

FIDEL CASTRO

14th CONGRESS OF THE CTC
CLOSING SPEECH
DECEMBER, 1978



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**SPEECH GIVEN BY COMMANDER IN CHIEF
FIDEL CASTRO, FIRST SECRETARY OF THE CENTRAL
COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY
OF CUBA AND PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF
STATE AND OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS,
IN THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE 14TH CONGRESS
OF THE CENTRAL ORGANIZATION OF CUBAN
TRADE UNIONS (CTC), AT LAZARO PEÑA THEATER,
ON DECEMBER 2, 1978,
YEAR OF THE 11TH FESTIVAL**

POLITICAL PUBLISHERS

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Distinguished Guests;

Comrades of the Leadership of the Party and of the Government;

Delegates to the 14th Workers' Congress:

It is not easy to give the closing speech of an event that has been so rich in content, ideas and results as this one. I will try to convey some of my thoughts, some of my impressions. Someone said yesterday in a brief conversation that it seemed as though the 13th Congress were only yesterday, and I replied, "Well, it seems to me as though it were this morning." *(Applause)*

That's how fast five years of our workers' and of our people's productive, revolutionary life seem to pass. But what a lot of important events have taken place in these five years since 1973! In the first place, the Congress of our Party in 1975; then the discussion and approval of the Constitution of the Republic; the institutionalization; the politico-administrative division of the country; the setting up of People's Power; the start made in the establishment of the Economic Management and Planning System; as well as other major efforts that have required the mass organizations to adapt to new circumstances and have required of everyone, especially our workers, an intense activity.

The trade union movement's achievements during these five years were brilliantly analyzed in the Main Report. The advances really have been impressive. I won't try to repeat them all, but we could give one example: the field of education within the trade union movement, the struggle to finish sixth grade, a struggle put forward at the 13th Congress, where some doubted that we could

achieve a target of one million workers finishing sixth grade between the time of the Congress and 1980.

As the Main Report said, this target has virtually been reached, which means the minimum level of education of our workers — the minimum! — will have been raised to sixth grade by 1980. Moreover, today's sixth grade is not just any old sixth grade; it is not a sixth grade that is easy to finish.

On the basis of this victory, the goal now set for 1985 is ninth grade. Yes, I know that people are talking about a half million workers finishing ninth grade by 1985. This is what you have committed yourselves to. But in reality it is a modest target. *(Laughter)* It's modest, and we think it's fine that you have approved a modest goal; but, generally speaking, we must struggle for ninth grade to be the minimum educational level for our workers by 1985. *(Applause)*

People all over the world talk a lot about how the Literacy Campaign, the eradication of illiteracy, was a great success for Cuba. However, in our opinion, the easiest battle was the battle against illiteracy; it was more spectacular, but at the same time it was shorter. I think that our Revolution deserves more credit for the efforts that have been made since the Literacy Campaign, and it will be a much greater victory when we can say that our workers all have a minimum level of sixth grade and when we can say that all our workers have a minimum level of ninth grade. Since I am an optimist — I was one, I am one and I think I always will be one *(Applause)* — I go so far as to claim that by the next Congress in 1983 we will be close to winning the battle for ninth grade, and we will be setting ourselves the battle for 12th grade by 1990. *(Applause)*

Do you think it's impossible? *(Shouts of: "No!")* Wasn't it more difficult to achieve the educational level our workers now have? *(Shouts of: "Yes!")* Yet it was achieved at a time when we barely had any classrooms or teachers. Will it be difficult when in just one year, this year, about 28 000 of our citizens graduate as teachers at the various levels?

Just a few years ago, 70 percent of our primary school teachers did not have certificates, and by 1980 they all will have them. We have tens of thousands of students in teacher-training schools and tens of thousands at the university, and thousands of primary school teachers who are getting ready to study for a primary school diploma at our universities.

The number of schools is going up each year, the number of teachers is increasing, and we have fewer primary school students. That means that our possibilities are increasing, that the situation is improving objectively and subjectively, so that we can give all the desired support to this extraordinary program of educational and technical advancement for our workers. Then we really will be showing the world what a workers' revolution is and what socialism is.

We might add that, of the 145 000 students now at the university, around 50 percent are workers. *(Applause)* As a result, new problems are beginning to emerge, and one of these is the number of workers who have already graduated from the Worker Education Program or senior high school and have not been able to enroll in university courses. Because we are being confronted with a dilemma that arises from the fact that there is a limit to the capacity of our universities and that we have to find room in the regular courses for the enormous numbers

of young students who each year graduate from high school or technical school at the intermediate or senior level. This is a problem we have to tackle; we have to find new solutions in order not to stifle this enormous interest and enthusiasm our workers have for studying — which demands, as I said, a search for new solutions, new formulas — so that everyone who wants to take a course at a higher level can do so, one way or another — if not regular courses, then directed study courses.

These problems were spelled out to the Party quite forcefully by the comrades of the CTC, to see how solutions could be arrived at for this situation; for a start, we don't consider it is correct to block a young person's chances of continuing to study. So, apart from those workers studying at the university in the normal way, we must think about programs so that workers can take directed study courses, take examinations and get their diplomas. Because if we already have the problem of this enormous demand from more than 20 000 who have graduated from the Worker Education Program and have not been able to get a place at the university, imagine what it is going to be like in 1985 when we have a minimum of senior high school level. Nobody knows how many are going to want to take university courses.

We think that our society should work so that our people are enriched culturally, intellectually and technically, without restrictions on this process. So, if everyone wants the honor — and I mean honor, because it would be impossible to consider it any other way if this were the general rule — if everyone wants the honor of having a university degree, then everyone should have the chance to get one; without, of course, this implying that, if everyone has a university degree, then everyone is going to have a job that corresponds to that degree.

But this is a problem that has to be solved by creating facilities for study, and, of course, in the knowledge that having a degree will not automatically guarantee a job that corresponds to that degree.

In other words, a cane-harvester operator can, if he or she wants to, be a mechanical engineer, but someone has to operate the cane harvesters; if that person is a mechanical engineer, so much the better, because I am sure that the productivity and the maintenance will be incomparably better. *(Applause)*

I say this because it is important that we understand that, while there was an enormous shortage of university graduates, every university graduate could, with that degree, immediately get the appropriate professional job. But the day when our society has tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions with these degrees, then we won't be able to consider university studies as a way to get a job or a professional position. But we must find a solution to this contradiction, and, instead of saying to part of the workers, "So you want to study? Well, you can't," we must say to them, "So you want to study? Right, we are going to give you every opportunity to study," without this implying, as I said, that, when an enormous number of people are getting degrees, everyone will have a job that corresponds to that degree.

I'm sure you all understand perfectly what I'm trying to say. So, are we all agreed? *(Shouts of: "Yes!")* Or are we going to work so that we are all doctors or engineers, dedicated exclusively to medicine and engineering? *(Shouts of: "No!")*

The time will have to come — and it will come — when jobs such as that of engineer of any kind or doctor, teacher,

historian, economist or whatever will be allocated on the basis of one's university record. Some way will have to be found, *(Applause)* but we are not going to stop this movement, even at the risk of becoming a society of intellectuals. *(Laughter)*

What will a society of intellectuals be like, anyway? Nobody knows. All the same, some will have to face this problem, the problems of the Party, of the state and of the trade union movement in a society of intellectuals. We are on the road to becoming a society of intellectuals, but, at the same time — and this is what is so good about it — it will be a society of proletarian intellectuals and a society of revolutionary intellectuals. *(Applause)* For that reason, we are not afraid of it.

Now, since we have not yet reached this stage, and since we still need many technicians in many fields, and we need not only technicians with degrees but also intermediate technicians and many skilled workers, let's come back down to earth *(Laughter)* to suggest that we take great care to channel this university study effort toward the basic majors for which there is a greater need at the present time in Cuba — above all, into the schools of technology, and, of these schools, especially into the school of machine construction, which is very important.

We have been making efforts in various areas, and in some fields we have made a great deal of progress: for example, more teachers have been trained at various levels, and the number of those studying agricultural engineering and agronomy is increasing rapidly; year by year the number of students enrolled in the schools of economics and of medicine is going up. We must have the same kind of success with students enrolling in the schools of technology, and we must take constructive,

organizational measures to promote these schools in our country.

