

To Understand Mariátegui*

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It has been a little more than three years since we had the occasion to talk from this place. At the time, we spoke about the problem of education and shared our thoughts on this important issue. It was a wonderful opportunity to talk with you. Today, once again, we have the opportunity to speak with you, but the circumstances are somewhat different.

We are going to speak about José Carlos Mariátegui, of the actuality of his thought, and this task which I have been assigned to address, is not in itself an easy task, at least not to me. First of all, we believe that Mariátegui must be approached with respect, and secondly, we must approach him from a clear and precise position, because otherwise it is not possible in any way to understand the actuality and richness of his thought.

Of course, Mariátegui has been physically dead for many years, but his thought is still profoundly alive, just as it was in the 1930s. It is still vibrant, still current and still a perspective for Peru, while other thoughts of people who are still alive are truly dead.

It is difficult in an hour more or less, to talk on all Mariátegui's thought, so for this reason we want to focus on a few concrete problems and emphasize on what should do facing the image of this great Peruvian. First, we uphold the figure of Mariátegui as a proletarian intellectual. We will not get into detailed dates or other matters which are not of interest now. We will get into central problems set forth by the actuality of the thought of José Carlos Mariátegui.

*https://web.archive.org/web/20120730033530/http://www.presidentegonzalo.org/document/p_19680000_entender_eng.html

To Understand Mariátegui

After having tried to bury him in silence, much has been written about Mariátegui. Of course, we also see Mariátegui as very highly spoken of, so as to mystify him, to systematically try to twist him, to try to “better” him with senseless pedantry. It has been said in the first place about Mariátegui that he was not a convicted and confessed Marxist and whose thought was not sustained by Marxism-Leninism.

Mariátegui said it himself. He was a convicted and confessed Marxist, fearless, neat and precise. What does that mean? It means that Mariátegui had a proletarian class position. He was plainly and simply on the side of the exploited. Mariátegui felt in his own flesh what the exploited masses of our country felt and during his time, unfortunately for us, a very short life, he translated into deeds what he felt and put in practice written word. Mariátegui had a conception of the world. He had an ideology, and he said many times that his ideology was Marxism-Leninism. He conceived and upheld it, and he based his thesis on the contemporary world. It is not possible to understand things, and it is not possible to understand society and the world, unless we view them from the ideological conception of the proletariat.

Mariátegui was a Marxist-Leninist. If we review his works, Mariátegui tells us that in the current century (he spoke around the 1920's) Leninism was the new form, the highest Marxism acquired at the time. Mariátegui then found his affiliation with Marx and Lenin and that is why he called himself a convicted and confessed Marxist-Leninist. In the third place, Mariátegui had a working method, a method of analysis, an irreplaceable method to understand anything. Mariátegui based himself on dialectical materialism, and his works are convincing proof of that. The first question, we said, which must be very clear, is the proletarian position of Mariátegui, the Marxist-Leninist ideology nourishing him and the dialectical materialistic method guiding him.

On these three bases it is feasible to understand the figure of José Carlos Mariátegui, but whoever cannot understand Marxism-Leninism, will not be able to understand Mariátegui, and it is not for a lack of enlightening or of intelligence that she or he cannot understand him, but because he is not on the same side, nor has the same light in the brain, nor uses the same method. That must be very clear.

We must base ourselves on facts, start from the class position of Mariátegui,

start from his Marxist-Leninist ideology and one must also start, therefore, from his dialectical materialist method. Whoever does not focus on Mariátegui with those three viewpoints indicated above, cannot understand his thought and will twist it in many cases in good faith or in the majority of cases, like the feathery hacks, in very bad faith.

Mariátegui was a great Latin American Marxist-Leninist and we must be very proud of that fact. There is not in all of Latin America another Marxist-Leninist comparable to him in any way; truly José Carlos Mariátegui is a summit of Latin-American Marxism thought and a greater summit as time goes on.

José Carlos Mariátegui is better appreciated outside our borders. Here in our country he is less wanted, less respected, and even very little known, which is a shame. Mariátegui then is a great Marxist-Leninist, who honors our country and the exploited among our people, but not others, for the others he is a knife sunk in their hearts, which they cannot manage to take it out neither will they are able to take it out.

