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Seven Erroneous Theses About Latin America

by Rodolfo Stavenhagen

Note to American readers

This article was originally published in Spanish in the Mexican daily *El Dia*, and has been reprinted in Brazil and in France. Its purpose is to review critically and refute a number of ideas on social development and underdevelopment which are current in Latin America. If the general tone of the article is outspoken and polemical, it is because the "theses" and "antitheses" it develops are directly pertinent to the great political and ideological issues that Latin America is facing today. The present text is a slightly revised version of the original.

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In the massive literature dealing with social and economic development and underdevelopment produced in recent years, many doubtful, mistaken, and ambiguous theses have appeared. Many of these are accepted as the working truth, and form a major part of the conceptual framework of Latin American intellectuals, politicians, students, researchers, and professors. Neither facts nor recent research, which contradict these theses, have been able to weaken them. Constant repetition in innumerable books and articles, particularly foreign ones, have given these concepts a growing life of their own, turning some of them, despite growing evidence to the contrary, into dogmas.

In this article I will deal with the sociological theses, since the debate about similar mistaken economic theses has been quite wide spread.

The first thesis:

The Latin American countries are dual societies

In essence this thesis affirms that two different, and to a certain extent independent — though necessarily connected — societies exist in the Latin American countries: one is an archaic, traditional, agrarian, and stagnant or retrogressive society; the other is a modern, urban, industrialized, dynamic, progressive, developing society. The "archaic society" is characterized by personal and family (kinship) relations; by traditional institutions (ritual co-parenthood, certain types of collective labor, certain forms of personalistic political domination, and patron-client relationships); by rigid stratification of ascribed social statuses (i.e., where the

individual's status in the social structure is determined by birth, with little likelihood of change during his lifetime); and by norms and values which exalt — or at least accept — the status quo and the inherited traditional forms of social life, which are said to constitute an obstacle to economically "rational" thought. The "modern society", on the other hand, supposedly consists of the type of social relations which sociologists call secondary, determined by interpersonal actions which are motivated by rational and utilitarian ends; by functionally-oriented institutions; and by comparatively flexible social stratifications, in which status is attained through personal effort, and is expressed by quantitative indices (like income or level of education) and social function (like occupation). In the so-called "modern society", the norms and values of the people tend to be oriented towards change, progress, innovation, and economic rationality (e.g., maximum benefits at minimum costs).

According to this thesis, each of the two societies facing each other in the Latin American countries has its own characteristic dynamics. The first, the "archaic society", has its origins in the colonial epoch, (or perhaps earlier), and preserves many ancient cultural and social elements. It changes little, or does so very slowly. At any rate, changes are not internally generated, but are imposed upon it by the modern society. The other society, the "modern" one, is oriented towards change; it generates within itself its own transformations and is the focal point of economic development, whereas the "archaic" society constitutes an obstacle to such development.

The dual society thesis is expressed on a more sophisticated level by positing an alleged duality between feudalism and capitalism in the Latin American countries. In fact, it is claimed that in a large part of Latin America a feudal type of society and economic structure exists, which constitutes the base for retrogressive and conservative social and economic groups (i.e., the land-owning aristocracy, the oligarchy, local political strongmen, etc.). On the other hand, the theory affirms, there exist nuclei of a capitalist economy, in which we find the entrepreneurial, progressive, urbanized middle classes. Implicit in this description is the idea that "feudalism" is an obstacle to development in Latin American countries and must be eliminated to give way for a progressive capitalism, which will be developed by the entrepreneurial capitalists for the benefit of the country as a whole.

There is no doubt that in all the Latin American countries great social and economic differences exist — between rural and urban areas, between the Indian and non-Indian populations, between the mass of peasants and the urban and rural elites, and between the very backward and the relatively developed regions.

Nevertheless, these differences do not justify the use of the concept of dual society for two principal reasons. First, the relations between the "archaic" or "feudal" regions and groups and the "modern" or "capitalistic" ones represent the functioning of a

single unified society of which the two poles are integral parts; and second, these two poles originate in the course of a single historical process.