The successes of the trade union movement over these years have been reflected in other areas, such as culture, the amateur performers' movement and sports. All of the figures point to an enormous growth in these activities. We have been training new trade union cadres; our national school has been operating at full capacity, as have the provincial schools, and training is given not only to our own cadres but also to lots of cadres from other countries, especially Latin-American ones.

We have been advancing a lot in terms of experience; we have been advancing a lot in terms of organization. But, what's more — something which in our opinion is essential — we have been advancing in terms of consciousness and in terms of revolutionary spirit. One example of this spirit is voluntary work, which has been maintained, has been preserved and has been enriched. Few things have been so impressive as the spectacle of the last special Sunday voluntary work, November 5, in honor of this Congress.

Seldom have we seen such an impressive sight as the massive mobilization of our working people to the work centers and the factories — and with such enthusiasm. All the estimates were exceeded. People were talking of 1.2 million as a target — and there were something like 1.5 million people. To me it seemed as though there were more than 2 million, because everybody took part in the mobilization. As a joke, I said there were more workers that Sunday than there are during the week, *(Laughter)* because perhaps the most extraordinary thing was that there was no absenteeism that Sunday, although it was voluntary work. It's impressive how this tradition,

this spirit which Che established in our country, (*Prolonged applause*) has been maintained through 20 years of the Revolution.

Comrade Veiga mentioned almost all the main subjects discussed in the theses and at this Congress, and he did not forget to refer to the importance of the innovators' movement. We heard a comrade here talk about the innovators' movement and what it means. Equally important are the Youth Technological Brigades, what they have been contributing and what they are capable of creating.

They have been asking for resources and facilities, and it is right that they do so; although, of course, you cannot set up a pilot center in every factory. We will have to study which centers have the most facilities and which localities and which regions have the most resources and see how we can channel through these centers the facilities they are requesting for their work. He made a distinction between the technician and the innovator, the one who invents; and he said that, although the innovators did not necessarily have to be inventors, they could still be of great help.

We think that this movement should receive the utmost attention and support from the administration and the state. (*Applause*)

I would say that the 13th Congress was a much more difficult congress than this one. There were some really ticklish questions at that Congress. (*Laughter*) Among other things, there was the question of tying wages to production, which was the central issue at that Congress. But we haven't forgotten that there were other questions, like the famous Resolution 270, which turned out to be impracticable. We had to appeal to the revolutionary

consciousness of our workers, to their understanding of the problems, in order to adopt some of the measures of the 13th Congress. But the tying of wages to production was the central issue: the formula of socialist distribution, which has had such a great effect on our economy.

For the fruits of tying wages to production and applying the principle that corresponds to the phase we are in — that is, distribution according to work, or socialist distribution — are undeniable.

In some lines of work spectacular results have been obtained, as in the case of port workers, where great effort and good organization also played a key role. Just the fact that their productivity has tripled can serve to give us an idea.

A productivity increase exceeding the salary increase has taken place in practically all sectors, with highly positive results for the nation's economy.

Yet, it is obvious that we have not benefited as much as we could have from the application of this principle, that we must go on perfecting and strengthening it in practice while straightening out any aspects or situations handled mistakenly due to the principle's not having been correctly applied — without letting the difficulties discourage us.

A lot has been said here on agriculture; on the question of getting the fields ready for planting; and on a certain lag in applying the above principle, which is attributed to a lack of interest on the part of the management, to the latter's desire to avoid taking the trouble of setting up the needed controls. Some comrades told me that the application of such a principle to agriculture entailed an obligation on the part of the management to make a greater effort and exert greater control.

Needless to say, we should not lag behind in tying wages to production in agriculture, for agriculture is one of the fields where we need to make a greater effort for productivity.

To be truthful, there's something that socialism cannot abolish, there's something that the Revolution cannot suppress, and that's work. We're all familiar with how things were in the past in our fields: unemployment on the one hand; on the other, fierce competition among the workers to land jobs which were relatively abundant during the harvest season and hard to find the rest of the year.

We're all familiar with the situation of the cane cutters then, the early hour they had to start work. The ox-cart drivers had to be in the fields by 2 in the morning to start loading the cane by hand — no cane loaders were around then; we didn't have anything then. Working conditions in the fields forced the agricultural workers to engage for 12, 13 and 14 hours in rugged, hard work at a fast pace.

All those conditions changed with the Revolution: the dead season disappeared, unemployment disappeared, new work opportunities sprang up everywhere — and not only, mind you, in agriculture. Work was humanized, and the workday was reduced considerably — from 14 to 8 hours, this eight-hour day we're talking about now. But how can agriculture be developed if you reduce the workday from 14 to 4 or 5 hours of work at a slower pace; if it takes three men under socialism to do the work of one man under capitalism? It isn't like that, of course, in all cases, but in some it is.

Of course, technology is a great ally of man. From the moment a cane loader is brought into the picture, his

strength is multiplied manyfold, his productivity is increased, and then a few thousand men can load all the cane that formerly called for the effort of hundreds of thousands.

Then comes the cane-cutting machine with which one man can do the work of 50. What a wonderful thing the cane harvester is! Or take the rice-harvesting machine, that substitutes for all that rugged work of harvesting rice manually. Or take the plane that sows rice from the air or sprays the crop.

And so technology is man's great ally; it enables us to humanize work and increase work productivity manyfold. Yet applying technology takes time, and it hasn't been introduced yet in some lines of work — although, fortunately, it has been in many.

But it's even difficult to find someone in our country willing to milk cows by hand; you simply can't find them. All new dairies are equipped with milking equipment. But those old enough to know how cattle were raised under capitalism are aware that a man had to get up very early, round up and tie down 30 zebu cows that were plenty skittish and plenty rebellious (*Laughter*) — one single person to milk 30 cows and get a liter and a half, two liters of milk per cow.

So technology is being progressively introduced — indeed, it has been rapidly introduced in agricultural work in our country since the Revolution. Just remember how we first had the cane loaders; then came the cane-conditioning centers, later the cane-cutting machines, and other technological advances in agriculture. But work is still needed. You can rely on technology; technology aids work, it multiplies work productivity, humanizes work.

These are the characteristics of technological progress, yet it can't eliminate work. It can lessen the intensity; it can reduce the physical effort needed; but we must bear in mind that work can't be done away with. In both manual work and mechanized or agrochemical work, we must make the best use of the workday and work with earnestness.

Therefore, it is necessary that the management go to all the trouble required to be in control of the situation, and it is necessary that the workers and the trade unions go to all the trouble required to create deeply rooted awareness and to make demands, for we all should make demands on one another.

I can imagine how difficult it must be at present to work as a field manager, because field managers are not class enemies of the workers — they belong to no other class. Under capitalism, yes. The owners belonged to another class; those in the management, the supervisors, field managers, etc. — I don't even remember what they were called back in those times: foremen, overseers, managers — they all were at the service of the landholders and the owners.

Today the manager or field manager belongs to no other class, is not an enemy of the workers; he came from the ranks of the workers and is a friend, relative or neighbor of the people he works with. So we must all make demands on this man and demand of him that he make demands on all of us. We must ask him and demand of him that he apply controls; that on the job he isn't anybody's friend, buddy or relative; (*Applause*) that his job is to make demands and apply controls.

We must act firmly and be highly critical of demagoguery, irresponsibility, softheartedness and inefficiency — highly

critical! (*Applause*) And we must be highly critical of all softhearted managers, highly critical of them. This does not mean in the least that in making demands we mistakenly confuse duty with despotism, or with lack of camaraderie; by no means!

Yet the capitalist was the master of everything; he went around keeping an eye on things. He had a trusted employee, one whose job was to keep an eye out for things. So now all managers and managerial cadres are the trusted employees of the working class, of the workers. (*Applause*) Therefore, the masters, the owners — the workers now — must be demanding with the managers administering their wealth.

Demagoguery is easy — you all know that — and not for nothing has our working class, our trade union movement, learned so much over these years. Economism is easy — you all know that — and one of the weapons of capitalism to prevent and hold back our Revolution is precisely economism.