Mariátegui was not a mere repeater, who simply knew four or five formulas, but he is much more, something more profound, more Marxist. He takes Marxism-Leninism and introduces and fuses it with our reality, he gets it into our country, incarnates it in our soil, and upon incarnating it, introducing it, penetrating it in our country with Marxism-Leninism, he Illuminates us with a thought which is still current. The interpretation Mariátegui wrote of our country, in his famous *Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality*, (Siete Ensayos de Interpretacion de la Realidad Peruana) is still an unshakable document.

In Mariátegui we see the grip he had, the Marxist and genial grip of being able to fuse the universal reality of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete actuality of our revolutionary prophet. Very few persons have this quality and Mariátegui had it in excess and grandeur, and we must recognize it. Whoever does not understand the development of Marxist ideas in our country; cannot understand what is happening in Peru, and evens less, of course, can he call himself a revolutionary? Unfortunately there many revolutionaries out there who know Mariátegui's thought and still fear it, a justified fear, because it is a good touching stone to find out who are genuine revolutionaries and who are not. That's the reason why they fear Mariátegui. Mariátegui's Seven Essays are still a fundamental part of Peruvian thought.

Mariátegui developed seven masterful interpretations for us from the Marxist viewpoint, and from the one and only correct viewpoint of our Pe-

ruvian reality. Many talented and well-versed scholars with a contrary viewpoint have tried to discredit that little book, from the reactionary position of Don Victor Andres Belaunde [The New Flag (TNF): Bourgeois Peruvian Historian], but their efforts have failed.

The Immortal Book

Mariátegui's little book *Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality* is still very much alive, while that of Don Victor Andres Belaunde has been read only by very few (mostly for historical curiosity.) We must start from this, what Mariátegui is telling us in that little book, in this small volume which constitutes a vision of the People's War in our country. Mariátegui does an analysis of our economy, which is a vital and fundamental issue. It is impossible to understand a society if we don't understand its economic structure, unless we understand the social relations of exploitation which are the social economy, the political economy. All else are fabrications [TNF: Spanish word "engendros"]. What does he tell us about Peru? He characterized it very concretely; Peru is a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country. He shows and proves it in his scheme of the economic process of our country. Mariátegui also develops an outline of social classes in Peru and their historical development, and he states, with other words, of what today is the Marxist thought in Peru being developed under Mao Zedong thought.

Mariátegui not only develops an outline of the relations of exploitation in our country, not just an outline of the social classes, he also makes a schematic that describes the evolution of ideas in Peru. He speaks, for instance, of the literary problem, something we must study sufficiently to realize how literature has evolved in Peru, and how it has had a clear class character. Mariátegui makes a fusion of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete reality of our country, and as a result, the best, the most profound meaning of that reality emerges. This analysis of the Peruvian reality is the basis to continue advancing theoretically what he masterfully began. No one was able to seriously refute the theoretical thesis of Mariátegui, the most they could do, is to come up with superficial outlines, but they could not make the building that he designed and built so quickly and at such a young age.

Much has been said that the *Seven Essays*, was simply journalistic work, putting them down as only the work of a newspaperman. There is even a certain individual –the mere saying of his name, Ravines [TNF: usurped the

Party's leadership after Mariátegui's death], pollutes the air around us— he claiming things like this: “what can one think about Mariátegui, why so much noise about Mariátegui if he was only a frivolous journalist.” That person did not understand a bit about Mariátegui; of course, how could he understand anything about Mariátegui, when he was one of those who deviated from Mariátegui's road (just like a player of a team who takes off his shirt and goes over to help the other side.) Because they lack the proletarian conception and the method of Mariátegui, that shirt will not help them. With time and exposure to the sunlight, things lose their color and become yellowish.

For this reason, the problem is not external, but three little things, three basic things about Mariátegui: his class position, his ideology and his method. Whoever is on the side of the proletariat, of the peasantry and of the exploited classes in our country is in a position to understand Mariátegui; whoever does not assume this attitude, this class position, whoever has one foot on the side of the exploited, and the other foot on the side of the exploiters, whoever cautiously sides with the exploited, but at heart is with the exploiters, is not able to understand Mariátegui; that's why we see so many salivating varmints out there. However, their spit will never reach the height of the steps reached by Mariátegui more than 30 years ago.