Let us take the first point. What is important is not the mere existence of two "societies" or a "dual society" — two contrasting poles at the ends of a socio-economic continuum — but rather the relationships which exist between these two "worlds" and which bind them into a functional whole. To the extent that the localized development of certain areas in Latin America is based on the use of cheap labor (is this not what principally attracts foreign capital to our countries?), the backward regions — those that provide the cheap labor — fulfill a specific function in the national society and are not merely zones in which, for one reason or another, development has not taken place. Moreover, the archaic zones are generally exporters of raw materials to the urban centers of the country and abroad. As we shall see later, the developed areas of the underdeveloped countries operate like a pumping mechanism, drawing from their backward, underdeveloped *hinterland* the very elements that make for their own development. This situation is not new to the underdeveloped countries. It is the result of a long historical process that began with the expansion of mercantilist and colonialist Europe.

Let us turn now to the second point, the single historical process which gave rise to the two poles of Latin American society. The conquest of Latin America was accomplished principally in the context of commercial goals. Essentially, it was accomplished by a series of joint (private and state) mercantile enterprises. In some regions veritable feudal areas were created by means of *encomiendas* and *mercedes* (respectively, grants of Indian labor and land, by which the Spanish Crown rewarded the conquerors). The conquered indigenous populations were subjected to the most brutal oppression and exploitation on the part of the Spaniards. In the same way that the slavery of the African Negroes on the Carribean and Brazilian sugar plantations satisfied the needs of a mercantilist economy oriented towards the consumer markets of Europe was not characterized by a closed, self-sufficient economy (as was the case in classical European feudalism), but rather satisfied the needs of the export mining industry and of agriculture which supplied these mining centers or the European markets.

During the whole colonial epoch, the driving force of the Latin American economy was the mercantilist-capitalist system. The Spanish and Portugese colonies were large producers of raw materials which supplied various European markets, directly or indirectly, and thus contributed to the later industrial development of Western Europe. The "feudal" economy, if it ever really existed, was subsidiary to the dynamic centers — the mines, and export agriculture — which, in turn, responded to the needs of the colonial metropolis.

The one constant factor of the colonial economy was the search for and control of cheap labor for the colonial enterprises. First

the colonists tried enslaving the indigenous populations; then the slavery of Africans was introduced. Later they assured themselves of servile Indian labor through a series of arrangements which varied from the *encomienda* to the forced distribution of Indian workers. The "feudal" living and working conditions of the majority of the Indian peasant population reduced to a minimum the costs of production in mining and in colonial agriculture. Thus, the "feudalism" in labor relations may be considered a function of the development of the colonial economy in its entirety; which, in turn formed an integral part of the world mercantilist system.

The colonial economy was subjected to strong cyclical variations. In Brazil, one after another of the major industries grew and then declined. This was true for the primitive extraction of wood, sugar production in the great slave plantations of the Northeast, mining in the central part of the country, the extraction of rubber in the Amazon, and finally, during this century, coffee production in the South and Southeast of Brazil. Each one of these cycles brought an epoch of growth and prosperity to the area in which it occurred. Each corresponded at that moment to a foreign demand. And each one left, in the end, a stagnant, underdeveloped, backward economy and an archaic social structure. In a large part of Brazil, then *underdevelopment followed upon and did not precede development*. The underdevelopment of these areas is largely the result of a previous period of development that was of short duration and followed by the development of new activities in other parts of the country.

This pattern also can be observed in the rest of Latin America, principally in the mining zones which flourished in one epoch and whose economies decayed thereafter. The economic cycles of colonial Latin America were determined, in large part, by the economic cycles of the Western world. In Middle America, Indian communities that are now closed, isolated, and self-sufficient were not always like that. On the one hand, the colonists displaced the Indian populations who were removed into inhospitable and isolated zones, in which their living standards were reduced to a miserable subsistence level; on the other hand, during the periods of economic depression, those communities which had previously been relatively integrated into the global economy, cut themselves off from the world and were depressed through necessity to a subsistence level. We see, then, that in historical terms development and underdevelopment are connected in Latin America, and that frequently the development of one zone implies the underdevelopment of others. We also see that the "feudal" conditions largely respond to the needs of the colonial metropolis and the colonial elite, whom it is hardly possible to define as feudal.

