the poor. They forget what Christ said about it being easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into Heaven.

Those are the facts. We have spoken, as always, clearly. It means only that we are prepared to defend the Revolution and continue forward, convinced of the justice of our cause.

We have spoken of our socialist revolution. It does not mean the little businessman or little industrialist need worry. Mines, fuel, banking, sugar mills, export and import trade—the bulk of the economy— is in the hands of the people. That way the people can develop our economy. The little industrialist and little businessman can co-exist with the Revolution. The Revolution has always cared for the interests of the small owners.

Urban reform is a proof. This month all small landlords will be collecting about 105,000 pesos. Formerly if the tenant did not pay his rent the landlord did not collect; now a fund has been established to ensure that the small landlord will be paid. The Revolution will have some 80 million pesos a year for construction from the urban reform. And when rental is the only income of these landlords, the Revolution has ruled that after the house is all paid for the landlord will receive a pension. A socialist revolution does not mean that the interests of certain sectors are eliminated without consideration. The interests of the big landholders,

bankers and industrialists were eliminated. No social interest of the lesser levels of society is to be condemned. The Revolution will adhere to its word: no middle interest will be affected without due consideration.

Small businessmen and industrialists have credit today. The Revolution has no interest in nationalising them. The Revolution has enough to do with developing the sources of wealth it now has at its disposal. The Revolution feels that there can be collaboration from the small businessman and small industrialist. It believes that their interest can coincide with those of the Revolution. Counter-revolutionaries have claimed that barber shops would be nationalised, even food stands. The Revolution does not aim at those. The solution of those problems will be the result of a long evolution. There are some problems; sometimes tomatoes and pineapples are sold in the city at far higher prices than in the country. There is still a small plague of middlemen. The Revolution still has measures to take to do away with the middleman abuse, to improve consumption for the people. But I do not want anybody to be confused. I want everybody to know what to expect.

Basically, the Revolution has already passed its measures. Nobody need worry. Why not join in this enthusiasm, in this prowess? Why are there still Cubans bothered by this happiness? I asked myself that while watching the parade. Why are some Cubans so incapable of understanding that this happiness can also be theirs? Why do they not adapt to the Revolution? Why not see their children in the schools here also? Some people cannot adapt, but the future society will be better than the old one.

This is the hour in which we, far from using the moment against those who do not understand, should ask them if the time has not come for them to join us. The Revolution found it necessary to be detained. Perhaps they have. The Revolution does not want to use its force against a minority. The Revolution wants all Cubans to understand. We do not want all this happiness and emotion all to ourselves. It is the glory of the people.

We say this to those who have lived in the past and have not understood. We frankly say that our Revolution should not be lessened by severe sanctions against all the mercenaries. It might serve as a weapon for our enemies. We say this because we tell the people all that will benefit the Revolution. We have had a moral victory and it will be greater if we do not besmirch our victory.

The lives lost hurt us as much as they do others. But we must overcome that and speak for our prestige and our cause. What is before us? The risks of imperialist aggression! Big tasks! We have reached a point in which we should realise that the time has come to make the greatest effort. The coming months are very important. They will be months in which we

must make greater efforts in all fields. We all have the duty to do the utmost. No-one has a right to rest. With what we have seen today we must learn that with efforts and courage we can harvest wonderful fruit. And today's fruits are nothing compared with what can be done if we apply ourselves to the maximum.

Before concluding I want to recall what I said during the Moncada trial. Here is a paragraph: "The country cannot remain on its knees imploring miracles from the golden calf. No social problem is resolved spontaneously." At that time we expressed our views. The Revolution has followed the revolutionary ideas of those who had an important role in this struggle.

That is why when one million Cubans met to proclaim the Havana Declaration, the document expressed the essence of our revolution, our socialist revolution. It said that it condemned landed estates, starvation wages, illiteracy, the lack of teachers, doctors, and hospitals, discrimination, exploitation of women, oligarchies that hold our countries back, governments that ignore the will of their people by obeying US orders, the monopoly of news by Yankee agencies, laws that prevent the masses from organising, and imperialist monopolies that exploit our wealth. The general assembly of the people condemns the exploitation of man by man. the general assembly proclaims the following: the right to work, education, the dignity of man, civil rights for women, secure old age, artistic freedom, the nationalisation of monopolies, and the like. This is the programme of our socialist revolution.

Long live the Cuban working class! Long live the Latin American sister nations! Long live the nation! Fatherland or death! We shall win!