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FIDEL CASTRO'S SPEECH TO INTELLECTUALS ON 30 JUNE 1961

Source: Pamphlet entitled Palabras a los Intelectuales (Words to Intellectuals), Havana, National Cultural Council, 1961, 32 p.

Male and female Comrades:

It is now time for us to take our turn, following three Sessions at which various problems related with culture and creative work were discussed, and at which many interesting problems were posed and the various different opinions represented were expressed. We are not doing this as the person most qualified to speak on the matter, but as a question of a meeting between you and us, out of the need for us to express certain points of view here.

We were greatly interested in these discussions, and I believe that we have demonstrated what could be called "great patience" with this.

Actually, however, it was not necessary to make a heroic effort, because it has been an instructive discussion for us, and I would say sincerely that it has been pleasant. Of course, in this kind of discussion, we men of the Government are not the most qualified people to express opinions on the matters in which you are specialists. At least, that is the case with respect to me.

The fact of being men of the Government and agents of this Revolution does not mean that we are obliged to be experts in all subjects, something which we hardly are. It is possible that if many of the comrades who have spoken here were to attend a meeting of the Council of Ministers to discuss the problems with which we are more familiar, they would find themselves in a position similar to ours.

We have been agents of this Revolution, of the socioeconomic revolution that is taking place in Cuba. This economic and social Revolution must inevitably produce a cultural revolution in turn in our country.

For our part, we have tried to do something (perhaps during the first moments of the Revolution there were other more urgent problems to be seen to). We could also perform a self criticism by saying that we have put the discussion of a matter as important as this one somewhat to one side. This does not mean that we neglected it entirely. This discussion was already in the Government's mind, and perhaps the incident to which reference has been made repeatedly here contributed to accelerating it. We have had the intention for months of calling a meeting like this one for the purpose of analyzing the cultural problem, cents have been taking place, and it was especially the recent events that prevented this meeting from being held earlier. Nevertheless, the Revolutionary Government had been taking certain measures which expressed our concern with this problem. Something has been done, and several comrades in the Government have persisted on the matter on more than one occasion. It can be said provisionally that the Revolution in itself has already wrought certain changes in the cultural atmosphere: the working conditions of artists have changed.

I believe that there has been a slight emphasis here on certain pessimistic aspects, I believe that there has been concern here which goes beyond any real justification for this problems There has been hardly any emphasis on the reality of the changes which have taken place with respect to the environment and the present situation of artists and writers. In comparison with the past, it is undeniable that Cuban artists and writers cannot feel as they did in the past, and that the conditions in the past for artists and writers were truly depressing in our country. If the Revolution began by bringing a profound change in the environment and in the situation in itself, why suspect that the Revolution which brought us these new working conditions might stifle the conditions? Why fear that the Revolution would eliminate precisely those conditions that it has brought with itself?

It is true that the problem being discussed here is not a simple one. It is true that we all have an obligation to analyze it carefully. This is an obligation of yours as well as of ours. It is not a simple problem, since it is a problem that has been posed many times and that has been posed in all revolutions. We might say that it is a skein, that it is quite tangled and not easy to disentangle. It is a problem that we shall not be able to solve easily either.

The various comrades who have spoken here expressed an infinity of points of view, and they expressed them with their arguments. There was some fear of entering into the matter on the first day, and so it was necessary for us to ask the comrades to delve into the subject, and for everyone to say what it was that troubled him.

Unless we are mistaken, the basic problem hovering in the background of the atmosphere here was the problem of freedom for artistic creation. This matter has been brought up more than once by various writers visiting our country, especially political writers. There is no doubt that it is a matter which has been argued in all countries where profound evolutions such as ours have taken place.

By coincidence, a comrade brought us a pamphlet a moment before we returned to this salon. On the cover of it, or at the end, there is a short dialogue which we had with Sartre which Comrade Lisandro Otero collected in the book entitled *Conversaciones en la Laguna* (*Conversations at La Laguna*) (Revolucion, Tuesday 8 March 1960).

A similar matter was posed to us on another occasion by Wright Mills, the US writer.

I must confess that these matters took us somewhat by surprise, in a certain sense, We did not have any Yenan conference with Cuban artists and writers during the Revolution. Actually, this is a revolution which took place and attained power in what might be called record time. Differently from other revolutions, it did not have all the principal problems solved.

Consequently, one of the characteristics of the Revolution has been the necessity of facing many problems hastily. We are just like the Revolution, that is, we have improvised a great deal. Consequently, it cannot be said that this Revolution had neither the stage of gestation that other revolutions have had, or that the leaders of the Revolution did not have the intellectual maturity that the leaders of other revolutions have had. We believe that we have contributed to the present events in our country to the extent of our forces. We believe that we are carrying out a genuine revolution with the efforts of everyone, and that this revolution is developing and appears to be destined to become one of the important events of this century. In spite of this reality, nevertheless, we who have had an important part in these events do not believe ourselves to be theoreticians of revolution nor intellectuals of revolution. If men are judged by their deeds, then perhaps we shall have the right to consideration for the merit which the Revolution means in itself. Nevertheless, ye do not think this way, and I believe that all of us should have a similar attitude, whatever our deeds have been. No matter how meritorious they may seem, we must begin by placing ourselves in the honest position of not presuming to know more than others do, of not presuming that we have learned everything that can be learned, of not presuming that our points of view are infallible, and not presuming that those who do not think exactly the same way are mistaken. That is to say, we should put ourselves in this honest position -- not out of false modesty, but rather from true evaluation of what we know. Because if we put ourselves in this position, I believe that it will be easier to march forward correctly. And if all of us -- both you and we -- adopt this attitude, personal attitudes will disappear, and that certain dosage of personalism which we inject into the analysis of problems will disappear. Actually, what do we know? We are all learning. Actually, we have a great deal to learn, and we have not come here to teach. We have come to learn also.

There were certain fears in the atmosphere, and certain comrades expressed those fears.