Mariátegui Was a Fighter For the Proletariat

We would like to go on to another point which cannot be unlinked from the one above. These are tied like the two sides of a sheet of paper, inseparably linked. I am referring to Mariátegui as a proletarian fighter, a great figure, an extraordinary thinker and also an extraordinary organizer, and the first militant Marxist fighter of our country. We must also put that out very clearly.

José Carlos Mariátegui came to our country from Europe. He brought new ideas and a new task, a mission: to build socialism in Peru. That was his mission and he fulfilled it. He worked tirelessly for socialism, he lived for socialism, he outstretched himself for socialism, and he died for socialism. At all times he remained unbeatable, with an erect spinal cord, without twisting accommodations. When one studies a bit, one finds in Mariátegui a work plan, some kind of organizational development of the proletariat in our country. In the first place, he works to prepare the work of workers unions, he shows up as one of the creators of classic trade unionism.

Before him there already were union struggles in the country, but Mariátegui sets the bases for proletarian industrial unionism. Mariátegui is the founder of the General Confederation of Peruvian Workers (CGTP). The CGTP is Mariátegui's work. He was its ideologist, its mentor, who built it organically and who conceived its foundations and organizational characters.

One of the first organizations the proletariat needs is the structuring of an industrial and trade Central Union. Mariátegui understood that very well, but he not only understood it, since Mariátegui was not the type of person who upon understanding something, just laid back relaxing on the enjoyment of his own lucidity, but quite the contrary, he felt the need to fulfill the task this understanding demanded of him. He did all the preparatory work of the CGTP constitution and platform. Any constitution, no matter what it is, has two consecutive parts, two elements which together form any organization or institution. First, the ideological part, that is, the dynamics of thought, the formation of a programme, the constitution of its points of agreement, the importance of a statute, etc., and a second part, the constitution of the organization apparatus strictly speaking. That was understood by Mariátegui profoundly and masterfully, and following his Marxist analysis, Mariátegui was the creator of the CGTP.

The General Confederation of Peruvian Workers (CGTP)

There is a very interesting thing: in developing the statutes, Mariátegui made a class conscientious, proletarian workers' union statute which is still awaiting to fulfill its realization. That is ironic, but more than ironic, it is proof of the disorientation and confusion that after him have imposed certain individuals in the workers' union movement in our country. If you read the CGTP statutes, in the first place you'd find some sort of introduction, an orientation says Mariátegui, and it set forth how the proletariat sees the world of today, how there is a struggle which cannot be disguised, a struggle which cannot be swept under the rug, a struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and in turn he sets forth, that there is a class ideology one must follow to create a union organization, he sets it forth clearly and in a very precise language. Then, what does Mariátegui do?

Mariátegui sets forth the general bases of the organic constitution of that

union organization, but he does not do it so meticulously as to suffocate it, but in general lines, and basic points which allow for the development and initiative of the people. We cannot tell the people, “when you get down a ladder, do it first with the right foot.” We must allow for their initiative, their creativity, let them think with their own heads so they can understand the issues, so they learn instead of being forever “under age.” He thought about the people that they did not need at all times a sort of guiding dog, because the people aren’t blind. Mariátegui understood that very well and that’s why he drew the general bases for the organization. Also, when Mariátegui addressed the problem of the unions he referred to formidable ideas not found in any statute. The only favorable difference of today’s statutes is that they are printed in a better quality paper.

Mariátegui sets forth the means of the struggle and speaks to us about the strike. Why does Mariátegui set forth things that way? Because in the organization one must also speak to them of the means and tactics to wage a struggle, in accordance with what we want to achieve, there is a form of the struggle.