The kind of relationships that were established between a colonial metropolis and its colonies were repeated within the colonial countries themselves, in the relationships that developed between a few "poles of growth" and the rest of the country. As Spain was to her colonies, so the centers of colonial power in New

Spain (and in the rest of Latin America) stood to the outlying, backward areas that surrounded them.

Indeed, the backward, underdeveloped regions of our countries have always played the role of *internal colonies* in relation to the developing urban centers or the productive agricultural areas. And in order to avoid the mistaken idea that there are two (or more) independent social and economic systems at work in the Latin American countries, we propose to describe the situation in terms of *internal colonialism* rather than in terms of "dual societies." This will become clearer as we discuss the next thesis.

The second thesis:

Progress in Latin America will come about by the spread of industrial products into the backward, archaic, and traditional areas

This diffusionist thesis is found on many levels. Some speak of an urban — or Western — culture which will spread gradually over the world, and which will little by little absorb all the backward and primitive peoples. Others speak of the effects of modernization as if it was a spot of oil which spreads slowly outward from a central focus. Others affirm that all stimuli for change in the rural areas comes of necessity from the urban zones. The fact that transistor radios, bicycles, toothpaste, and Coca-Cola can be found in the most remote parts of the world is cited to support these arguments.

This thesis implied three others, which are not always stated as clearly: 1) the development of the modern sector, which is essentially expansionist, brings with it *ipso facto* the development of the traditional and archaic sector; 2) the "transition" from traditionalism to modernism is a current, permanent, and inescapable process which will eventually involve all traditional societies; and 3) the centers of modernism themselves are nothing but the result of the diffusion of "modernist" traits (technology, know-how, the spirit of capitalism, and, of course, capital) which come from the already developed countries. The thesis can be considered mistaken for the following reasons:

A. While it is certain that a large number of consumer goods have been distributed to the underdeveloped areas in recent years, this does not automatically imply the development of these areas, if by development we mean an increase in per capita output of goods and services, and in the general social welfare. Often this diffusion of products is nothing but the diffusion of the culture of poverty into the backward, rural areas, for it involves no basic institutional changes.

B. The spread of manufactured industrial goods into the backward zones often displaces flourishing local industries or manufactures, and therefore destroys the productive base for a significant part of the population, provoking what is known as rural proletarianization, rural exodus, and economic stagnation in these areas.

C. The same process of diffusion has contributed to the development of a class of merchants, usurers, middlemen, monopolists, and moneylenders in the backward rural areas, in whose hands is

concentrated a growing part of the regional income; and who, far from constituting an element of progress, represent an obstacle to the productive use of capital and to development in general.

D. The "diffusion" is often nothing more than the extension into the rural areas of monopolies and monopsonies, with negative consequences for a balanced and a harmonious development.

E. The process of diffusion of *capital* has taken place from the backward to the modern areas. Constant decapitalization of the underdeveloped areas in Latin America accompanies the migration of the best trained part of the population out of the backward zones: young people with a bit of education who are looking for better opportunities in other areas. It is not the presence or absence of factory-made goods, but this unfavorable outward flow from the backward zones which determines the level of development or underdevelopment of these areas.

F. This process of "diffusion" to which are attributed so many beneficial results, has been going on in Latin America for more than 400 years — and aside from certain dynamic focal points of growth, the continent is still as underdeveloped as ever.

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In reality, the correct thesis would be: the progress of the modern, urban, and industrial areas of Latin America has taken place at the expense of backward, archaic, and traditional zones. In other words, the channeling of capital, raw materials, abundant foods, and manual labor coming from the backward zones permits the rapid development of these poles or focal points of growth, and condemns the supplying zones to an increasing stagnation and underdevelopment. The trade relations between the urban and the backward areas is unfavorable to the latter in the same way that the trade relations between underdeveloped and developed countries on a world scale are unfavorable to the underdeveloped countries.

The third thesis:

The existence of backward, traditional, and archaic rural areas is an obstacle to the formation of an internal market and to the development of a progressive and national capitalism.