We had the impression at times that we were dreaming a bit as we were listening. We had the impression that we had not yet put our feet on the ground well. Because if there is some concern and some fear that restrains us today, it is with respect to the Revolution itself. The great Concern which all of us must have is the Revolution in itself. Or is it that we believe that we have already won all the revolutionary battles? Is it that we believe that the Revolution has no dangers? What must be the primary Concern of all citizens today? The concern that the Revolution

might reveal its measures, that the Revolution would asphyxiate art, that the Revolution is going to asphyxiate the creative genius of our citizens? Or should not the Revolution itself be the Concern of everyone? The real or imaginary dangers that might threaten the creative spirit, or the dangers that might threaten the Revolution itself? It is not a matter of our invoking this danger as a simple argument, we are merely pointing out that the state of mind of all citizens of the country and the state of mind of all revolutionary writers and artists, or of all artists and writers who understand and justify the Revolution, must be: what dangers might threaten the Revolution, and what can we do to help the Revolution? We believe that the Revolution has many battles yet to wage, and we believe that at first thought and our first concern should be what we can do so that the Revolution can emerge victorious. Because this is the first thing. The first thing is the Revolution itself, and after that, we can concern ourselves with the other matters. This does not mean that the other matters should not concern us, but that the basic Concern in our state of mind must be the Revolution -- as it is in mine, in any case.

The problem which has been discussed here and which we are going to touch on is the problem of freedom of expression for writers and artists.

The fear has been stirred up here that the Revolution could stifle that freedom, whether the Revolution is going to smother the creative spirit of writers and artists.

Formal freedom was spoken of here. Everyone agreed with respect to formal freedom. I believe that there is no doubt concerning this problem.

The matter becomes more subtle and actually turns into the essential point of the discussion when freedom of content is involved. It is the most subtle point because it is exposed to the most diverse interpretations. The most debatable point of this question is whether or not there should be absolute freedom of content in artistic expression. It seems to us that some comrades are defending that hint of view. Perhaps it was out of fear of the prohibitions, regulations, limitations, rules, and authorities ties to decide on the matter which they visualized.

In the first place, permit me to tell you that the Revolution defends freedom; that the Revolution has brought a very large number of freedoms to the Country; that because of its essence, the Revolution cannot be an enemy of freedoms, and that if anyone fears that the Revolution is going to stifle his creative spirit, that Concern is unnecessary and has no reason for being.

Where can the *raison d'etre* of that Concern lie? Only someone who is not certain of his revolutionary convictions should truly concern himself with this problem. Someone who lacks confidence in his aim art and in his real capacity for creating might be concerned about this problem. And it might well be asked whether a genuine revolutionary, an artist or intellectual who sympathizes with the the Revolution and is certain that he is capable of serving the Revolution could pose this problem. That is to say, whether or not that doubt would be present in truly revolutionary writers and artists. I believe not; that the field of doubt is left to the writers and artists who are not counterrevolutionary, but who do not feel themselves to be revolutionary either. (Applause.)

It is proper that a writer or artist who does not feel himself to be a genuine revolutionary would pose himself this problem. That is, that an honest writer or artist who is capable of understanding the *raison d'etre* and the justice of the Revolution without joining into it would posit this problem. Because the revolutionary puts something above all other matters. The revolutionary puts something above even his aim creative spirit. He puts the Revolution above everything else, and the most revolutionary artist will be that one who is prepared to sacrifice even his

own artistic vocation for the Revolution. (Applause.)

No one has ever assumed that all men, or all writers, or all artists must be revolutionaries, just as no one can assume that all men or all revolutionaries must be artists, or that every honest man must be a revolutionary because of the fact that he is honest. Being a revolutionary is also an attitude toward life. Being a revolutionary is also an attitude toward present reality, and there are men who are resigned to that reality. There are men who are adapted to that reality. And there are also men who can not resign themselves to or adapt to that reality and who try to change it, and thus are revolutionaries. However, there can be men who adapt to that reality and are still honest men. It is just that their spirit is not a revolutionary spirit. It is just that their attitude to reality is not a revolutionary attitude. And, of course, there can be artists and good artists who do not have a revolutionary attitude to life. It is precisely to that group of artists and intellectuals that the Revolution in itself is an unforeseen event, a new event, an event which could even affect their state of mind profoundly. It is precisely this group of artists and intellectuals to whom the Revolution could be a problem.

It would never be a problem to a mercenary artist or intellectual, or to a dishonest artist or intellectual. Such a person knows what he must do, knows what is of interest to him, and knows in which direction he must go. The problem truly exists for the artist or the intellectual who does not have a revolutionary attitude to life and who, nevertheless is an honest person. Of course, someone who has this attitude to life -- whether he is a revolutionary or not, and whether or not he is an artist -- has his purposes and objectives, and we may all inquire into those purposes and objectives. To the revolutionary, these purposes and objectives are directed toward changing reality. These purposes and objectives are directed toward the redemption of man. The objective of revolutionaries is man himself, one's fellow beings, the redemption of one's fellow beings. If we revolutionaries are asked what is most important to us, we will say the people, and we will always say the people. The people in the real meaning of the word, that is, that majority of the people which has had to live in exploitation and in the most cruel neglect. Our basic concern will always be the great majorities of the people, that is, the oppressed and exploited classes of the people. That is the prism through which we look at everything. What is good for them will be good for us, whatever is noble, useful, and beautiful for them will be noble, useful, and beautiful to us. One does not have a revolutionary attitude if he does not think this way, if he does not think for and about the people -- that is, if one does not think and act for that great exploited mass of the people, that great mass for whom redemption is wanted.

At least, that is the crystal through which we analyze the good, the usefulness, and the beautiful in every action.

We believe that it is tragic when someone understands this and yet has to acknowledge himself to be incapable of fighting for it.

We are, or we believe ourselves to be, revolutionary men. Someone who is more an artist than a revolutionary cannot think exactly as we do. We are fighting for the people, and we are not hurt by any conflict because we are fighting for the people, and we know that we can achieve the objectives of our struggles. The people are the principal goal. We must think of the people before thinking of ourselves, and this is the only attitude that can be defined as a truly revolutionary attitude. The problem to which we referred exists for the ones who cannot or do not have that attitude, but who are honest persons. It is also to them that the Revolution constitutes a problem, and it is they who constitute a problem for the Revolution, a problem with which the Revolution must concern itself.

The case was correctly pointed out here of many writers and

artists who were not revolutionaries, but who nevertheless were honest artists and writers and who also wanted to help the Revolution and in whose help the Revolution was interested; people who wanted to work for the Revolution, and in whose knowledge and efforts to its benefit the Revolution was interested.