It is important to say this, because if one reads the newspapers of today in our country, La Prensa, for instance, it claims that the strike is a poor method, inadequate, a method just for extremist agitators. La Prensa wants to domesticate the proletariat wishing it never goes on strike, but rather appeal to Congress (parliamentarism), to compromise, it pretends that the victim of theft discusses about the stolen goods with the thief. In any struggle, it is important, it is fundamental, to see what the means of the struggle is, the ways in which struggle is conducted, and what is the basic and fundamental demand that allows the mobilization of the masses, and mobilizing them for one sacrosanct reason: because through active mobilization the people open their eyes and understand and free themselves from apathy and atavism and go on to generate those who will conduct the struggles (their leaders). For this reason, a mass movement is very important, for that reason it’s good to highlight this fundamental point in the statutes of the CGTP. Mariátegui also addresses the problem of propaganda and agitation. The people need their own voice to say their own words. They don’t need for others to say it instead of them. The people may not talk in a florid language, they may not have a polished language, they might make mistakes on diction, but it does not matter. What counts is that the people say what they feel, what they see, what they need and struggle consistently and to the end for what they want, regardless of defeats, because any defeats the people may suffer

are temporary, all of them, each and every one of them; Mariátegui takes care of that too and when we read the statutes he speaks of propaganda and agitation.

If we study at this long historical period from Mariátegui's death, we see how this entire problem has not been understood and how reaction may shout at us every day. However, we cannot find a daily press expressing the voice of the workers, we can't find such a thing because the problem, how Mariátegui set it forth, has never been well understood. If we do this small summary of what was proposed right in the statutes of the CGTP, then we see the extraordinary capacity Mariátegui possessed and the means of solution. Mariátegui understood perfectly well this problem: "As long as they are organized, the people are invincible." Lenin, extraordinary in every sense, said: "the people are invincible, but only when they are organized like steel, united on its own principles."

The Organization of the Peasantry

Mariátegui proposes that the people, first and foremost, must define their ideological and political position, second, they must forge their organic structure.

But Mariátegui not only takes care of organizing the workers, the gigantic work of Mariátegui does not end there, but he sees something else: he understands our country to its very entrails and discovers that in our country there are peasants. Mariátegui not only studies them but understands their role, understands their historic mission, and what it is that oppresses them. Mariátegui says that in Perú, there are peasants who are crushed by the feudalism oppressing them. This feudalism has two expressions: Latifundia and serfdom that damned urge to exploit, to live off somebody else's labor. Mariátegui understands all that and pinpoints the fundamental cause, the malady, the origin, the historic source is feudalism which still prevails in our country. He says our country is semi-feudal and, that is a mountain yielding its weight over and crushing the Peruvian peasant. The problem of the Peruvian peasant is the problem of the land, and the problem of the land is summarized by how to conquer that land. How can the land be conquered? Mariátegui proposes that the peasantry be organized and he is the first to sow it under a correct concept, to fight for it from a proletarian viewpoint, indefatigable in the organization of peasants. Mariátegui has a profound work

that is seldom read, because many consider it simple political work rather than a scientific one. Some people have monumental blindness. Mariátegui begins to address the peasants' problem and proposes organic forms, and he does an analysis in his work *Sketch of the Indigenous Problem*, which was presented at an international meeting.

Mariátegui analyzes the situation of the peasantry in our country, of interest to us is that right there he proposes forms to organize the peasantry. Mariátegui calls for organizing unions of peasants, to form peasant leagues, to set forth organizations capable of mobilizing of the peasantry. Mariátegui understands that without organization the people are very weak and cannot fight. However, he does not stop there, he proposes the need to create a workers-peasants alliance, that is, one of the most fundamental principals of any revolutionary process.

Mariátegui points this out and goes further. He proposes two extraordinary things; with respect to Power, Lenin said: "the problem of the revolution is the problem of Power." That is fundamental, everything points to conquering power, to retain it or to maintain it. Some believe that Mariátegui was a deformed humanist or a humanistic bourgeois liberal. Mariátegui goes much further and says that there is something else to do in the problem of organizing the peasantry: to find out the weaponry of the peasants, to organize the revolutionary armed forces of the peasantry. Now, don't tell me I am promoting this: I am merely speaking of Mariátegui, and Mariátegui proposes arming the peasantry as one of the necessary forms of organizing them; he not only proposed that, but proposed that Soviets needed to be formed, and that is most correct and applicable from A to Z, wholly and absolutely, outside little fears we might have. That was how Mariátegui proposed things.

