

THE ELEPHANT AND THE ANT

It would seem there's no topic worthy of addressing that would not bore our patient readers, after the Round Table program of June 12, which dealt with the new edition of a book published in Bolivia 15 years ago, featuring now a prologue I wrote. During this program, an introduction was also read written at a later date by Evo Morales and a message from the prestigious Argentinean writer Stella Calloni, to be included in an upcoming edition. I had carefully chosen the information I used for that prologue.

A powerful internationalist spirit, which had its roots in the broad contingent of Cuban combatants who participated in the anti-fascist struggle of the Spanish people and made the best traditions of the world worker's movement its own, had developed in Cuba in the first years of the Revolution.

We are not in the habit of publicizing our cooperative efforts with other peoples, but it is at times impossible to prevent the press from mentioning it. Our cooperative efforts stem from profound feelings that have nothing to do with a desire for publicity.

Some ask themselves how it is possible for a small country with scarce resources to carry out tasks of such magnitude in fields as decisive as education and health, without which contemporary society is unthinkable.

Humanity developed the goods and services essential to its existence since establishing its first society, and the latter has in turn developed from the most elementary to the most sophisticated of forms over many thousands of years.

The exploitation of man by man was inseparable from this development, as we all know or ought to know.

The different ways in which this reality has been perceived have always depended on the place each of us occupies within society. For long, exploitation was seen as something natural and the immense majority was never aware of the above relation.

At the very height of capitalist development in England, which was a world leader, next to the United States and other countries in Europe, in a world that was already dominated by colonialism and expansionism, a great thinker and history and economics scholar, Karl Marx, on the basis of the ideas of the most prestigious German philosophers and economists of the time –including Hegel, Adam Smith and David Ricardo, with whom he disagreed– elaborated, wrote and published his ideas on capitalism's relations of production and exchange in 1859 in a work titled Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy. In 1867, he continued to spread his ideas with the publication of the first volume of his most important work, a work that made him famous: The Capital. Most of the long book, on the basis of Marx's notes and comments, was edited by Engels, who shared Marx's ideas and, like a prophet, spread his work after Marx's death in 1883.

What Marx published constitutes the most serious analysis ever to be written about class society and the exploitation of man by man. Marxism had thus been born, as the foundation of revolutionary parties and movements that proclaimed socialism as their objective, including nearly all social-democratic parties that, when World War I broke out, betrayed the slogan proclaimed by Marx and Engels in The Communist Manifesto, first published in 1848: "Workers of the world, unite!"

One of the truths that this great thinker expressed in simple terms was that: "In the social production during their lives, men establish certain necessary relations independent of their wills, relations of

production which correspond to a given phase of development of their material productive forces. It is not man's consciousness which determines its being, but on the contrary, it is its social being which determines its consciousness. On reaching a given phase of development, society's material productive forces come into contradiction with existing production relations...From forms of development of the productive forces, these relations become obstacles to the latter and an era of social revolution thus begins...No social formation disappears before its productive forces are fully developed and no new and more advanced production relations emerge before the material conditions for their existence have matured within the old society".

I could not find better words to more clearly and precisely express these concepts elaborated by Marx, concepts whose essence, with a basic explanation from a teacher, even one of the young Cubans who joined the Young Communists League this past Saturday June 14th could understand.

To describe the concrete development of the class struggle, Marx wrote *The Class Struggle in France* from 1848 to 1850 and the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, two excellent historical analyses that delight any reader. He was a true genius.

Lenin, a profound continuator of dialectical thought and Marx's research, wrote two key works: *The State and Revolution* and *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. Marx's ideas, put into practice by Lenin through the October Revolution, were also developed by Mao Zedong and other Third World revolutionary leaders. Without them, the Cuban Revolution would not have taken place in the United States' backyard.

Had Marxist thought simply limited itself to the idea that "no social formation disappears before its productive forces are fully developed", the capitalist theoretician Francis Fukuyama would have been right in proclaiming that the collapse of the Soviet Union marked the end of history and ideologies and that all resistance to the capitalist system of production should cease.

When the founder of scientific socialism published his ideas, society's productive forces were far from fully developed. Technology had not yet yielded deadly weapons of mass destruction capable of exterminating the human species; the aerospace domain did not yet exist, nor did the unlimited squandering of hydrocarbons and non-renewable fossil fuels; climate change had not yet been detected in a natural world whose potential seemed infinite to humanity, nor had the world food crisis, to be borne by innumerable combustion engines and a population six times larger than that which inhabited the planet on the year Marx was born (then of one billion), made itself known yet.

Cuba's socialist experience takes place at a time when imperial domination has expanded across the globe.

When I speak of consciousness I am not referring to a will capable of changing reality but, on the contrary, to knowledge of objective reality which can determine the path to follow.

Tens of million of people died in the war sparked off in the mid 20th century by fascism, an ideology which was new at the time, born in the anti-Marxist bosom of the developed capitalist world Lenin had foretold.

In Cuba, as in other Third World countries, the struggle for national liberation, under the leadership of the middle classes and petite bourgeoisie, and the struggle for socialism that the most advanced sectors of the working class and farmers had been waging over the years, combined and strengthened one another. Ideological and class contradictions also flourished. Objective and subjective factors varied considerably from one process to another.

The United Nations and other international organizations, where many saw the beginning of a new, international consciousness, emerged from the last world war. Those hopes were betrayed.

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Fascism, whose instrument Hitler called the National Socialist Party, was re-born, more powerful and threatening than ever.

What does the empire decide to do in order to compete with Cuba in our hemisphere? To deploy an enormous ship turned into a floating hospital that works ten days in each country. It can assist a number of people daily but it cannot solve a country's problems. It does not compensate for the brain-drain, and it cannot train the specialists who are needed so that real medical services may be offered on any day of the week and year. All of the world's aircraft carriers, which today are instruments of military intervention deployed across the world's oceans, working as hospitals, could not offer those services to the millions of people treated by Cuban doctors in remote corners of the planet, where women go into labor, children are born and there are sick people in urgent need of attention.

Our country has demonstrated that it can stand up to all pressures and help other peoples.

I was thinking about our cooperative efforts, not only in Bolivia, but in Haiti, the Caribbean, several countries in Central America, South America, Africa and even distant Oceania, 20 thousand kilometers away. I also recalled the missions undertaken by the Henry Reeve Brigade, which responded to serious emergencies, traveling in our planes, transporting personnel and other resources.

We are not far from reaching the figure of one million people annually operated on for sight problems, free of charge. Can the United States really compete with Cuba?

We will make use of computers, not to create weapons of mass destruction and exterminate people but to convey knowledge to other peoples. From the economic point of view, the development of the intelligence and conscience of our fellow citizens, made possible by the Revolution, allow us not only to aid those in most need at no cost to us, but also to export specialized services, including healthcare services, to countries that have more resources than our own. In this field, the United States will never be able to compete with Cuba.

Our small country shall continue to hold its ground.

In one phrase: The ant has proved mightier than the elephant!

Fidel Castro Ruz

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