Economism has caused many a headache for more than one revolutionary process before the workers have had the chance of becoming aware of their role in society and in the revolution, in their revolution. Because, insofar as the revolution is not their revolution, it isn't a revolution; and, insofar as policy is not their policy, it is not a policy for the workers. The workers do well to demand as much as can be demanded. But, when a revolution is their revolution, when policy is their policy, then the situation is completely different, for they can no longer go against their own interests. The interests of the workers and those of the exploiters are in legitimate contradiction. But, given the identification that comes about under socialism, it would be absurd, impos-

sible, for there to be contradictions between the workers and their interests as workers.

That's why we must be demanding; why we must criticize demagogy, softheartedness; why we must say to the manager, "You must make demands on me; you must make demands on me, because that's your duty. If you make no demands on me, then you're not a good manager." (*Applause*) Because the working class, the worker, has no need, absolutely no need, of buddies managing things.

This is another of the important roles the trade union movement has as management's counterpart.

And this is an interesting topic, very interesting indeed, particularly since we have with us visitors and representatives of the labor movement from many other countries.

I must say here, in the first place, that economism has never been a problem for our Revolution, never! (*Applause*)

When the first signs of this being a problem were detected early on, when there were certain mistaken slogans, the way our workers clearly understood the problem was something to be seen; and so we have had no problems of economism in our revolutionary process. If something were to characterize our labor movement, it would be the high political awareness it has.

This a really interesting topic.

The workers and the trade union movement have two tasks: the first duty of the workers in the Revolution is to build socialism; that's their first duty! (*Applause*) And to do everything that contributes to the building of socialism, because it's their socialism, their society;

their wealth belongs to no one else; it's their wealth, the wealth of the nation and of the workers.

As has been pointed out here, the labor movement has another role: that of watching over the interests of the workers as workers of a certain branch of the economy, of a certain place of work, and of watching over their rights, over all the prerogatives the socialist state gives it to protect the interests of the workers against any misunderstanding, arbitrary action, injustice. It must be the spokesperson of the interests of the workers as such; of all their problems, as they have been set out here in this Congress, as they have been set out in the theses; of all the legitimate, just interests of the workers in all fields and in all senses. It must clarify, set out, demand and defend the duties and the rights of all the workers.

That's the task of our trade union movement. But, naturally, to those who come from a capitalist country... And the capitalists would like to campaign against the trade union movement under socialism and are out to portray it as an appendage of the management. That's what the ideologists and phony propagandists of capitalism are inventing. But we mustn't let that discourage us. We say that to the labor movement representatives coming from capitalist countries. The thing is that, under socialism, a miraculous identity and identification comes about between the interests of the workers and the interests of the entire people, who are, of course, a working people. (*Applause*) A fabulous social miracle takes place whereby a people of workers becomes, for the first time in history, the master of its labor and the master of its country's wealth.

That's why there's harmony in socialist society and why we have a labor movement like this.

Why, this labor movement would be a capitalist's ideal, the ideal, mind you. A labor movement talking about production and increasing productivity and improving quality and furthering culture? A labor movement always talking about increasing the wealth of the country? That's what a capitalist would like! But that doesn't even occur to a capitalist, because, to a capitalist, a trade union is the Devil incarnate. (*Laughter and applause*)

Strikes? Who talks about strikes in a revolutionary process, a socialist process? Under capitalism all you hear about is strikes and more strikes at all hours and every day; there's always something brought to a halt under capitalism. One day TV stations go on strike; another, air traffic control towers go on strike. There's one catastrophe after another, there's chaos in the world, because flight controllers are out on strike. Or take the case of New York: it went I don't know how many weeks without newspapers, because they were out on strike. Such chaos and disorder are what is most commonplace in capitalist society, and it is logical — logical, I repeat — because of the contradiction between workers and capitalists.

One thing that we revolutionary leaders — I'm not referring to others; I'm just referring to us, because there are many revolutionary and socialist leaders in the world, and I can't say something here alluding to the rest; I can engage in self-criticism, or we can all engage in self-criticism, but we can't apply it to others, because then it wouldn't be self-criticism, but criticism (*Laughter*) — one thing we are is inefficient, inefficient! Inefficiency lies with us, the managers, the leaders, for we could do things much better and we don't; for we could be much more efficient and we aren't; for we have cooperation in pushing ahead the economy, pushing ahead with work

and everything, cooperation that the capitalists never had, and yet, with all these advantages, although we are making progress — nobody is going to deny that we're progressing and progressing a lot — still we could be doing things much better.

We're absolutely convinced that we're working in optimum conditions from a human and social standpoint; from a subjective standpoint; and from the standpoint of the worker, who is the creator of wealth. We may have other problems connected with underdevelopment, the blockade, the shortage of raw materials and many other things, but, when it comes to the effort and the cooperation that our workers are willing to contribute in connection with any task, that is something no society in the world has ever had before, that no bourgeois leader has ever had and that no capitalist has ever had. However, the capitalist is a fiend when it comes to protecting his factory, when it comes to protecting his raw materials and protecting his costs — protecting everything on the basis of an out-and-out contradiction with the interests of the workers. Moreover, he defends his interests as a capitalist with the help of the army, the police, the courts, the lawmakers, the press, everybody. Everything is at the service of these interests, but he defends them like a fiend just the same — and he does it efficiently. We cannot deny the fact that, when it comes to running a factory, the capitalist is usually efficient.

What should we expect from a socialist manager? We should expect him to be, as a rule, more efficient than the capitalist, not because he's the owner — he doesn't own any factories — but because he's in charge of a factory that belongs to the workers, to the people.

If it's a case of a power plant, that plant no longer belongs to K-listo Kilowatt, as the electric power company of the past used to be called; and, if it's a telephone switchboard, a truck or a bus, then it doesn't belong to any transnational corporation or transportation enterprise, either; nor is the socialist manager defending any foreign-owned mine, factory or sugar mill. It is precisely because the workers know this and are completely aware of it that, the minute you walk into a factory, you discover the workers' enormous interest in production, their great love for their factory and their determination to do whatever has to be done.

This means that the workers, as such, understand these things much more clearly than the managers who come from the working class — and who are of the working class (*Applause*) — do in their role as managers. It isn't that I want to criticize managers just for the sake of it, but I understand the realities of the situation.

Of course, we must ask ourselves where our administrative cadres came from. As a rule, they didn't come from the bourgeoisie; they chiefly came from the working masses, and they didn't have any experience or much technical know-how. We've been developing cadres. It must be said that you cannot generalize about these things, and I'm simply referring to a certain attitude. I'm thinking of the attitude that we must all have toward our work, the attitude that the workers must have when they're working, the attitude of those directly involved in production and the attitude of those workers who hold administrative posts. I say this because I'm sure that, if we were more efficient, we would be drawing the greatest benefit from the exceptional subjective factors that favor production in a socialist process.

I believe that we have a magnificent trade union movement, a movement that should be constantly improved and perfected but that is, nevertheless, a magnificent movement. I think we can say that our revolutionary process can really feel satisfied with the role being played by our workers and our trade union movement. (*Applause*)

Don't let anybody be deceived into thinking that the trade union movement is an appendage of the administration. Let no one think that. On the contrary, we could say in all justice that the socialist administration, the socialist state, though not an appendage, is an instrument of our workers; (*Applause*) that the administration in our country is an instrument of our workers, of our working class and of its political and trade union organizations. That's what can be said.

In a capitalist country, it's quite difficult — actually impossible — for the workers to discuss things the way they do in our trade unions and to participate in trade unions as they do here. This boils down to the fact that, in a capitalist society, they have no participation of any kind, while here they participate in everything; in the management of the state, in the Party, in everything, because the leader of the Cuban trade union movement attends and takes part in every meeting of the state's highest executive body, the Executive Committee of the Council of Ministers. (*Applause*) He's there to coordinate, make suggestions and constantly remind others what the general and particular interests of the workers are.