The Party

Mariátegui resolves the political problem in our country. He knows perfectly well that the proletariat has organic forms such as workers unions, workers' alliances, and workers' weaponry. Well, Mariátegui knew that these three things we just mentioned amount to nothing if there is no brain guiding it. So then Mariátegui proposes founding a proletarian party and creates the party of the proletariat in our country. Anyone studying the problem of the ideas in Peru must recognize that fact. But out there we see some of the ilk of Carlos Tapia [TNF: the same individual who nowadays -1990's- is a

well-paid Senderologist, an agent of reaction] saying that Mariátegui was not the founder of the Communist Party of Perú, that what Mariátegui founded was the Socialist Party of Perú, “because Mariátegui was a man of ample concepts, and an ample spirit, Mariátegui was not sectarian. He was not narrow minded, and he was very gentlemanly in his ideas.” That seems like a defense of Mariátegui, but in reality it is the worst offense that can be done to Mariátegui. Mariátegui would accept anything except that, which is like telling him: “you were a bad man, at the end, you broke down when you were only 35.”

There are some “defenders” whom we are better off telling them, do not defend me, because you are sinking me, and that is what we need to tell to these “defenders of Mariátegui,” who speak about a non-sectarian Mariátegui, and ample and democratic one, so ample as to confuse the exploiters for the exploited. Mariátegui founded the Communist Party of Peru, which at first was not thus named: it was named the Socialist Party. There arises the aforementioned Mr. Ravines saying, “we can prove it with documents and everything else,” he says with trembling voice that he [Mariátegui] founded the Socialist Party and not the Communist Party. “I founded the Communist Party,” states the miserable Ravines.

But that is false. It is true that Mariátegui founded the Socialist Party, but affiliated to the III International and subject to the principles stipulated by Lenin in 1919. How is that about? Mariátegui creating a Socialist Party instead of a Communist Party, however one affiliated to the Communist International? Were those really ignorant people who thought that this party was not the Communist Party, yet in reality it was? Mariátegui wrote its constitutive charter, its birth certificate. Mariátegui was present there. Mariátegui also wrote the party programme. We must refer to the documents found in the works of Martínez de la Torre [TNF: a biographer and close comrade of Mariátegui.], there we find the programme written by Mariátegui himself, the program of the Communist Party of Peru (PCP). How is that? He does not create the Party, yet creates that document? Does that mean that those in the International were not aware? They say he did not create it, yet was affiliated to the International. He does not create it, yet writes its constitutive charter. Simply what we see is a conspiracy to wrest away from us the immense figure of Mariátegui.

Mariátegui dedicated his life and tireless work to accomplish what he thought was his duty, to participate in the struggle for Peruvian socialism. But he wasn't only a mere participant but the one who generated it. Since

then, socialism in our country has a filiation, an ideal. We are in the process of rediscovering the figure of Mariátegui.

We Are The Legitimate Heirs of Mariátegui

We want to speak about the actuality of Mariátegui. But first we must speak of the enemies of Mariátegui. You already know that he died young, at age 35; his work remained largely to be done and he set the bases for his practical work. His work has had many ups and downs: open felonies, untold betrayals, opportunists attempting to cover themselves under his shade. It also has, naturally, individuals who have defended it consistently and some who today want to go back to his figure, to his source. With Mariátegui physically dead, certain elements, certain individuals, certain weasels whose name I do not even want to mention here, arise as the ones carrying the banner of Mariátegui, for the express purpose of systematically renege and distort his thought and betray in deeds the legacy they claim to have received. How do these self-proclaimed heirs of Mariátegui behave politically? , What is their practice? By their deeds you will know them. The way they act today they will act tomorrow and with still more reason in 1969. In words, they cover Mariátegui with praise, they fill column after column in newspapers to pay him homage. They call for massive and popular picnics, ostensibly to heighten the figure of Mariátegui. Behind Mariátegui's name, they pretend to hide their many years of betrayals in our country, more than 30 years. They are old and proven betrayers. Can anyone heighten the image of Mariátegui, recognize him, without following his thought? In no way is this possible. How could they have been followers of Mariátegui when, unlike the Amauta [TNF: El Amauta referring to Mariátegui, the teacher] who held that the country is semi-feudal and semi-colonial, they hold, with very loose bones and shamelessly, that Peru is a dependent nation? How can they be followers of Mariátegui? These gentlemen say, and it is on their posters, in their documents around everywhere, they claim that Mariátegui's thought is still current, is still real, concrete, that Mariátegui's economic analysis is still reality in our country, but that Peruvian society is semi-feudal and dependent. Let's repeat what Mariátegui says? Mariátegui says that Perú is a semi-feudal and semi-colonial country, and that its semi-colonial character will go on worsening and establishing itself more with the increased penetration of imperialism. Let's ask ourselves a simple question: Has impe-