It is easier to evaluate this when individual cases are analyzed, There are many of these individual cases that are not easily analyzed. However, a Catholic writer spoke here, He stated what it was that concerned him, and he said it quite clearly. He asked whether he could make an interpretation of a certain problem from his idealistic point of view, or whether he could write something defending those points of view. He asked quite frankly whether he could express himself in accordance with those feelings within a revolutionary system. He posed the problem in a form which might be seen as symbolic.

The thing which concerned him us finding out whether he could write in accordance with those feelings or in accordance with that ideology, which is not precisely the ideology of the Revolution. That he was in agreement with the Revolution on social or economic matters, but that he had a philosophical position different from the philosophy of the Revolution. This is a case which greatly merits Consideration, because it is precisely a case representative of the type of writers and artists who show a favorable disposition toward the Revolution, and who wish to know what degree of freedom they have in a revolutionary situation to express them selves in accordance with their feelings. This is the sector which constitutes a problem for the Revolution, just as the Revolution constitutes a problem for them. The Revolution has a duty to be concerned with these cases. The Revolution has the obligation to be concerned with the situation of these artists and these writers, because the Revolution must aspire to having not just all the revolutionaries and all the revolutionary artists and intellectuals marching alone with it. It is possible that the men and women who have a truly revolutionary attitude toward reality do not constitute the majority sector of the population. Revolutionaries are the vanguard of the people, but the revolutionaries must aspire to having all the people march along with them. The Revolution cannot reject having all honest men and women march along with it, whether writers or artists, or not. The Revolution must aspire to having everyone who has doubts become a revolutionary. The Revolution must try to win the major part of the people over to its ideas. The Revolution must never renounce having the majority of the people with it, having not just the revolutionaries, but also all the honest citizens who are with it even though they are not revolutionaries -- that is, even though they do not have a revolutionary attitude toward life. The Revolution should reject only those who are incorrigible reactionaries, who are incorrigible counterrevolutionaries. And the Revolution must have a policy for that part of the people. The Revolution must have an attitude for that part of the intellectuals and writers. The Revolution must understand that reality, and consequently must act in such a way that the entire sector of artists and intellectuals who are not genuinely revolutionary find a place to work and to create within the Revolution, and so that their creative spirit will have an opportunity and freedom for expression within the Revolution, even though they are not revolutionary writers or artists. This means that within the Revolution, everything goes; against the Revolution, nothing. Nothing against the Revolution, because the Revolution has its rights also, and the first right of the Revolution is the right to exist, and no one can stand against the right of the Revolution to be and to exist, No one can rightfully claim a right against the Revolution. Since it takes in the interests of the people and Signifies the interests of the entire nation.

I believe that this is quite clean. What are the rights of revolutionary or non-revolutionary writers and artists? Within the Revolution, everything against the Revolution, no rights at all. (Applause.)

This will not be any law of exception for writers and artists. This is a general principle for all citizens. It is a basic principle of the Revolution. Counterrevolutionaries -- that is, the enemies of the Revolution -- have no right against the Revolution, because the Revolution has a right: the right to exist, the right to develop, and the right to win. Who could have any doubt about this right of a people which has said: "Fatherland or Death," that is, Revolution or death?

The existence of the Revolution or nothing, of a Revolution which has said "We Shall Win," that is, which has posed an objective for itself very seriously. No matter how respectable the personal reasoning of an enemy of the Revolution is, the rights and the reasons of a Revolution are to be respected much more, especially since a Revolution is a historical process, since a Revolution is not and cannot be the work of the caprices or will of any man, and since a Revolution can be only the work of the need and the will of a people. The rights of the enemies of an entire people do not count in comparison with the rights of that people.

When we spoke of extreme cases, we did so simple to express our ideas more clearly. I have already said that there is a great variety of mental attitudes between those extreme cases, and there is also a great variety of concerns. This does not necessarily mean that harboring some concern means not being a revolutionary. We have attempted to define essential attitudes.

The Revolution cannot attempt to stifle art or culture when the development of art and culture is one of the goals and one of the basic objectives of the Revolution, precisely in order that art and culture will come to be a genuine patrimony of the people. And just as we have wanted a better life for the people in the material sphere, so do we also want a better life for the people in all spiritual spheres and a better life in the cultural sphere. And just as the Revolution is concerned with the development of the conditions and the forces which permit the satisfaction of all the material needs of the people, so do we also want to develop the conditions which will permit the satisfaction of all the cultural needs of the people.

The people have a low cultural level? A high percentage of the people do not know how to read or write? A high percentage of the people is also going hungry, or at least is living or lived in difficult conditions. It lived in conditions of poverty. A part of the people lacks a large number of material goods which are essential to them, and we are attempting to supply the necessary conditions so that all these material goods will reach the people.

We must supply the necessary conditions for all these cultural goods to reach the people in the same way. This does not mean that the artist has to sacrifice the value of his creations, or that their quality must necessarily be sacrificed. It means that we must conduct a struggle in all senses in order to have the creator produce for the people, and to have the people raise their cultural level in turn, so that they might also draw closer the creators. No rule of a general nature can be indicated.

Not all artistic manifestations are of exactly the same nature, and we have sometimes posed matters here as if all artistic manifestations were of exactly the same nature. There are expressions of the creative spirit which by their very nature can be much more accessible to the people than other manifestations of the creative spirit. Thus, no general rule can be laid down, because in which artistic expression is it that the artist must go to the people, and in which one must the people go to the artist? Can a statement of a general nature be made in this sense? No. It would be too simple a rule. Efforts must be made to reach the people in all manifestations, but everything that is within our soon must also be done in turn so that the people will be able to understand ever more and ever better, I do not believe that this principle contradicts the aspirations of

any artist, and much less so if one takes into account the fact that men should create for their contemporaries.

Don't say that there are artists who live with their thoughts on posterity, because without, of course, claiming infallibility or anything of the sort for our opinion -- I believe that anyone who operates in this way is engaging in auto-suggestion. (Applause.)

This does not mean that someone who works for his contemporaries must renounce posterity for his work. Because it is in precisely creation for ones contemporaries that works have acquired historical value and universal value, independently even of whether or not the contemporaries have understood it. We are not making a Revolution for future generations. We are making a Revolution with this generation and for this generation, independently of whether or not the benefits of this work benefit future generations and become a historical event. We are not making a Revolution for posterity. This Revolution will pass into posterity because it is a Revolution for the present and for the men and women of the present. (Applause.)