We are very happy with the Congress and with the presence here of so many representatives of the international trade union movement; the representatives of our brother and sister workers of the socialist countries; representatives of our brother and sister workers of the countries of Latin America, Africa and the so-called Third World in

general and also of the developed capitalist countries. We're very happy, very satisfied with the fact that they have had the opportunity to witness what happened at this Congress. *(Applause)*

I would like to point out to them that one of the characteristics of the Congress was the broad democratic spirit and the spirit of criticism and self-criticism from the grass-roots level up — an atmosphere that has prevailed ever since the preparations for the event got under way a year ago.

The delegates spoke here with complete freedom, as long as they liked, on whatever subject they desired; they have elected their leaders, and, in our opinion, they elected the right ones.

A vote was taken, and there were a few votes against some of the most outstanding and valuable leaders of our trade union movement. I remember that, when the votes were being read, there was some murmuring, and I said to myself, "Very good, very good!" First of all, because the right to vote against someone is one of a delegate's most sacred rights. *(Applause)* Let's begin by respecting that right and feeling satisfied that we have it. Second, because the job of leading is a difficult, complex, hard job, and frequently the opinions of the leaders must clash with other people's opinions. There may be cases where comrades were told they were wrong and yet for the rest of their lives go on believing they were right and that an act of injustice was committed. This could happen in the case of a promotion — or lack of promotion, or demotion. All these things can happen.

Needless to say, we must ask leaders, demand of them, that they be demanding. We can't have milk-toast leaders; we can't have leaders who avoid contradictions, who sidestep problems; we can't have leaders thinking of the

Congress, worrying about votes against them. If they've done a conscientious job, if they've worked seriously and honestly, they shouldn't be worried about votes cast against them.

It goes without saying that the criterion of the immense majority of our workers is revolutionary, fair — above all, fair — and analytical. We expect our workers to be demanding, to demand that leaders be demanding and that the work of each leader be evaluated. Men, being men, can make mistakes; it happens all the time. But the important thing is moral integrity, purity of principles, honesty. Of course, the role of the leader is not only to lead or demand but also, to a great extent, to understand, help and teach. The one thing we must demand of a leader above all others is that he be honest, that he never resort to politicking and demagogy of any kind. To tell the truth, I don't think this kind of leader can exist in our country, because the masses reject and abhor this type, because the masses are allergic to demagogy and dishonesty. *(Applause)*

We are personally familiar with the work of many of the leaders you have elected. Elections in our country are a complex, rigorous process, mainly because here nobody aspires, nobody can aspire, to a particular post. An individual aspiring to a certain post is something unknown to socialism. In the Revolution it's simply inconceivable to imagine some guy running for something, putting up a poster that reads "Vote for Joe Blow" or "Vote for So-and-So." *(Laughter)* There's no such thing in the labor movement or among the delegates. You know very well how People's Power candidates are nominated. What makes a cadre stand out is the way he goes about his life and work, his concept of the people, the masses, the workers. So far, nobody aspires to anything here.

We must take into account that our trade union movement was dealt a very hard blow, a very hard blow, shortly after the 13th Congress, with the death of Comrade Lázaro Peña. *(Applause)* We all remember the sorrow of our people, and especially our workers, when they learned of that tragedy, of that irreparable loss, and how difficult it was to find a cadre to take the place of Comrade Lázaro Peña.

In those circumstances, which were cause for concern for all of us and for the Party leadership, we didn't pinpoint or designate a cadre. We met with the leadership of the trade union movement to discuss the matter freely, and we asked them to study the question at length until they arrived at a practically unanimous decision as to the comrade to propose and elect to take Lázaro Peña's place. After thinking over the matter carefully and conscientiously, the leadership of the trade union movement elected Comrade Veiga. *(Applause)*

I think that one of Comrade Veiga's greatest merits is his having taken up the difficult task — a virtually impossible one for a young cadre of the labor movement — of occupying the post formerly held by Comrade Lázaro Peña.

We have seen the way he and the other members of the leadership collective have worked over the years, making a tremendous effort, without the authority, the experience and the universal recognition Comrade Lázaro Peña had. In spite of all those difficult, adverse circumstances, they did a marvelous job.

We are well acquainted with them because we are always in contact with them, because they take part in high-level state meetings and because we've seen how they go about their work; we have seen how they go about things, their concern, their honesty and how they stand

firm. Each time a problem that involves the workers, concerns the workers, affects the workers has been discussed, they have responded in keeping with their dual role as leaders of the country, as state leaders, as Party leaders and as the workers' leaders. Their fundamental mission in the leadership of the Party — without their ever neglecting the general interests of the Revolution — their role, has been to keep up to date on everything that directly concerns the workers. We can testify to that.

Therefore, we congratulate the delegates to the Congress and the members of the National Council for the election of the members of the Secretariat and the National Committee. *(Prolonged applause)*

Throughout the process leading up to this Congress, different work centers and different people have raised a variety of problems, some of which were brought up here. There are the difficulties raised by working women, for example. This problem first came up some time ago. I remember particularly well those production meetings after 1970. The question of working on Saturdays was brought up with great vehemence in many places. And, after going over this question of Saturday work time and again, we kept coming to the conclusion that, under existing conditions, because of the production processes that large numbers of women were involved in, it was impossible to do away with Saturday work and reduce the women's workweek to five days. In many industries there was no way of doing this.

Then other ideas and proposals came up; the proposal stemmed not from the women's desire for privileges but from their problems at home, especially the problems they had with their children.

These problems have also arisen in relation to school vacations. We know that many work centers are full of children during vacation time, because there's no school, so they go with their mothers to work.

This is why there are school vacation programs. A great effort has been and still is being made to alleviate the problems faced by working mothers, with nursery schools, vacation camps, etc., but I remember that one of the things that came up most often was why there was no school on Saturdays. This has always been the subject of much discussion. While we don't think it's possible to cut down the workweek, in view of the stage we're at, our present situation at the moment, we must try our hardest to find solutions to this problem.

As you know, teachers have had a very full schedule, and you can see this in teachers' meetings. At meetings in the light industry sector, you'll hear one set of issues, and at the teachers' meetings, others. They have complained that they were almost going mad, what with meetings and all sorts of obligations in school, in the union, sometimes in the Party, in the Union of Young Communists, in the FMC [Federation of Cuban Women] and in the CDRs [Committees for the Defense of the Revolution], plus education programs. The teachers said they were all going to end up crazy, for, on top of all this, they themselves had courses to attend. In the last few years they have indeed made a great effort to get their further qualifications. But Comrade Fernández was saying to me — and he must bear some responsibility for the fact that this problem has not been solved (*Laughter*) — that they're working on it for the future; not for 1979 they say, but for 1980 — he didn't say which month (*Laughter*) — for the Ministry of Education to be in a position to offer classes on Saturdays in primary schools.

(*Applause*) You're clapping, but I'm sure that, if this were a meeting of Pioneers, there wouldn't be much applause. (*Laughter*) So what's the best way of going about this? We'll really have to ponder this question of whether it's a good idea or not to have school on Saturday. But at least it's hopeful in terms of finding a solution to this problem that's been brought up so often, the difficulties that working mothers face on Saturdays with their children.

Things have also been brought up about nursery schools, and to such a degree that we feel that we must really get down to finding what we can and should do in response to the totally justified concern which working mothers repeatedly express in this regard. This includes those whose work places have three shifts, who have to work different shifts and raise the question of child-care centers functioning at night and at all hours. I think we have a duty to find some solution to this problem; the socialist state must be capable of finding some way to solve the problem, which is brought up so often by working mothers.

Vacation problems have been brought up here. To be honest and realistic, we can't offer you a spectacular increase in holiday facilities. I think that this problem of vacations is going to be with us for a long time, perhaps all our lives. And remember, I'm an optimist, as I said, because there are conceptual problems involved. We've been looking into all this.

It's not a question of whether or not vacation programs have been cut back — and they have been, because there has been a shift to international tourism, so there has been a cutback. It's open to debate whether we'd rather have more facilities for ourselves or get more foreign currency from tourism. We don't like tourism; we really

don't like it, but tourism is simply an economic necessity of the Revolution.

As we've said before, we're not an oil-producing country; we aren't going to be able to get rich quick. One of our natural resources is the sea, the climate, the sun, the moon, the palm trees, etc.; this is the natural wealth of our country, and we have to take advantage of it even if we don't like tourism.