rialism penetration increased or not since the time of Mariátegui? The clear answer is obviously yes. It has penetrated more. If imperialism has penetrated more, has what Mariátegui said been fulfilled or not? He told us that with the further penetration of imperialism, and of semi-colony we would be even more at risk of becoming a total colony, that is, definitely losing our sovereignty. Mariátegui proposed, for instance, a workers and peasants front and to make Soviets. And what do these self-proclaimed followers of Mariátegui preach? They preach to make a front with the bourgeoisie. How about the workers and peasants? They are not in their plans, except for the very few they bring in pulling them from their ears, to falsely represent the genuine workers. But what do these supposed followers say? That we should participate in elections that through elections we will conquer power. What kind of followers are these? I refer myself to Mariátegui's documents. Can these gentlemen be called followers of Mariátegui? No. They are smokers of Mariátegui, arsonists of Mariátegui's work. They burn a lot of frank incense for the purpose of covering the saint with ashes, to tar him so no one will be able to see how he really was and still is. Much picnicking, much phrase mongering, elevating the figure of the man while prostituting his thought. They mention Mariátegui a lot while denying his revolutionary vision. Are these followers of Mariátegui? No. They are traffickers, enemies of Mariátegui. They want to reduce the celebration of Mariátegui to merely commemorate his death [TNF: Las Romerías al Amauta. Yearly delivery of flowers and candle light to Mariátegui's tomb by revisionist groups in Peru]. Very symptomatic. They celebrate his death because they celebrate that he is dead, understand? When should we be much happier of the fact that he was born, like for the great figures of the world, nobody celebrates the day Lenin died, but all celebrate the day on which Lenin was alive. We know them better for their deeds. We must not accept that. We must fight all those who oppose Mariátegui, who denies he. But it is not only Mariátegui who has those kinds of enemies.

Those “Superseding” Mariátegui’s Work

He also has hidden enemies. Those individuals who keep on saying: “On what year was it that Mariátegui wrote? In 1928? Ah!,” They say, “that was forty years ago! In 40 years historical science has progressed much in the world. The methods of investigation have progressed much, studies on Peruvian

history have advanced both on the archaeology, on history of the republic, on history of the Inca empire,” “these things have advanced so much as to exceed the reach of Mariátegui.” The affiliation of these superseders is the same of the improvers of Marx. These “petty superseders” have not even been able to supersede their own narrow minds. They are liars, false, traffickers. What do these individuals do? They have the habit of accumulating data: that typical intellectual richness of the bourgeoisie. Data is a bourgeois concept. They believe that the more data one has, the better interpreter one is, the better understanding one has of the national situation; which of course it is absurd. That is not where the problem lies, it is not a matter of accumulating data, because we simply are not mere counting machines; the problem lies on the interpretation, and Mariátegui called it “Seven Essays of Interpretation,” not seven essays of data accumulation. And the problem of interpretation is a problem of class position, of proletarian ideology and of dialectical materialist method. What happens is that his superseders have yet to grasp the problem of knowledge in the bourgeoisie and in the proletarian. What happens is that these superseders want to make a Marxist interpretation of Perú, with a bourgeois concept in their heads, that is what really happens. What is the end result? A chili pot which not even they themselves are able to digest and that is how ambiguous things get: “Perú is semi-capitalist, Perú is a semi-colony, Perú is a neo-colony, but Perú is the same time semi-feudal, at the same time that it is capitalist.” But what the hell is Perú? The problem with these individuals is that they lack unity of thought, not because they are less intelligent. They may have a great intelligence, great wit, but they lack a base. It is like building a house that has a roof but lack of a foundation. They lack class position and that is why they cannot go further. They digress, make grandiose interpretative schemes, lucid and brilliant schemes about a stage of the country or of today’s Peruvian society, but they are unable to get to the crux of the problem and therefore, end up talking about Perú having curious situations of class or curious alliances. There is nothing curious in Perú, society is not curious at all.