Who would follow us if we were making a Revolution for future generations?

We are working and creating for our contemporaries, but this does not deny the merit of aspiring to eternity to any artistic creation.

These are truths which we all must analyze honestly, I believe that we must set out from certain fundamental truths in order not to draw erroneous conclusions. We do not see that there is any reason for concern on the part of any honest artist or writer. We are not enemies of freedom. No one here is an enemy of freedom. Whom do we fear? bat authority is it that we fear will stifle our creative spirit? Is it that we fear the comrades on the National Cultural Council? In our conversations with the comrades of the National Cultural Council, we have observed points of view and feelings that are very alien to the concerns about limitations, nooses, and such things imposed on the creative spirit which have been posed here.

Our conclusion is that the comrades on the National Council are as concerned as all of you are to see that the best conditions for the development of the creative spirit of artists and intellectuals are achieved. The Revolution and the Revolutionary Government have a duty to have a highly qualified agency which stimulates, encourages, develops, and orients -- yes, orients -- that creative spirit. We consider this to be an obligation, and could this possibly be an attack on the rights of writers and artists? Could this constitute a threat to the rights of writers and artists, for fear of engaging in arbitrariness or an excess of authority? We might harbor the fear in like manner that a policeman would attack us when we pass a traffic light. We might also harbor the fear that the judge would sentence us. We might also harbor the fear that the force which exists in the Revolutionary Power would commit an act of violence against us.

That is, we would then have to be concerned about all these things. Nevertheless, the citizen's attitude is not that of believing that a militiaman is going to shoot at him, that a judge is going to sentence him, or that the Power is going to indulge in violence against his person.

The existence of an authority in the cultural sphere does not mean that there is any reason to be concerned with abuse of that authority, because who is it that wishes or desires for that cultural authority not to exist? One might aspire along this same route to the non-existence of the militia, to the non-existence of the police, to the non-existence of State Power, and even to the non-existence of the State. And if anyone is so concerned about the existence of the slightest state authority, he should not worry and he should be patient, because the day will come when the

state does not exist either. (Applause.)

A council which orients, stimulates, develops, and works for the creation of better conditions for the work of artists and intellectuals must exist. Who is the first defender of the interests of artists and intellectuals, if not that very Council? Who is it that proposes laws and suggests measures of various kinds to improve these conditions, if not the National Cultural Council itself? Who is proposing a National Printing Law to clear up the deficiencies that have been pointed out here? Who is proposing the creation of an Institute of Ethnology and Folklore, if not the National Council itself? Who pleads for the availability of budgetary provisions and the necessary foreign exchange to bring in books, which have not come into the country for many months, and to acquire the materials with which painters and artists can work? Who is concerned about economic problems, that is, the material conditions of artists? Which agency is it that is concerned with a large number of the present needs of writers and artists? Who is it that defends the budgets, construction, and projects within the Government that are directed precisely toward raising the level of the conditions in which you will work? It is precisely the National Cultural Council.

Why look on that Council with reservations? Why look on that authority as one which presumably is going to do the opposite, to lit our conditions, and stifle our creative spirit?

It can be understood that persons without any problems of any kind would be concerned about that authority. Actually, however, those who can appreciate the need for all the activity and all the work that the Council must do should never look on it with reservation. Because the Council also has an obligation to the people and an obligation to the Revolution and to the Revolutionary Government. That obligation is to fulfill the purposes for which it was created, and it is just as much interested in the success of its work as every artist is interested in that of his own.

I do not know if there are any of the basic problems that have been pointed out here which I have not dealt with. The problem of the film was discussed a great deal here. I have not seen the film, but I would like to see it. I am curious to see the film. Was the film mistreated? Actually, I don't believe that any film has received so many honors, or that any film has been discussed so much.

Even though we have not seen the film, we have submitted to the judgement of comrades who have seen it, among them the opinion of the Comrade President and that of various comrades of the National Cultural Council. It would be superfluous to say that this is a judgment and an opinion which merits complete respect for us. However, there is something which I believe cannot be disputed, and that is the right established by law to exercise the function which the Cinematography Institute or the Review Commission carried out in this case. Is it possible that this right of the Government is being disputed? Does the Government have or not have the right to exercise that function? In this case, the basic thing to us above all is to establish whether or not that right existed on the part of the Government. One might argue about the matter of the procedure, as was done, determining whether or not it was suitable and whether a cordial kind of procedure would have been better. One can even argue about whether or not the decision was just. However, there is one thing which I do not believe anyone disputes, and that is the right of the Government to exercise that function. If we impugn that right, it would then mean that the Government does not have the right to review the films which are going to be shown to the people.

I believe that this is an indisputable right. And there is something else which all of us understand perfectly well. Among manifestations of an intellectual or artistic type, there are some which are more important with respect to the education of the people or the

ideological instruction of the people than are other kinds of artistic manifestations. I do not believe that anyone would dispute the fact that the cinema and television are one of these basic and very important media. And in reality, can the right of the Government in the midst of a Revolution to regulate, review, and censor the films shown to the public be disputed? Is it possible that this is what is being argued?

And can the right of the Revolutionary Government to censor those media of communication which influence the people so greatly be considered as a limitation or a prohibitive formula?

If we were to impugn that right of the Revolutionary Government, we would be incurring in a problem of principles. Because denying that power to the Revolutionary Government would mean denying the Government's functions and responsibility to lead the people and to lead the Revolution, especially in the midst of a revolutionary struggle. At times it has seemed that this right of the Government were going impugned. And if that right of the Government is being impugned, we believe that the Government does have the right. And if it has this right, it can make use of it. It may do so mistakenly, because we do not claim that the Government is infallible. The Government does not necessarily have to be infallible in exercising a right or a function that is its. But who is it that has so many reservations with respect to the Government, who is it that has so many doubts, who is it that has so many suspicions with respect to the Revolutionary Government, and who is it that mistrusts the Revolutionary Government may always be mistaken? I am not claiming that the Government was mistaken in this decision, not by any means. What I am stating is that the Government was acting in use of a right. I try to place myself in the position of those who worked on this film. I try to understand even their sorrow, displeasure, and pain in the fact that the film was not shown. Anyone can understand that perfectly well. However, it must be understood that the Government was acting in use of a right. And that this judgment had the support of competent and responsible comrades in the Government, and that there is actually no well-founded reason for mistrusting the spirit of justice and fairness of the men of the Revolutionary Government, because the Revolutionary Government has not given any reasons for anyone to put its spirit of justice and of fairness in doubt.

