

What is Cuba's history but that of Latin America? What is the history of Latin America but the history of Asia, Africa, and Oceania? And what is the history of all these peoples but the history of the cruelest exploitation of the world by imperialism? At the end of the last century and the beginning of the present, a handful of (European nations) had divided the world among themselves subjecting two thirds of humanity to their economic and political domination. Humanity was forced to work for... the group of nations which had a developed capitalist economy. The historic circumstances which permitted certain European countries and the United States of North America to attain a high industrial development level put them in a position which enabled them to subject and exploit the rest of the world.

What motives lay behind this expansion? Were they moral, "civilizing" reasons, as they claimed? No. Their motives were economic. The discovery of America sent the European conquerors across the seas to occupy and to exploit the lands and peoples of other continents; the lust for riches was the basic motivation for their conduct. ... As industry and trade developed, the social influence of the new class grew ...

Since the end of the Second World War, the Latin American nations are becoming pauperized constantly. The value of their ... income falls. The dreadful percentages of child death rate do not decrease, the number of illiterates grows higher, the peoples lack employment, land, adequate housing, schools, hospitals, communication systems and the means of subsistence. ... Like the first Spanish conquerors, who exchanged mirrors and trinkets with the Indians for silver and gold, so the United States trades with Latin America. To hold on to this (flood) of wealth, to take greater possession of ... resources and to exploit its long-suffering peoples. ...

... Where repression of workers and peasants is fierce, where the domination of Yankee monopolies is strongest ... (it is ignorant to think) that the dominant classes can be uprooted by legal means which do not and will not exist. The ruling classes are entrenched in all positions of state power. They monopolize the teaching field. They dominate all means of mass communication. They have infinite financial resources. There is a power which ... the ruling few will defend by blood and fire with the strength of their police and their armies. The duty of every revolutionary is to make revolution.

We know that in [Latin] America and throughout the world the revolution will be victorious. But revolutionaries cannot sit in the doorways of their homes to watch. ... Each year by which [Latin] America's liberation may be hastened will mean millions of children rescued from death, millions of minds, freed for learning, infinitudes of sorrow spared the peoples. Even though the Yankee imperialists are preparing a bloodbath for America they will not succeed in drowning the people's struggle. They will evoke universal hatred against themselves. ...

-Fidel Castro, "Second Declaration of Havana" (February 4, 1962) excerpt