Society is governed by laws, but those who do not follow Marxism cannot understand those laws. To these friends, to these gentlemen who pretend to overcome Mariátegui, we must tell them to understand what the problem is, show them what a gross mistakes they make when they try to understand Mariátegui while keeping the bourgeois system in their heads. They will never succeed.

One of the most debated problems is the capitalist character of Peru,

because Mariátegui held that Perú is semi-feudal and that is correct. They claim Mariátegui made a mistake because he said we are semi-feudal when we are capitalist; what happens is that at the bottom of the thought of those individuals there is no dialectic mechanism, they believe that revolution is not feasible unless the forces of production are largely developed. That concept was superseded already: Lenin made of these ideas “mashed potatoes,” but some still revive it.

Some people claim to have superseded Mariátegui. In what does this betterment consist? Where is the well-thought document showing us that the country is this or that way, or that the revolution must have this or that character? That is another problem, because Mariátegui says that the first stage of the Peruvian revolution is national democratic, people’s democratic, but the superseders of Mariátegui say, no, the revolution is socialist. Finally, there is another set of twisters, they extract or cut little sentences of Mariátegui’s work, then begin to make weird mental elaborations, somewhere Mariátegui says something about religion, he has an opinion about religion, about the myth, but then some rub their hands with glee, their soft hands which have never done any field work, and say: deep down Mariátegui was a mystic and not a Marxist, he was a humanist that suffered and pained for Peru.

Mariátegui set forth clearly that Marxism-Leninism is universal. The superseders take hold for one sentence of his in which he said that the revolution in Perú will not be traced nor copied. Mariátegui set forth Marxism as a universal truth and that universal truth he transferred into our reality. It is not as some say that Mariátegui attempted to squeeze reality within the narrow Marxist scheme that is what Mr. Victor Andres Belaunde said. No. Mariátegui has not done that. Mariátegui was not a senseless man. Mariátegui was a Marxist man and he understood things as a scientist, although he had an anti university feelings, this was because he was against the rigid, obsolete and a feudal university we had in our country, not against the people’s university which he shone with his thought.

Reactionaries pretended to show a bourgeois or petty-bourgeois Mariátegui, and some have even said Mariátegui was a populist [laughter], a populist in the sense that it was Mariátegui who developed the pro-peasantry thought in Perú, a Mariátegui who did not develop a proletarian conception, but a conception from the viewpoint of the peasantry. That is a lie and a gross distortion. Mariátegui is a Marxist, he does not have the peasantry viewpoint, because if he had it, he would be a petty bourgeois revolutionary and

nothing else.

To Study and To Diffuse

What conclusions must we the revolutionaries draw about Mariátegui's thought? First, to study and diffuse José Carlos Mariátegui. Why study Mariátegui? Because much is spoken about him in our country, but very little by him is read. Let's do a retrospective analysis and see if we have read the 10 little volumes written by Mariátegui? Strictly speaking, do we know his political proposals? Are we familiar with his anti-imperialism viewpoint? How many times have we think about the problem of an anti-imperialist viewpoint? How much have we meditated about the problems of Mariátegui? Not much.

Mariátegui is a man who shines in our country: there is no one else of this magnitude. What figure do they pretend to counterpoise? To Mr. Riva Agüero, that apprentice of fascism who never even became a consistent one? Neither did Don Victor Andres Belaunde managed to put forth a consistent thought. Belaunde is a superficial man, who today is taken for a thinker. His work on St. Augustine does not go beyond pure quackery, it is shell without substance. We must spread Mariátegui's thought. What have we done for the fortieth anniversary of Mariátegui? Have we studied him in depth? Have we held discussions at the base level, organize seminars and conferences on the Seven Essays? Have we attempted to try to apply what Mariátegui said and to follow his line to understand in that light, the current situation in the country? Have we picked up the lantern to be able to see where we are going? We have not done so. Concretely, here is what I propose. I think we must set forth activities to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Seven Essays. How do we do that? For now, at least by discussing it. Secondly, it seems to me that we have another task: the problem of defending Mariátegui, who is being attacked openly, and covertly.