It is claimed that progressive national capitalism — located in the modern industrial and urban centers — is interested in agrarian reform, the development of the Indian communities, the raising of minimum wages paid to agricultural workers, and other programs of a similar sort. This thesis is mistaken for the following reasons:

A. With rare exceptions, no progressive or national capitalism exists in Latin America, nor do the international conditions exist which would allow its development. By a "progressive" and "national" capitalism, we mean one which is committed in word and in deed to the independent economic development of the country — i.e., of the masses of the population. This would mean the formulation and acceptance by the capitalist class of economic policies furthering: a) diversified agriculture for the internal

market; b) transformation of the country's principal raw materials for use in the country itself; c) increasing industrialization; d) a high rate of reinvestment in the country's agriculture; e) increasing state participation in large economic enterprises; f) strict control of foreign investments and their subordination to national needs; g) strict control over exports of capital and profits; h) preference for nationally owned enterprises over foreign owned companies; i) strict limitation of unnecessary imports; j) strict limitation of the manufacture of non-essential consumer goods; and other such objectives.

These policies are not being pursued in most Latin American countries, and the countries that have tried at one time or another to implement them have suffered tremendous external political and economic pressures. The recent history of Brazil is a case in point. After the U.S.-supported military coup in that country in 1964, the previous economic policies which had furthered a progressive and national capitalism were thrown overboard in favor of the increasing control of the economy by U.S. corporations. The same thing has happened in Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, and other countries. With the exception of Mexico (and at one time, of Brazil), the "national bourgeoisie" in Latin American countries does not have enough power or influence anywhere to make its interests really felt.

B. Up to this time — and for the foreseeable future — a significant internal market exists among the urban population, a market which is growing continuously and which is not yet fully supplied. On the other hand, in these same urban areas there is an industrial sector that works at less than full capacity for reasons that have little to do with the internal market, but rather with profits; and for a long time there will be no need for these industries to do more than supply the growing urban zones. That is to say that metropolitan areas like Lima, Callao, Sao Paulo, Santiago, and Mexico City can grow economically for the indefinite future without necessarily affecting any basic changes in the structure of the backward rural areas, the internal colonies.

The fourth thesis:

The national bourgeoisie has an interest in breaking the power and the dominion of the landed oligarchy.

It has often been said that there is a profound conflict of interests between the new elites (or the new upper class) represented by modern commercial and industrial entrepreneurs and the old elite (or the traditional upper class), which derives its prominence from the ownership of the land. Although the latifundist aristocracy was eliminated by revolutionary means in some Latin American countries (however, always by the people, never by the bourgeoisie), there does not seem to be a conflict of interests between the bourgeoisie and the oligarchy in the other countries. On the contrary, the agricultural, financial, and industrial interests are often found in the same economic groups, in the same companies, and even in the same families.

For example, much of the capital coming from the archaic latifundia of Northeast Brazil is invested by their owners in lucrative enterprises in Sao Paulo. And in Peru, the grand families of Lima, associated with progressive foreign capital, are also the owners of the major "feudal" latifundias in the Andes. There is no structural reason why the national bourgeoisie and the latifundist oligarchy should not understand one another; on the contrary, they complement each other very well. And in those cases where there is a possibility of a conflict of interests (as with some legislation which would benefit one group and be prejudicial to the other, for example), there is no lack of bourgeois or military government which will give ample compensation to the group whose interest is prejudiced. The disappearance of the latifundist oligarchy has been exclusively the result of popular movements, not of the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie finds a very good ally in the land-owning oligarchy in maintaining internal colonialism, which in the last analysis benefits both of these social classes equally.

The fifth thesis:

Latin American development is the work and creation of a nationalist, progressive, enterprising, and dynamic middle class, and the social and economic policy objectives of the Latin American governments should be to stimulate "social mobility" and the development of that class.

There is probably no other thesis about Latin America more widespread than this one. It is supported by researchers, journalists, and politicians; it is the theme of seminars and conferences, the subject of voluminous books, and one of the implicit but basic assumptions of the Alliance for Progress; it has been transformed into a virtual dogma. But this thesis is false, for the following reasons:

A. In the first place, the concept "middle class" itself contains ambiguities and equivocations. If it deals, as is often the case, with middle income groups situated between the two extremes of a given economic scale, then it is not a social class but a statistical aggregate. Generally, however, this concept refers to people who have a certain type of occupation, particularly in the tertiary sector of the economy — in commerce or services — and mostly in the urban areas. In this case, it refers to white collar workers, the bureaucracy, businessmen, and certain professions. At times this concept also refers to certain social groups which have no place in the traditional structural model of Latin America, in which there supposedly exists only a landed aristocracy and peons without land. All other groups, from the small land owners to the urban population as a whole, are then lumped together under the catch-all term of "middle class." As long as there is no clear definition of this term, information concerning the virtues and potentialities of this "middle class" is only a subjective opinion of those who state it.