Well, is tourism going to corrupt us? We asked ourselves, are we so tiny and so defenseless that they're going to corrupt us? (*Shouts of: "No!"*) I ask you workers: Is anything going to corrupt us? (*Shouts of: "No!"*) Aren't we strong enough? (*Shouts of: "Yes!"*) I believe we are and that we can have as tourists here anybody we like; yes, anybody we like. I'm saying this because this matter of admitting certain people into our country is the topic of the day. (*Applause*)

We are going to start from a principle, from the principle that the Revolution has a policy — a firm, revolutionary policy. What's more, the Revolution acts with and is based on infinite, absolute, total confidence in the masses. This is why we said some of these things.

Our Revolution is nearly 20 years old; is strong, solid and indestructible; and has not only defended itself victoriously and overwhelmingly but also helped other revolutions to defend themselves. (*Applause*)

We're not going to live in a completely aseptic world; if we have to have tourists, we'll have tourists. We hope to increase this source of revenue.

It would be much better to find that one of the hummocks in Pinar del Río wasn't limestone at all but pure, solid gold (*Laughter*) and then to say, "We won't use the

sun or the moon or the stars or the beaches or the white sands of Varadero," etc. Right?

However, we have to be realistic and keep our feet on the ground, and that's why we are developing tourism. Are tourists going to influence us? It could be the other way around, the other way around, you know. (*Applause*) Those who are right, who are ideologically and politically strong, who are revolutionary, can have anybody come. (*Prolonged applause*)

It's hard — at least in this hemisphere and most of the rest of the world — it's hard to find a people with as much self-confidence as the Cuban people.

Going back to the subject of vacations, we were saying that some installations were turned over to another kind of tourism. Some were, but so few that it would have been better to keep them as they were. Really, when the Revolution put up its first buildings for tourism, it was with national rather than international tourism in mind. The hotels that were built were for the people; the tourist centers were for the people.

The need to increase international tourism arose later on. There hasn't been a large hotel construction program for either national or international tourism. Perhaps we'll be able to bring about a rapid increase in international tourism; we'll see. There may be lots of people who want to come here. Obviously, those who come know that they're not coming for casinos or brothels or things like that, or to climb on Martí's statue — definitely not (*Applause*) — or for drugs or gambling or prostitution or anything like that, of course.

There may be a need to step up the amount of hotel construction. In view of our economic reality, we have

to give preference in our investments to international rather than national tourism.

We have to continue to look for a socialist solution to the problem of vacations, because all the people are entitled to vacations. If we continue with the old idea of going to the beach only in July and August, and all workers and their families want to go to the beach only in July and August — especially as this ties in with the children's summer vacations — we'll never be able to solve the problem of vacations. We have to make the most of our facilities all year round. There's no alternative; if everyone took his vacation in August with his children, that would mean building New York City at the beach — I don't know which beach, because we don't have all that many or large enough ones — somewhere outside the cities, but for vacations, not to live in.

We do have to build New York City; yes, we have to build it in the next few years — that is, practically as many houses as there are in New York — but to live in, not for vacation programs. We have to be realistic: (*Applause*) the houses should be lived in, not just used for vacation programs.

We have to look into our urban development plans, to see if the swimming pools planned for schools can also be used by adults, something like we've started in Santiago de Cuba and some inland cities, and see what they do about amusements and recreation; how they use their facilities all year round; and how we can make life more enjoyable without having to resort to impossible, crazy, absurd aspirations of building a New York at Varadero or anywhere else — at any other little beach, in Guanabo or elsewhere.

This is the problem.

We must think about this; we must make the best use of the space we have and study how hotels built for international tourism can be used for national tourism part of the time — that is, for the relaxation of the workers — as much as possible; I said "as much as possible" because the perfect, ideal thing, the thing we would like most, socially speaking — which is to provide inexpensive tourist vacations for everybody — isn't within the reach of this country, because one thing clashes with another. There'd be an excess of money; money wouldn't be absorbed so quickly, and there'd be an excess of money in circulation.

We have to analyze all these problems. It isn't something that we can but don't want to do. It is something we must look into and which you must think about.

A commission on this has been set up. The Political Bureau, in which this problem was brought up, created a commission to study it. So, we will study it; we will come up with formulas, or at least with clear, logical answers concerning what is to be done and how we are going to do it, what possibilities there are. But let me tell you something very frankly: if we have a certain number of rooms in the hotels we are building for national tourism, in the hope of using them for national tourism in July and August, and there is a sudden flood of international tourists and the country needs those rooms, we will have to give preference to international tourism; we will have no alternative. (*Applause*)

Vacations are pleasant, and they are necessary. In fact, another question that was discussed was overdue vacations.

When we were considering this issue during a discussion of the draft law on social security in the Political

Bureau, it came out that 110 million pesos' worth of vacations are owed to a certain number of workers — 110 million pesos' worth of vacations not taken, because the people went on working and went on producing. Well, this isn't the idea in establishing vacation time.

I think this is one of the first issues that must be solved.

At some assemblies or work centers it was proposed that these overdue vacations be made up at the end, when retirement comes around, because there are some people who are owed vacations for as many as six years. What I said was that I didn't know we were stealing from the workers. *(Laughter)* I didn't know this was happening. I really believe that, if somebody is scheduled to go on vacation and doesn't, spending the month at work in the national interest, and he is paid the same as he would be if he were on vacation, we are stealing from him. That is the truth. However, we can't say, "Well, pay these people the 110 million in cash." We can't go about solving things in such an abrupt way; but we are stealing; technically, we are stealing. *(Laughter)* Nobody meant to steal, but they have ended up stealing vacations in certain cases. *(Laughter)*

This is one of the first things we must solve, must settle. Only in exceptional, extremely justified circumstances should we say, "Don't take your vacation now; take it later." We should see to it that everybody gets a rest — if not at Varadero, at least at home or in the park, at the movies or Lenin Park, or walking down the Malecón or any other street in Havana. *(Laughter)* But we must see to it that everybody's rest is assured.

That is the first thing. We would be dreaming if we thought there would be a place for everybody to go to in

July or August, since everybody wants those two months; the rest of the year, many places are empty.

Can we solve the problem that way? Wouldn't it be better to be realistic and think it through? I said that, if necessary, we would give preference to international tourism, even though we would much rather have a worker, a dedicated worker from one of our factories, there. That is what we would prefer, but there are other problems to which we must give priority. We would rather have the worker have medicine when he needs it, the best medical attention when he needs it, the best specialist when he needs one. We would prefer his children to have all those benefits; *(Applause)* we would rather provide the children of that worker with food, milk, a fine education and preparation for the world of tomorrow. We would prefer a family to have security, to have work. That is, there are priorities for investing our country's foreign currency and resources. When we get a million, ten million, 100 million dollars or whatever, it all goes directly into education, public health, the economy of the country, the country's needs and its development, to pay for a new factory, to help solve the problem of transportation, the problem of spare parts, etc., etc., etc. *(Laughter)* So, we must be realistic.

We can't possibly have mistaken ideas. We must develop a concept, a concept of what vacations should be in our circumstances, vacations in a small socialist country which now has a population of almost ten million.

I was telling some people that we have as many inhabitants per square kilometer as China has. Historically, it has been said that China is overpopulated. If China is overpopulated, so is Cuba, because we have more or less the same number of inhabitants per square kilometer.

I gave another example: I said, "Well, when we export seven million tons of sugar grown in our fields, in view of the population density per square kilometer, it is as if China were exporting 700 million tons of food a year." I don't really know how much China exports, but I doubt it exports seven million tons of food. I doubt it. What I mean is that, in our small country, our people, on their land, produce considerable per capita quantities of food for export.

These are the realities. Now, think about our continuing with the old capitalist concept of how vacations should be spent. It can't be. We must ponder this. This is the kind of problem that we should mull over before coming up with an answer for it. I don't have the answer, but I think we should give it serious thought. At least, we should face facts: it isn't because of anybody's ill will that there's no room in a hotel at the beach in August. And then there's the issue of whether we should pay more or less for vacation facilities. We agree that the vacation plans should be inexpensive, but, if we were to give everybody an inexpensive vacation, I don't know where the money would come from. I really don't know.