We cannot think that we are perfect, and we cannot even think that we are alien to strong feelings. Some persons might say that certain comrades in the Government have strong feelings, or are not devoid of feelings. But can those who believe such a thing really claim that they are devoid of feelings?

And can attitudes of a personal nature be attributed to certain comrades without acceptance of the fact that those opinions themselves might also be inspired by attitudes of a personal kind? We might say here that the person who thinks himself to be perfect or who feels himself to be devoid of feelings should cast the first stone.

I believe that there have been personalism and strong feelings in the debate. Weren't there personalism and strong feelings in these discussions? Did everyone come here absolutely stripped of strong feelings and of personalism? Have absolutely all of us come stripped of a group spirit? Haven't there been currents and trends within this discussion? This cannot be denied. A six-year old child sitting here would have noticed the various trends, points of view, and strong feelings that were confronting each other here.

The comrades have said many things. There were interesting things said. Some have said brilliant things. Everyone has been very "erudite." There has been a reality, however, above all else -- the very reality of the discussion and the freedom with which everyone has been able to express and defend his points of view. The freedom with which everyone has been able to speak and explain his opinions here in an extensive meeting, one

which has been more extensive every day. A meeting which we consider to be a positive meeting; a meeting at which we were able to dissipate a number of doubts and concerns. Were there any quarrels? Who could doubt it? Were there any wars and skirmishes between the writers and artists here? Who could doubt it? Were there any criticisms and super-criticisms? Who could doubt it? And have certain comrades tested their weapons and proved their weapons at the cost of other comrades? Who could doubt it?

Those who have been harmed have spoken here, expressing their resentful complaints against what they considered to be unjust attacks. Fortunately, the wounded rather than the corpses have passed by here. Even some comrades who are still convalescing from the wounds received. And some of them have submitted as an obvious injustice the fact that they were attacked with heavy caliber guns without their even being able to return the fire. Did any hard criticism take place? Who could doubt it? In a certain sense, a problem was posed here, one which we will not attempt to explain in a few words. Out of the things which were posed here, however, I believe that one of the most correct things is the fact that the spirit of criticism should be constructive and positive, and not destructive. That is, insofar as we understand it. This is not generally taken into account, however. For some reason, the word "criticism" has come to be synonymous with attack, when it actually does not mean any such thing. When someone is told, "So-and-so criticized you," that person becomes angry before asking what it was that he actually said. That is, he thinks that he has been destroyed. Actually, if someone of us who have been a trifle removed from these problems and these struggles, to these tests and proofs of weapons, is told about the case of certain comrades who have been virtually on the brink of irremediable depression because of devastating criticisms levelled against them, we might possibly sympathize with the victims, because we have a tendency to sympathize with victims. We sincerely wish only to contribute to the understanding and unity of everyone, and so we have tried to avoid words which might harm or discourage anyone. One fact, however, is unquestionable -- that there might occur cases of these struggles or controversies in which equal conditions for everyone do not exist. From the point of view of the Revolution, that cannot be just. The Revolution can not give some people weapons against others, The Revolution must not give weapons to some people to use against others, and we believe that writers and artists should all have the opportunity to express themselves. We believe that writers and artists should have a cultural journal through their association, a broad one to which everyone has access, Doesn't this seem like a just solution to you? However, the Revolution cannot put these resources in the hands of a group, The Revolution can and must mobilize these resources in such a way that they can be extensively utilized by all writers and artists. You are soon going to form the Artists' Association. You are going to convoke a congress. That congress should be held with a truly constructive spirit, and we are confident that you are capable of carrying it out in that spirit. From it will arise a powerful Association of Writers and Artists to which everyone should come with a truly constructive spirit. Because if someone thinks that there is any desire to eliminate or to stifle him, we can assure him that he is absolutely mistaken.

It is now time for you to contribute in organized fashion and with all your enthusiasm to the tasks which are yours in the Revolution, and to form a broad organism of all writers and artists. I do not know whether the matters posed here will be discussed at the congress. However, we do know that the congress is going to meet, and that its deliberations, the deliberations which the Association of Writers and Artists should have, will be a good subject of conversation for our next meetings. We believe that there should be other meetings. At least, we would not like to deprive our selves of that pleasure and of the usefulness of these meetings, They have also been an occasion for attention to all these problems. We must meet again. What does this mean? That we must continue discussing these problems. That is, that there is something which should be the motivation for tranquillity on the part of everyone, and that is learning of the

interest which the Government has in the problems and of the opportunity to discuss all the matters in broad assemblies that there will be in the future. It seems to us that this should be a motive for satisfaction on the part of writers and artists. Along with this, we shall also continue to acquire more information and better knowledge.

The National Cultural Council must also have another informational organ. I believe that things are taking shape, This cannot be called guided culture, nor stifling the creative artistic spirit. How can anyone who has his five senses and is also a true artist think that this constitutes stifling the creative spirit? The Revolution wants artists to put their utmost effort into the service of the people. It wants them to put their maximum interest and effort into the revolutionary undertaking. We believe that this is a just aspiration of the Revolution.

Does this mean that we are going to tell the people here what they have to write? No. Let everyone write what he wants to, and if what he writes is no good, it doesn't matter. If what he paints is no good, it doesn't matter. We are not forbidding anyone to write on the subject that he prefers. On the contrary. And everyone should express himself in the manner which he believes proper, and express the idea that he wants to express. We shall always evaluate their creation through the prism of the revolutionary crystal. This also is a right, one of the Revolutionary Government, and one to be respected as much as the right of everyone to express what he wishes to.