Mariátegui is a source of light which we cannot allow to be turned off, to be slandered, we cannot allow for it to be seemed through colored lenses, so we would be forced to see black what is red, so his fundamental ideas would get twisted. We cannot allow that, we have to defend Mariátegui, because if we do not, then Mariátegui will be continued to be cast aside. We'd then be following the same policy of the reactionaries: what reaction did, was to take Mariátegui, chained and threw him in jail, and then tried to silence his ideas.

We must free Mariátegui, because if we do not, then neither can we liberate ourselves. Of course, this is not a personal problem but a problem of liberating all people. In third place, I think we must further the study of Mariátegui, I do not pretend to supersede or overcome Mariátegui, I do not want to be classified in quarters of the superseders, but I think we must develop Mariátegui further, take his ideology, his method, his sources as a base, and develop these problems. For example, how we analyze the Peruvian economy of 1968, in the light of the 1928 essay? It would be magnificent thing to do the same with literature, with the problem of the land, women and other problems. I think that this is a duty and we the intellectuals, must fulfill it, and the workers as well as the peasants because we find many portions of his work which refer to them in plain and clear language. In conclusion, Mariátegui is a great example, united with other figures in our history, such as, for example, Túpac Amaru.

The Example of Mariátegui

Mariátegui is a historic figure of our country. Even if a recent one, he already has a perfect historical dimension that excels. He is the country's ideologist. There is no other one. The reactionary ideologists are dwarfed and defeated by Mariátegui.

We must do it. How wonderful it would be if there were a few more people like him! Because I am quite convinced that individuals like Mariátegui are not born and forge every day, but every once in a while. His family name can be canned and assumed by his relatives or not. What matters here is the example. We must raise his figure as an example to follow, as guide of the revolution in our country, and our country is deeply changing and will change even more. It has been said, nobody can stop history, it may be deviated a bit for a short while, but not more. Mariátegui, therefore, is an example to us, but an example of what? Mariátegui is an example of proletarian revolutionary, not more, not less. We do not make him bigger. Mariátegui doesn't want that we exalt him nor he wants that we take away his merits. If we say he is an example of a revolutionary, then we would be stripping him of his proletarian family name; if we take the proletarian position out of him, then Mariátegui would be just one more among many.

An Itty Bitty Theoretician

[TNF: In Spanish “Un Teoriquito Pequeñito” or a little theoretician] And what does it mean? I study Mariátegui to understand what is about, I see his work, his life, and I find in Mariátegui’s work a theoretical development, a Marxist-Leninist analysis of our problems, a great theoretician of Perú and of Latin America.

We must follow that example; I am not proposing that we must be equal to him, but only that we follow his road. For instance I could make a little prologue. For instance, I could do something following his light on this level, and by doing so I would be an itty bitty theoretician, but I am on his road, and if we join together all the itty bitty truths that we may be reaching at while following the road of Mariátegui, then it becomes a huge river of truth. Who is more responsible for doing this? The intellectuals. But not the plain intellectuals because our country and its development not only demand intellectuals: It demands revolutionary intellectuals. What does it mean? Mao Tse-tung answer is luminous and precise and very realistic when he says we must fuse ourselves with the exploited masses of workers and peasants. He says that very concretely. If one wants to be revolutionary intellectual then one must fuse himself with the masses, work with them, feel like they do and think like they do. But this is a process, because we must leave aside our status, our business suits, we must become revolutionary intellectuals. That is a reflection proper to all of us, which carries us to the second part. In Mariátegui, we see the man of action, a doer, even when he confronted some personal problems, like his family, his health, he always put those problems behind his main task.

Mariátegui was very consistent. He sacrificed all for his work because he understood the importance of it, because he was a fighter, whoever is not a fighter, is not a Marxist-Leninist.

We must follow his road, truly, letter by letter, it will be difficult to follow his road, but we must follow it.

I think some ideas have been clarified, so try to take out all the embellishment and multitude of florid words, and retain what is essential, the synthesis, the schematic, the outline, there remain, thus, a few ideas, especially the need of enthroning the thought of Mariátegui, of defending it and following his example. The destiny of our people is at stake. Either we enthrone the thought of Mariátegui, or the country does not go forward.