The issue of historical salaries was also raised. I think this was discussed here. A number of people made proposals of different kinds at the grass-roots level. In general terms, the view was that historical salaries have given us a lot of headaches and created a lot of inequalities — so much so that the National Assembly was even forced to enact a law in this regard. We must be resolute in the struggle against generating new historical salaries. This has been a long battle. If we start to retreat, we will never win it, and the chaos that historical salaries have created will continue. Remember that there was even more drastic talk about historical salaries at the 13th

Congress. There was talk of eliminating them altogether. Nobody has done so, because we know how hard it would be and that it would just create other problems. People should study, become qualified for higher-paying jobs, etc. The time came when we made up our minds to stick to this principle: at least there should be no new historical salaries, so, with time, they will gradually disappear. We started to put this policy into practice everywhere: in the Party, in the leadership of the Party, when we discussed a cadre, we would say, "Well, we need this cadre for this or that. He is ideal for thus and such, but he makes more money than he would make here." And we decided, "Well, we will do without this cadre; we won't bring him in." When the difference isn't too great, we venture a proposal. We say, "Look, you will earn a little less, but there's an important job to do here." When the difference is great, we don't even make the proposal, because, if the man comes and gives up a historical salary — there are relatively high historical salaries here — if the man comes to work for the Party for a much lower salary, he may be in a spot after one, two, three or five months. He may become financially responsible for an aunt, a grandmother or a great-aunt — all those commitments you make. Suddenly the man's salary is cut in half, and he's going to go crazy or commit suicide.

We in the Party have been inflexible. Not a single case! I think this is what all the agencies and everybody should do: apply the law and the principles of historical salaries strictly — strictly! — to prevent new historical salaries from coming into being. There is no other way to win this battle, and we must not let ourselves be defeated by this problem.

There was talk about the various measures still pending from the 13th Congress, such as the question of reviewing

job requirements and improving the method of payment for work under abnormal conditions. It is true that it hasn't been possible to put some of the ideas of the 13th Congress into practice. Veiga explained in the Main Report that this would have meant an additional 300 million pesos a year in salaries, or 3 billion pesos in ten years. The salary increase has already been greater than expected, as a result of placing workers in the wage quota system, which hasn't produced the desired results in all cases. These were the issues we explained, and we were cautious about this. There is still the issue of categories one and two in agriculture. Some issues are still with us, and we are aware of them.

The issue of salaries must be handled with great care, because any measure taken in isolation always has unforeseen repercussions. We know this; we know this, because we have made mistakes. Sometimes we have tried to solve a problem in a certain place or sector, a very important one, and there have been thousands of reasons why something should be done; so we have raised the salary to solve the problem, and we have created another tremendous problem.

I can give you an example, if you like: the salaries of university professors were raised some time ago — and it was an isolated measure — in order to attract professors. There were a lot of reasons. The thing is, now many people don't want to work anywhere else: lots of people want to be university professors. Then we have economists at the Central Planning Board and other places who earn less, and we need them where they are.

We were discussing the question of a court of arbitration recently. For this court, we would need judges from the Supreme Court, or that level. So then we would have

to give the judges the same high salary, because one would be a university professor, and we couldn't get him to come, otherwise. If we set up a social research institute — which is very important — that needs a university professor, we have no way to solve the problem, because the salary at the institute is lower, and, if we move that individual, if we ask him to leave the university to go there, his salary would be reduced substantially.

These salary problems must be studied as a whole and very carefully. It's easy to say, "Yes, of course. How nice it would be if we could raise salaries in categories one and two in agriculture and for all those groups." There are problems. When we visit a factory, they tell us, "Nobody wants to be a lathe operator's helper," and the lathe operator — a skilled worker — has to do his own fetching and carrying, because nobody wants to be a lathe operator's helper.

These problems must be studied and solved in line with our possibilities, in a very rational manner. We should not take isolated measures in this matter of salaries. Let's see if we can at least get the wage quota system to work in agriculture. I know there are some jobs in agriculture with quotas that are really easy to meet, because I've seen them. I've been at places where the quotas were stiff, and you could see the workers hard at work beside their machines. And there were others where they weren't stiff. There are certain places where everything was eased: hours, quotas. Everything was easy. We will see what can be done, but we can't promise anything. The question of groups one and two was discussed at the congress of agricultural workers with great vigor. We won't promise anything; we will look into the problem, without making promises. It wouldn't be honest to make any promises here that

couldn't be kept because they would create financial or other kinds of problems. The only thing we can promise is to look into the issues which have been raised by a number of workers.

We have also been paying for work under abnormal conditions. This is one of the means available to the state for solving labor force problems in many places. There are some jobs that are harder than others, beyond doubt, and the state needs means for providing adequate salaries to solve personnel needs in different jobs.

Yesterday we talked about the housing problem, in remarks about the microbrigades. You already know the views which were expressed, but, since this is being broadcast for all the people and thousands of microbrigade workers are concerned about this problem, I will repeat some of the ideas expressed yesterday.

In essence, a mass construction program is required to solve the housing problem. That is the first point. Our needs have been estimated at 100 000 a year. This goal has been talked about on more than one occasion, but it still hasn't been achieved.

Our program is 50 000 by 1980, and it is a difficult program. However, we have been developing the material basis for it; we are completing two big cement factories and sand and stone quarries and are taking other measures to be able to fulfill the program.

We hope the figure will continue to rise till we reach 100 000 in 1985. It's going to take a great effort to build 100 000 homes. We estimate the minimum number we need to be 100 000 a year; and, even with 100 000 a year starting in 1985, by the year 2000 we'll only have met 85 percent of our housing needs.

So you can see what the situation is. It's a very serious situation, and, even with the greatest effort, it will take a long time to solve it.

There are about 25 000 microbrigade members. They're building about 20 000 homes a year. We've thought about changing over to having homes built by state brigades and changing the system of allocation.

If housing were built by state brigades, it could be allocated to any worker, including those who didn't belong to a work center with a microbrigade: teachers, health workers, service workers, administrative workers, etc., who now have practically no chance of getting housing.

Two things are essential: first, that the microbrigade members should be paid not by their work centers but by the construction enterprise; and second, something we've said many times, that the investments in housing construction should be so big that the program can be carried out on an economical basis.

A hundred thousand homes would be equivalent to an investment of a billion pesos a year. The country cannot spend a billion pesos a year on housing and get practically nothing back. We have suggested respecting the present system: that everyone who received housing under the Urban Reform Law should benefit from it for as long as necessary, under present conditions; those who received housing on the basis of a set percentage should continue with this arrangement. But at some point — maybe in 1980 or 1981 — and in accordance with the rate of increase of the home-building program, we will have to change the system of payment for new housing allocated. I'm not talking about housing that's already been allocated; I'm not talking about housing that's already being lived in, but new housing, establishing

payment by the square meter rather than by the system of a set percentage of the income of the head of the family, as in microbrigade housing; not applying that system, because it doesn't bring in enough returns; to be honest, it wouldn't pay off the cost of the materials even in 40 years — what the housing cost in terms of materials alone.

We can't invest like this; the country just can't. You, the workers, can't invest a billion pesos a year and get 20 or 30 or 10 or 15 million back. So, we have to make housing pay for itself; we can do it over 12 years, or 15 or 20, whatever we decide. With the system of paying rent by the square meter, the cost of the home, the investment, can be repaid in a number of years. This is what we're proposing.

Of course, when the microbrigades started, they were meant to function on plus work. As you well know, many work centers — as I said yesterday — really did do it on plus work, but others, because they had a surplus of personnel, did it with plus workers and not plus work. The microbrigades all began working very hard and have shown amazing spirit, and they are one of the country's best construction forces. All well and good. Then, as every sizable work center was to form a microbrigade, there weren't enough materials to go around, and they had to reduce the intensity of the work, but they helped in industrial and social projects, in everything. They really were a magnificent solution at a critical moment in terms of work force for building housing.