A number of measures are being taken, and we have pointed out some of them. For those who are concerned with the problem of the National Printing House, we can report that a law which will regulate its operation is under consideration, one that will create various publishers who will see to the various Publishing needs, correcting the existing deficiencies of the present time. The recently created National Printing House had to come forth under difficult working conditions, because it had to begin its work at the plant of a newspaper which suddenly ceased publication. We were present on the day when that newspaper plant became the country's first printing plant, with all its workers and writers, It also had to take care of urgently needed works, many of them of a military type. And so it has shortcomings that will be rectified. There is no need to repeat the complaints which have been expressed about the National Printing House at this meeting. The relevant decisions are also being taken for the purpose of acquiring books and acquiring working material to solve all the problems which have concerned writers and artists, and on which the National Cultural Council has been quite persistent. You know that there are various departments and various institutions in the state, and that everyone within the state requests and aspires to have the necessary resources for being able to satisfy his aspirations and fulfilling his functions fully. We would like to point out certain aspects in which progress has already been made and which should be the occasion for encouragement for all of us. For example, there has been the success achieved with the symphony orchestra, which has been reconstructed and totally reintegrated, and which has attained high levels not only artistically, but also revolutionarily, because 50 members of the symphony orchestra are already militiamen.

The Cuban Ballet has also been reorganized, and it has just completed a foreign tour in which it received the admiration and acknowledgment of all the countries visited.

The modern dance group is also having success, and it also has received very valuable praise in Europe.

For its part, the National Library is developing a cultural policy, engaging in arousing the people's interest in music and painting. It has organized a department of painting for the purpose of publicizing these works to the people. A music department, a young people's department, and also a children's section.

Shortly before coming to this hall, we were visiting the children's department of the National Library. We saw the number of children who are already associated with it, the work that is being done there, and the progress which the National Library has achieved. This is motivation for the Government to supply the Library with the resources that it needs in order to continue developing that work. The National Printing House is already a reality, and with the new organizational forms which it is going to take, it also is a conquest of the Revolution which will contribute greatly to the training of the people.

The Cinematography Institute is also a reality. The basic investments for supplying it with the equipment and material that it needs in order to work have been made during this entire first stage. At least the Revolution has established the foundations for the cinema industry. This has been a great effort, if one takes into account that it is not a question of an industrialized country, and that the acquisition of all that equipment has meant sacrifices and if there are no more resources for the cinema, this does not mean a restrictive policy of the Government, but simply is due to the shortage of current economic resources for creating a fan movement which would permit the development of all talents in the cinema, and which will be put into practice when we have those resources. For its part, the policy at the Cinematography Institute will be the object of discussion and of emulation among the various working teams. The work of the ICAIC [Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematograficas; Cuban Institute of Cinema Arts] cannot yet be judged. The Cinema Institute has not yet been able to have enough time to carry out a task which could be judged, but it has worked, and we know that a number of its documentaries have contributed greatly to publicizing the work of the Revolution abroad. However, the thing that is of interest here is to emphasize that the foundations for the cinema industry are already established.

Publicity, conference, and cultural extension work through the various agencies have also been carried out. In the end, however, this is nothing compared with that can be done and with what the Revolution hopes to develop.

A number of problems of interest to writers and artists remain to be solved. There are problems of a material nature -- that is, there are problems of an economic nature. The previous conditions do not exist at the present time. That small Privileged sector which bought the works of artists no longer exists here. They bought them, of course, at poverty prices, because more than one artist ended up a neglected indigent. These problems remain to be faced and solved. The Revolutionary Government must solve them. They should also be the concern of the National Cultural Council, as should be the problem of the artists who are no longer producing and are completely forsaken. The artist must be guaranteed not only the proper material conditions at present, but also security for the future. In a certain sense, the reorganization of the Copyright Institute has already achieved a considerable improvement in the living conditions of a number of authors who were miserably exploited and whose rights were mocked. These people now have incomes which have permitted many of them to emerge from the situation of extreme poverty in which they were.

These are steps which the Revolution has taken. However, they are nothing but some steps, and we must go on to other steps which will create still better conditions.

There is also the notion of organizing some recreational and working site for artists and writers, on one occasion as we were traveling about the national territory, the idea occurred to us in a very beautiful place -- the Isle of Pines -- of constructing a district, a hamlet in the midst of the pine trees for the purpose of rewarding and paying homage to writers and artists. At that time, we were thinking about establishing some kind of prize for the best progressive writers and artists of the world.

That project did not take shape, but it could be revived, The idea would be to build a hamlet or village in a backwater of peace which invites one to rest, which invites one to write. I believe that it would be well worth the trouble for artists, including architects, to begin to design or conceive an ideal resting place for a writer or an artist, and to see if they can reach agreement on that. The Revolutionary Government is prepared on its part to put the resources in some part of the budget, now that everything is being planned. And will Planning be a limitation imposed on the creative spirit by us revolutionaries? Because don't forget that in a certain sense we revolutionaries see ourselves situated somewhat rashly before the reality of planning. And that poses a problem for us, because up to the present we have been creative spirits of revolutionary initiatives and of revolutionary investments which must now be planned. Don't think that we are exempt from the problems. From our hint of view, we might also protest against that. That is, we now know what is going to be done next year, the following year, and the next year. Who will dispute the fact that the economy must be planned? There is room within that planning, however, for the construction of a resting place for writers and artists, and it would truly be satisfying if the Revolution could count that accomplishment among its undertakings.

We have been concerned here with the present situation of writers and artists. We have neglected the prospects for the future somewhat. And we, who have no reasons to complain about you, have also devoted a moment to thinking about the artists and writers of the future. We think about how it would be if we met again in 5 or 10 years, as the men of the Government should meet again with writers and artists in the future. This does not mean that it would be we ourselves necessarily. This would be at a time when culture had acquired the extraordinary development which we hope for it to achieve when the first fruits of the present academy and school plans emerge.

The Revolutionary Government had been concerned about the extension of culture to the people long before these matters had been posed. We have always been very optimistic, I believe that one cannot be a revolutionary without being an optimist, because the difficulties which a Revolution has to overcome are very serious and one must be an optimist. A Pessimist could never be a revolutionary.

The Revolution has had its Stages. The Revolution had a stage in which a number of initiatives originated from various organisms. Even the INRA [Instituto Nacional de la Reforma Agraria; National Institute for Agrarian Reform] was carrying out cultural extension activities, We did not even fail to clash with the National Theater, because work was being done there and we were suddenly doing other work on our own account. This is all being fit into the framework of an organization now, and so the idea of bringing culture to the countryside, to the farms, and to the cooperatives arose with respect to the peasants of the cooperatives and the farms.

