

right, to whom, as far as I know, it has not occurred to organize seminars on the political thought of Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan, Jorge Rafael Videla, or Augusto Pinochet—whose respective contributions to the expansion of financial capitalism, Third World exploitation, popular oppression, and the internationalization of the peripheral economies are certainly remarkable. Meanwhile, our critical protocol colleagues tortured us for decades with the always incomplete works of Teodor Yicov, the interminable speeches of Leonid Brezhnev, and the administrative thought of comrade Honeker or waxed eloquent about the literary merits of the speeches, novels, testimonies, essays, and narratives of revolutionary leaders, unaware of the lack of texts in Nicaraguan high schools or of the teachers' miserable salaries. Or they criticized as defeatist, suggesting intimacy with the enemies of the revolution, those of us who as part of our loyalty to the revolution from time to time pointed out problems and danger signals (see, e.g., Robinson and Norsworthy, 1986, 1988).

My argument is that there is a relatively direct route from yesterday's and today's intellectuals, labeled by Petras and myself respectively as organic intellectuals and *apocalípticos*, to these protocol intellectuals. It is paved with overemphasis on exogenous factors, an elitist conception of politics, disproportionate attention to anything that has to do with the state and its apparatus, an abstract classism that denies the specificity of any other type of social identity, and an all-or-nothing view of political processes that either responds to failure by accepting all kinds of propaganda or resigns itself to skepticism.

In opposition to Petras's argument, I would say that Latin America has recently seen its intellectuals engage in a level of significant political involvement never before seen in our times. The popular political options in Brazil, Mexico, Uruguay, Nicaragua, Peru, and Chile present true concentrations of intellectuals who have become organic. Their analysis is less dramatic than that of their colleagues two decades ago, but this is not because of funding from international research agencies. It is because the reality of the continent is different. Life has forced us to change—and not only us but above all the true revolutionary leaders of Latin America, who despite their personal preferences know how to adjust to changes in the international scene and their impact on the processes that they direct.

If in the mid-1960s, in the midst of almost complete isolation with respect to the rest of Latin America, the slogan of the revolutionary Cubans was "one, two, many Vietnams," in the mid-1980s, in the face of a very different international correlation of forces, Fidel Castro has asserted that "social changes alone do not solve things," that "there is something more important now than social changes . . . which is the struggle for independence and for

a new world economic order" (Castro, 1985: 34), and that "the task of the moment, the basic priority of everyone without exception, and around which we must all unite in struggle, is development" (1985: 37). Again, if in the mid-1970s he argued that in Africa there were "excellent perspectives for the transition from tribalism to socialism" (Vilas, 1986: 40-44), a decade later he would recognize that "Marx always conceived of economic development as a premise for socialism" (1985: 36) and that "it is very difficult to construct socialism without development" (1985: 61). Is this the metamorphosis of the Cuban Revolution, or the fundamental recognition of the transformation of the context?

The alternative to the apocalyptic intellectuals of yesterday is not the protocol intellectuals of today but those who have persevered in their political commitments and in their critical analysis both of things they detest and of things they love, those who are capable of putting their specific tools at the service of true processes of social transformation even when to do so means risking disfavor, identifying danger signals, and perhaps suggesting that the emperor has no clothes, those who begin the work of solidarity with distant processes by practicing solidarity with the popular struggles of their own neighborhood.

NOTE

1. For example, the excellent studies done by the Mexican Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios Transnacionales and the Centro de Estudios Transnacionales in Buenos Aires and the pioneering research of the Bolivian Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Nacional on the political economy of coca and drug trafficking.

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