Then it was suggested that the microbrigades should be turned into state brigades, so as to have the same system of home building, the same allocation system and the same system of payment. Of course, this got a lot

of people worried; it got a lot of microbrigade workers worried. If the Congress had really made the decision to turn the microbrigades into state brigades, we'd be running the risk of losing a large part of this force, because the microbrigade workers want to maintain their ties with their work centers. Many of them are already being paid by the construction sector and earn more than they did before, because they gained new skills; others were being paid by their work centers. So these problems cropped up.

We went into the question in depth. Then we reached the following conclusion regarding the microbrigades: if a microbrigade becomes a state brigade, because it needs to for a particular job, it remains linked to its work center and is not affected economically; a worker in construction who stays in construction will not be affected economically either.

What is inevitable is that they will be paid by the construction sector. It couldn't be otherwise, or it would clash with the economic management and planning system; so payment must come from the construction enterprises.

The rent that is paid, the rent that must be paid in the future, when another system is worked out for paying rent for new housing, must be the same for all workers, whether their housing has been built by a state brigade or a microbrigade.

During the discussions on this problem, it was pointed out that the idea of doing away with the microbrigades was of concern not only to the microbrigade workers but also to the centers for which they work, since the factories get a certain amount of the housing. So then we

thought of another way: have them paid by the construction sector; make the rent the same for all those who receive housing, the same system for everyone, whether it's been built by a microbrigade or a state brigade; have nobody affected economically — we explained this, too, how we did it without violating the principle of historical salaries — and maintain the link with the work center.

These are the ideas we have, but we also believe that, for the peace of mind of the work centers for which the microbrigades have worked, a percentage of the buildings built each year should be allocated directly to the work centers. When we're building 50 000, 80 000 or 100 000 housing units, we must look carefully into the methods of allocating the rest. In our opinion, the best way is through the work centers, because, when an official has the thankless task of allocating housing, he runs the risk of making many enemies and being suspected of favoritism. In a work center, when housing is allocated collectively, there may be complaints and workers who don't agree and think the collective was unfair and wrong. But, well, it's not the same when the entire work force of a factory makes a mistake as when one official of such a department is doing the allocating. (*Applause*)

We believe that the state ought to always hold a central reserve of housing, a limited amount, and so should People's Power, for when there are problems. There are cases, for example, of people in temporary accommodations who have to be given homes, emergency cases of families that have to be moved because a factory is being extended, or some other building, or whatever. It's always essential for the state to have a certain amount, a percentage — it doesn't need to be very much — of housing for solving these kinds of problems. Also for when there's

a new industry, as in Moa, because housing has to be built for the people who are going to work there.

We think that, in general, the ideal form of allocation, except in cases relating to a centralized pool, is through the work centers. So, we'd have no objection to having some of the housing built by the microbrigades — 15 000, 20 000, 80 000 or 100 000 units — and allocated through the work centers. Therefore, the workers of those centers which have been enjoying the benefits of the work of the microbrigades shouldn't get worried. We have to find the most sensible solution to this problem, one which doesn't produce anxieties and which doesn't make people drop out of the microbrigades, which are one of the most important forces in the construction industry.

I really don't want to go on much longer. I think I've been a little lengthy, and we're coming to the end of the Congress. But I want to emphasize the fact that, whenever the workers have been called upon, there has always been an immediate revolutionary response, in every period, ever since the beginning of the Revolution, and a growing one each time. I remember the time after the difficulties in 1970 when all those production assemblies were held in every union, the results of those meetings, the responses of the workers, the advances made since then. I remember how last year, in last year's sugar harvest, with very difficult weather conditions, there was an enormous amount of cane, and a tremendous special effort was needed. Agricultural workers, sugar workers and transport workers were all called upon to make this effort, and our sugar harvest exceeded 7.3 million tons of 96° pol. sugar. We brought in the second largest sugar harvest in the history of the country, the second biggest sugar harvest in the history of the country, and in the worst weather. Or the times the port workers were called upon to

solve the problems of the ports, to keep demurrage down; or the times the construction workers have been called upon.

In the first half of this year we visited some construction sites, and the workers at many of them were looking into the possibilities of accelerating the programs; several of them were in fact accelerated by up to a year. One was the textile plant in Santa Clara, which was scheduled for completion at the end of 1980 and is now going to be finished by the end of 1979. It was also proposed to complete the bottle factory at Tunas, the flour mill at Regla and a whole number of other important construction projects a year ahead of schedule. The workers didn't hesitate; their response was immediate and enthusiastic. Several of these construction projects have already been completed within the stated time; others have been notably speeded. You'll have seen the commitment of the construction workers in a whole series of priority projects. The problem of the parts for the KTP-1s for this sugar harvest was posed, a really serious problem, and there was an immediate response from the workers in the machine-tool industry.

We also recall the rally for the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution in which we spoke of the difficulties facing us, the need for economy, and we recall the effort made by workers in a number of centers, the level of efficiency and the economy of raw materials achieved.

There is virtually not a single occasion, not a single situation, in which the workers don't respond immediately and enthusiastically to the calls of the Revolution.

Now, too, an appeal is being made to the workers in the iron and steel and machine industry to step up the

production of components and spare parts; to turn out skilled workers for the machine-tool industry on a large scale; to see if we can once and for all solve this agonizing lack of spare parts which is holding up our transportation, holding up our buses, holding up our construction machinery, holding up everything. Because of the inflated cost of spare parts, their cost in foreign currency, we sometimes have a shortage of parts — even for machinery from socialist countries — which means that we have to make an effort. And we will make it! We will go forward!

We intend to boost our machine-tool industry's production of components so much that we will not only have all the parts we need but can become exporters of spare parts as well and get out of this situation of want. It often happens that the raw materials for making one of these parts cost only a tenth of the finished article. That is, for a tenth of the cost in foreign currency of many of these parts, we could buy the raw materials to make them here. Of course we'd need well-qualified and well-trained workers, and we're organizing this with comrades from the trade union movement and from the iron and steel and machine industry.

The slogan of this Congress has been one of working for a solution to our basic economic problems. As Comrade Veiga was saying, the accent of the Congress has been on supporting what we consider to be the only reasonable proposal, that we concentrate our ideas and our energies on development and think about development rather than consumption.

This country has serious obstacles to overcome, especially in trade with convertible currency countries. Exports must be increased in this area and in the socialist sector, as well, of course. The country has to increase exports,

and, as we were saying at the National Assembly, if we have new cement factories, we should not use all the cement ourselves but should export some; if we have new textile plants, we should not use all the textiles produced but should export some. All these factories also need raw materials bought with convertible currency. We have proposed that we export at least one meter out of three of what we produce in these new factories, to pay for the fiber and raw materials and whatever else we need to buy with convertible currency. We must develop an exporter's mentality, because now we only have an importer's mentality.

We've had to concentrate more on development than on consumption; we've had to realize that this was the real task, the real mission facing us. The most sacred duty of this generation of workers is to devote their efforts essentially to the development of the country. This doesn't mean that things won't improve, that our standard of living won't rise. There's no doubt that we've been making modest yet steady progress in many fields and that we will continue to do so. But what really counts is our awareness, our understanding and our attitude toward the fact that this generation must concentrate its efforts on development. *(Applause)*

Other generations will live better, but there's no question that this one is living better than the preceding one. *(Applause)* We would all like to belong to the generation that will be born in 1995 or the year 2000, say, for we could still say, "Those who come after us are going to be better off." Yes, they are going to be better off, and we should be happy for them. *(Applause)*

I'm sure that many of our comrades who were born at the beginning of this century, many of our workers who

had to live through all the calamities, oppression, humiliation, abuse and injustice of capitalism, would have wished they had been born today.

Our children today don't suffer from poverty or lack of clothing; they don't have to beg on the streets; they're not neglected by society; they don't have to live under the constant threat of dying from lack of medical care and medicines. In other words, our children are infinitely better off, in every way, than were our children in 1930, in 1940 or in 1950. Much better off.

The present generation is much better off than the past one with regard to social security, medical care, employment and countless other things. The state has to invest vast sums in education; public health; defense; and, above all, development. These are necessary investments. If we didn't invest in development, what could we do instead? Have a little more clothing and stop building factories?