How? Well, by bringing in comrades and turning them into instructors of music, of ballet, and of the theater. We optimists can launch only initiatives of this kind. But how can an inclination for the theater be aroused in a peasant, for example? Where were the instructors? Where did we get them, that we could send them later on to 3,000 people's farms and 600 cooperative? All of this presents difficulties, but I am sure that you all agree that it will be positive if it can be achieved, especially in the sense of beginning to discover talents in the people and in turning the performing people into a creator, because in the end, the people are the great creator. We must not forget this, and we also must not forget the thousands and thousands of talents which must have been lost in our countryside and in our cities for lack of conditions and opportunities to be developed. Unless we presume that we are the most intelligent people that have ever been born in this country -- and I will begin by saying that I do not presume any such thing -- we can all be sure that many talents have been lost in our countryside. I have often cited the example of the

fact that in the place where I was born, I was the only one of some 1,000 children who was able to pursue a university career, I was poorly prepared, of course, since I was not freed of having to go through a number of colleges with priests, etc. I do not wish to hurl an anathema at anyone, but I do say that I have the same right to say what I please as everyone else here had. To complain. I have the right to complain. Someone said that he was shaped by bourgeois society, and I can say that I was shaped by something still worse. That I was shaped by the worst reaction, and that a large part of the years of my life were lost in obscurantism, superstition, and falsehood.

That was the time in which they taught one not to think, but rather forced him to believe. I believe that when an attempt is made to truncate man's capacity for thought and reason, man is turned from a human being into a domesticated animal. I am not revolting against man's religious feelings. We respect those feelings, and we respect man's right to freedom of belief and of religion. However, that does not mean that my own freedom was respected. I did not have any freedom of belief or of religion. A belief and a religion were imposed on me, and they were domesticating me for 12 years.

It is natural that I must speak somewhat complainingly about the years that I could have used -- at the time when young people have the greatest interest and curiosity about things -- in systematic study which would have permitted me to have acquired that culture which the children of Cuba today will have an ample opportunity to acquire.

That is, in spite of everything, the only one among a thousand who was able to get a university degree had to pass through that grinding mill in which only by a miracle will one not be mentally pulverized forever. The only one out of a thousand had to go through all that.

Why? Ah, because I was the only one out of the thousand for whom a private college could be afforded, so that I could study. Now should I believe for this reason that I was the cleverest and most intelligent among the thousand? I believe that we are a product of selection, but not so much natural as social. I was selected socially to go to the university, and I am speaking socially here now about a process of social and not natural selection. Natural selection left who knows how many tens of thousands of young people, superior to all of us, in ignorance. That is the truth. Someone who believes himself to be an artist should think about the fact that many others, much better artists than he, may not have become artists. It would be unrealistic of us not to admit this. Among other things, we are privileged because we were not born as vagabond children. What has been said proves the enormous quantity of intelligences which have been lost simply out of the lack of opportunity. We are going to bring opportunity to all those intelligences. We are going to create the conditions that will permit every artistic, literary, scientific, or any other kind of talent to be developed. Think of what it means that the Revolution is permitting this, and that the entire people will be literate by the next school year, with schools everywhere in Cuba, with achievement campaigns, and with teacher training. This will make it possible to find and discover every talent, and this is just a beginning. In the countryside, all these instructors will know which child has a calling, and they will indicate which child should be given a scholarship to the National Academy of Art. At the same time, however, they will arouse artistic taste and cultural inclinations in adults. Some experiments which have been carried out prove the ability of the peasant and the man of the people to assimilate artistic matters, to assimilate culture, and to put himself immediately to producing. There are comrades in certain cooperatives who have already succeeded in forming theatrical groups. In addition, the interest which the peasant has in all these matters was proven recently with the performances given in various parts of the Republic and the artistic work which the men and women of the people did. Think, then, what it will mean when we have instructors of theater, of music, and of the dance in every

cooperative and at every people's farms.

We shall be able to send a thousand instructors in each of these categories in the course of only two years -- more than a thousand, for the theater, for the dance, and for music.

The schools have been organized They are already in operation. Imagine what it will mean in terms of cultural extension when there are a thousand dance groups, music groups, and theatrical groups in the countryside all over the island. We are not speaking of the city, because it will be a bit easier in the city. Because some people have said here that it is necessary to raise the cultural level of the people, but how? The Revolutionary Government has taken an interest in this, and the Revolutionary Government is creating the conditions so that the culture and the level of cultural training of the people will have been raised greatly within a few years.

We have selected these three fields, but one could continue selecting other fields and continue to work to develop culture in all its aspects.

This school is already in operation, and the comrades who work at the school are satisfied with the progress of this group of future instructors. In addition, however, construction has already begun on the National Academy of Art, aside from the National Academy of Annual Arts. Cuba is certainly going to have the most beautiful Academy of Arts in the entire world. Why? Because that academy is situated in one of the most beautiful residential districts of the world, where the most extravagant Cuban bourgeoisie lived; in the best district of the most ostentatious and most extravagant bourgeoisie, and also the most uncultivated -- let it be said in passing -- because while none of these homes lacked a bar, their occupants, with some exceptions, did not concern themselves with cultural problems. They lived in an incredibly extravagant manner, and it is worthwhile to take a tour of the area to see how those people lived. However, they did not know that they were building an extraordinary Academy of Arts, and that is what will remain of what they did, because students will live in the homes that were the residences of millionaires. They will not live cloistered. They will live as if in a home, and they will attend classes at the Academy. The Academy will be situated in the middle of the Country Club, where a group of architectartists have designed the construction work that will be done. They have already begun, and they are committed to complete it by December. We already have 300,000 feet of caoba lumber. The music, dance, ballet, theater, and painting schools will be in the middle of the golf course, in a site of natural beauty that is a dream. That is where the Academy of Arts is going to be located, with 60 homes situated about it, and with the social club at one side. The latter in turn has dining halls, assembly rooms, swimming pools, and also a floor for visitors in which the foreign professors who come to help us can be lodged. This Academy will have a capacity of up to 3,000 children -- that is, 3,000 scholarship students -- and we hope that it will begin to operate in the coming school year.

The National Academy of Manual Arts will also begin to function, with other homes, another golf course, and with similar construction. That is, they will be academies of a national type. This does not mean that they will be the only schools or anything of the sort. However, the young people who show the greatest ability will come to them as scholarship students, without it costing their families anything at all. These young people and children will have ideal conditions for developing. Anyone would want to be a boy now, to be able to enter one of these academies. Isn't that true? Mention was made here of painters who live on coffee with milk alone. Imagine what different conditions there will be now, and let us say whether the creative spirit will now find ideal conditions for developing. Instruction, housing, board, general culture. . . .Some children will begin to study in these schools at the age of 8 years, and they will receive

general education along with artistic training. . . . Won't they be able to develop their talents and their personalities fully there? . . .