Really, our revolutionary process, in difficult conditions, has been spared a great many sacrifices thanks to international solidarity, the cooperation given us by the rest of the socialist camp — especially the cooperation given us by the Soviet Union. *(Applause)* In the face of the economic blockade and all the difficulties caused by the loss of markets, our economic relations with the Soviet Union, the fact that it buys our sugar, all the sugar we want to sell it; the fact that it pays us prices way above the world market prices; and the fact that it supplies us with fuel have meant a great deal to us. All these things have been a great help to our country, have helped our plans for economic and social development. If it hadn't been for this, we certainly would have had to have made terrible sacrifices in order to carry through the Revolu-

tion, in order to maintain our independence. As for defense, you can imagine how much our weapons would have cost if we'd had to buy them on the world market, considering how expensive a tank, a gun or a plane is.

To the same extent that we've had international solidarity, good relations with the rest of the socialist camp and excellent economic relations with the Soviet Union, we have received the aid that has enabled us today to feel satisfied over the progress we've made and to say that there are no longer any illiterates in our country; that very soon every worker in Cuba will have a sixth-grade education and will go on studying; that we have tens of thousands of workers attending the universities; that there's practically no unemployment here; that there are no beggars and no prostitution; that the calamities that plagued this country in the past no longer exist here; that our infant mortality rate is by far the lowest in Latin America; that we have 1 040 000 students in high schools; (*Applause*) and that we're going through the world economic crisis with success while all we see elsewhere is calamities, unemployment, layoffs and conflicts of all kinds.

Our five-year plan is coming along quite satisfactorily, and we are making progress; our sugar harvests are bigger and more stable every year, and we are setting up major industries. We don't deny that we have difficulties; we're not saying that the road we're following is an easy one. We would be lying if we said that. The road to development that we are taking is a difficult one. In the world of today it is a difficult road precisely because of the unequal trade between the industrialized capitalist world and the Third World, and we're partly dependent on that trade. That's inevitable. However, thanks to socialism in our country, thanks to our relations with the rest of the socialist camp — especially with the Soviet

Union — and thanks to the efforts made by our workers, our country is making progress and will continue making progress regardless of the difficulties.

We are getting ready not only for the next five-year plan but also for a 20-year forecast plan, to know what we will be doing in the next 20 years, just to be able to look ahead 20 years. Under capitalism, the most our country could look ahead was 20 days, 10 or 20 days. Nobody knew what would happen in 20 days.

So, we will have our path already worked out, and we'll be able to get to work all over the country. One of the main virtues of the Revolution is that it has been working all over the country; the fruits of the Revolution have been carried everywhere: schools of all kinds, technological schools, junior and senior high schools, vocational schools and sports schools have been built everywhere. The cities in the interior have been transformed, and industries have been set up all over the country.

We have delegates from all over the country here, from Pinar del Río, for example; hasn't that city changed enormously in the last seven or eight years? And from Manzanillo, Holguín, Tunas, Villa Clara, Cienfuegos, Guantánamo, Santiago and elsewhere. (*Applause*) There have been amazing changes in all of them, especially those which were the poorest and the most neglected, as shown by the nursery schools, the hospitals and the university branches; university branches have been set up in nearly every province.

For the first time, there has been a fair distribution of the means of production and social benefits in our country, and we will continue working along these lines.

The role of the trade union movement in all this is decisive. Believe me, the Revolution could not be con-

ceived of without the trade union movement playing its role. *(Applause)*

What the administrators may do doesn't matter; the key thing, the decisive thing, is the workers.

If we want to improve our services and make our education more effective, continuing to improve it in order to place it on a par with the best in the world, this will basically depend on the teachers and professors. If we want to continue raising the standards of our public health service and make it as effective as possible, as we said in our speech inaugurating this school year, this will basically depend on our doctors and other health workers. Without their dedicated efforts and backing, nothing could be done. If we are going to promote construction, improve transportation, improve the ports or whatever, the key factor is the workers, the creators of the goods and services which the people consume. It is the trade union movement that groups all the workers, which is why it is so important, so decisive; without the trade union movement, the Party and the state could not tackle this huge task.

The Party's ranks are growing among the working class. In the drive to increase the size of the Party, stress has been placed on attracting more workers, and we expect that the percentage of workers in the Party will increase constantly.

The coming years will be years of effort and hard work. They will continue to be difficult. They won't be easy years, but there will be constant and steady progress for our people and our Revolution.

We don't promise that anything will be easy. It would be demagogic to say that the coming years which face

this generation were going to be easy ones; they will be years of hard work and difficulties. Let me repeat that we must devote ourselves to development, chiefly for the benefit of future generations. However, these generations will also benefit and will have the great spiritual and moral satisfaction that comes from the fulfillment of their historic role. The coming generations will always be grateful and will always appreciate what this revolutionary generation is doing; *(Applause)* yes, this generation is revolutionary, really revolutionary, a generation with great internationalist awareness. *(Applause)* The real nature of our working class, of our workers today, is shown in their spirit, their role in the Revolution, their work and eternal enthusiasm; in the internationalist fighters who fought in Angola and Ethiopia, *(Applause)* the overwhelming majority of whom are workers, members of the reserve forces of our glorious Revolutionary Armed Forces; *(Applause)* in the thousands of civilian technicians, construction workers, doctors and other health workers and teachers serving in different parts of the world.

The growing demand for Cuban technicians is a satisfaction and an honor for our country: the fact that many countries call upon us to provide technicians, technical cooperation, doctors and other experts. This is so to such an extent that the export of technical services and construction aid is becoming another of our country's major economic resources. What do you think of that? Before, there were no doctors to send to a small town like Baracoa, but now our doctors are all over the world, and our construction workers are in several parts of the world. And the demand is increasing. I must admit, I prefer this resource to that of tourism. Definitely. But

we're not going to give up tourism. We need all our resources; we need them all. *(Applause)*

So, is our country afraid? Afraid of what? Our soldiers have proved and our internationalist workers are proving what they can do! *(Applause)*

This is the best feature of the present stage of the Revolution, which has moved beyond certain idealistic, utopian, unreal stages. Of course, all these earlier stages were motivated by the sincerest revolutionary spirit. We have been overcoming these past mistakes, and we've had to establish certain conditions, certain material incentives, certain concepts on how distribution should take place under socialism, on how things should be run under socialism. We have been learning from these past experiences, and we have been profiting from them. At the same time, our awareness is growing; our revolutionary spirit is growing.

We have been feeding the fire of our revolutionary zeal, as it were. This has been the case, for instance, with the voluntary work spirit and with the internationalist spirit. In other words, alongside the realistic measures — imposed upon us by reality — there have been measures that promote and strengthen our communist consciousness, our revolutionary spirit.

This should be one index we should always measure ourselves by. And, speaking of indices, there's one index that speaks for a Revolution, for one congress after another, for the Party and for the workers: and that is that we're more revolutionary every day, *(Applause)* that we're more Marxist-Leninist, *(Applause)* that we're more internationalist, *(Applause)* that we're more communist. *(Prolonged applause)*

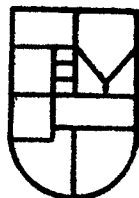
Our Workers' Congress has been held in the midst of important and moving historical dates: on the 22nd anniversary of the Santiago de Cuba uprising, *(Applause)* on the 20th anniversary of the Battle of Guisa, *(Applause)* on the eve of the 20th anniversary of the Revolution. *(Applause)* And we're closing this Congress on December 2, the 22nd anniversary of the *Granma* landing. *(Applause)*

On a day like today a group of us made the landing under very difficult, really difficult circumstances, with very serious obstacles and many enemy soldiers facing us; thirsty, hungry, physically exhausted and with other problems, we struggled on through the night. Probably none of us at that moment could have imagined that, 22 years later, at that same hour, we would be present at the closing session of this magnificent Congress, of this magnificent meeting.

We have come far since then. Together, we have marched along the path that began on that December 2, 1956, and has now reached this Congress on December 2, 1978. This is why — with all the obstacles, all the difficulties and all the victories — we say to you that we have been, are and always will be optimistic! *(Applause)*

Patria o Muerte!

Venceremos! *(Shouts of: "Venceremos!")*
(Ovation)



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