These are more than ideas or dreams, They are already realities of the Revolution. The instructors that are being trained, the national schools that are being prepared, and the schools for amateurs that will also be established. This is what the Revolution means. It is for this reason that the Revolution is important for culture. How could we do this without the Revolution? Let us suppose that we are afraid that "our creative spirit will wither, crushed by the despotic hands of the Stalinist Revolution," (Laughter) Gentlemen, would it not be better to think of the future? Are we going to think about the fact that our flowers are withering at a time when we are sowing flowers everywhere? When we are forging these creative spirits of the future? And who would not exchange the present, who would not even exchange his own present for that future? Who would not exchange his own things, who would not sacrifice his own for that future? And who that has artistic sensitivity does not have the readiness of the fighter who dies in a battle, knows that he is dying and that he will cease to exist physically, but who knows that his blood will fertilize the path of victory of his fellow-beings, of his people? Think about the fighter who dies in battle and who sacrifices everything which he has. He sacrifices his life, he sacrifices his family, he sacrifices his wife, and he sacrifices his children, and for what? So that we can do all these things. And who is it that has human feelings and artistic sensitivity who does not think that doing this is worth all the sacrifices that may be necessary? However, the Revolution does not ask for the sacrifice of creative geniuses. On the contrary, the Revolution says that this creative spirit should be put into the service of this undertaking, without fear that the undertaking will be truncated. However, if you should some day think that your work could be cut short, you should say: it is well worth it for my personal work to be cut short so that we can do something such as that which we have ahead of us (Applause.)

We ask the artist to develop his creative effort to the maximum. We want to create the ideal conditions for the creation of the artist and the intellectual, because if we are creating for the future, why would we not want the best for the present artists and intellectuals? We are asking for the maximum development for culture and, very precisely, in function of the Revolution, because the Revolution means precisely more culture and more art.

We ask intellectuals and artists to put their grain of sand into this undertaking, which in the end will be an undertaking of this generation. The next generation will be better than ours, but we shall be the ones who have made that better generation possible. We shall be the forgers of that future generation. We, those of this ageless generation into which we all fall; both the bearded ones and the beardless, and those who have plenty of hair and those who have none, or who have white hair. This is the undertaking of all us. We are going to wage a war against lack of culture. We are going to wage a battle against lack of culture. We are going to launch an irreconcilable dispute against lack of culture. We are going to fight it, and we are going to test our weapons, Someone does not want to take part? Well, what greater punishment is there than depriving oneself of the satisfaction in what others are doing? [Ye said that we had been privileged. Because we were learning how to read and to write in a school, and could go to an institute or a university, or at least acquire the sufficient rudiments of education necessary in order to be able to do something. And can't we call ourselves Privileged for being able to live in the midst of a revolution? Didn't we devote ourselves with great interest to reading about revolutions? And who is it that has not read the history of the French Revolution or the Russian Revolution with great interest? Who has not at some time dreamed Of having been a personal witness of those revolutions? Something has often happened to me, for example. When I read about the War of Independence, I regret not having been born at that time, and I am sorry not to have been a fighter for independence and not to have

experienced that action, because all of us have read the accounts of our war for independence with genuine feeling We envied the intellectuals, the artists, the warriors, the fighters, and the commanders of that age. Nevertheless, it has been our privilege to experience and to be personal witnesses to a genuine revolution, a revolution whose power is still developing outside the boundaries of our country and whose political and moral influence is making imperialism on this continent shudder and stagger, (Applause.), and for which reason the Cuban Revolution is becoming the most important event of this century for Latin America, the most important event since the wars for independence of the 19th century, a genuinely new era of the redemption of man Because what were those wars for independence except the replacement of colonial rule by the rule of the ruling and exploiting classes in all those countries?

The experience of a great historical event has been ours. It could be said that it is the second most great historical event which has taken place in Latin America in the last three centuries. And we Cubans have been participants in it, knowing that the more we work, the more inextinguishable flame the Revolution will be and the more it will be destined to play a great historical role. You writers and artists have had the privilege of being eyewitnesses of this revolution. And a revolution is such an important event in human history that it is well worth the trouble to experience one, even if just to be a witness to it

This is a privilege also. Consequently, those who renounce the Revolution are those who are incapable of understanding these things, those who let themselves be deceived, those who let themselves be confused, and those who allow themselves to be perplexed by falsehood. What can be said about those who have renounced it, and how can one think of them except with grief? To leave this country in full revolutionary development in order to be submerged in the entrails of that imperialist monster where no expression of the spirit can have any life? And they have forsaken the Revolution in order to go there. They have preferred to be fugitives and deserters of their fatherland rather than to be no more than spectators. And you have the opportunity to be more than spectators, to be participants in this Revolution, to write about it, to express yourselves about it what will future generations demand of you? You might be able to execute magnificent artistic words from the technical viewpoint, but if a man of a future generation, a man 100 years from now is told that a writer or an intellectual of this age lived during the era of the Revolution but outside of it, and did not express the Revolution and was not part of the Revolution, that would be difficult for him to understand. This is especially so when there will be so many, many people in coming years who will want to paint the Revolution and write about the Revolution, and will want to express themselves about the Revolution, compiling data and reports in order to find out how it was, what happened, and how we lived. . . . We had the experience recently of coming across an old lady 106 years old who had just learned how to read and write, and we Proposed that she should write a book. She had been a slave, and we wanted to know how a slave viewed the world when she was a slave, what her first impressions of life, of her masters, and of her companions were I believe that this old woman could write something more interesting about her age than any of us could. It is possible that she will become completely literate in a year and will also write a book at age 106. This is the stuff of revolutions! Who could write better than she about what the slave saw, and who could write better about the present than you? And how many people will begin to write in the future without having experienced this, at a distance, collecting written materials? On the other hand, we are not hurrying to judge our work, because we shall have an excess of judges. It is not that supposed authoritarian judge, the imaginary hangman of culture which we have fashioned here that is to be feared You should fear other, much more fearful judges -- fear the judges of posterity! Fear the future generations, which in the end will have the last word! (Great ovation.)  
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