B. Very often the term "middle class" is a euphemism for "ruling class." When one speaks of the entrepreneurs, the financiers, and the industrialists in relation to the development of the

Latin American countries, reference is made to a class which has the power in the society, which occupies the apex of the social economic, and political pyramid, and which makes, as such, the overall decisions which affect these countries. In other words, the class in question is in no sense "middle."

C. This thesis of the middle class usually suggests the idea of a potentially majoritarian mass of the population, primarily recruited from the lower strata of society, which will sooner or later totally occupy the social universe. At that time, it is implied, the upper classes will no longer have any economic, nor the lower classes any numerical, importance. There could be nothing more utopian or mistaken. The growth of the tertiary economic sector is no guarantee of development, nor will the growth of the middle social sectors (a statistical fiction) guarantee of the disappearance of the economic and social inequalities of society. No matter how accelerated the growth of these middle strata may be in Latin America as a whole, the growth of the lower income groups in both the countryside and the city on the one hand, and that of the miniscule upper income strata on the other, is still greater.

D. The sectors which compose the middle class in its restricted sense — small and medium-sized farm owners, small businessmen, public employees, small entrepreneurs, artisans, different types of professionals, etc. (i.e., those who work on their own or who receive a salary for non-manual labor) — usually do not have the characteristics which are attributed to them. Instead they are economically and socially dependent upon the upper strata; they are tied politically to the ruling class; they are conservative in their tastes and opinions, defenders of the status-quo; and they search only for individual privileges. Far from being nationalists, they like everything foreign — from imported clothing to the *Reader's Digest*. They constitute a true reflection of the ruling class, deriving sizeable benefits from the internal colonial situation. This group constitutes the most important support for military dictatorships in Latin America.

E. The concept "middle class" is also understood at times in terms of the consumption habits of a certain part of the population. In this way, for example, the fact that the peasants buy bottled beer instead of Chicha or Pulque, or that the urban population buys furniture or electrical appliances on credit, is considered by some as an indisputable sign that we have taken great steps in the march toward a "middle class" civilization. Everyone in Latin America, these authors tell us, has "the aspirations of the middle class." It is only a question of time as to when these aspirations will be realized. This assertion is incorrect for the following reasons:

A social class is not defined by the articles it consumes, nor does the level of aspirations reveal the structure of social institutions and the quality of inter-group relations. The diffusion of manufactured articles is directly related to the overall level of technology as well as to effective demand. The majority of the population —

particularly in the urban areas — can enjoy this type of consumption, to some extent, but it requires no basic change in the class structure or in the inequalities of income, social status, political power or labor relations.

The creation of “aspirations” or “necessities” of a certain type is increasingly the result of an all-powerful advertising industry which has infiltrated all social milieus. Levels of aspiration are rising everywhere, but so is the level of unfulfilled aspirations; and this, as any psychologist would confirm, leads to rising levels of frustration and feelings of deprivation. Thus, the aspirations of the middle class could well be transformed into revolutionary consciousness.

Furthermore, economic studies have demonstrated that in Latin America the proportion of wages in the national income — on which most of the population is dependent — tends to diminish, while the profits and capital returns of a minority tend to increase. This tendency, which has been accelerated in recent years by the process of inflation (especially in countries like Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Bolivia, and Columbia) does not fit with the idea of the slow, harmonious growth of the middle class.

F. The strengthening of the middle class, as a goal of social policy, is not essentially intended to further economic development in a country, but rather to create a political force capable of supporting the existing ruling class, and of serving as a buffer in the class struggles which endanger the stability of the existing social and economic structure. The ideologues of the middle class have lamented that this class was not sufficiently strong in Cuba to oppose the socialist revolution. On the other hand, they give credit to the “middle class” for the fact that the Mexican and Bolivian revolutions have become “stabilized” and “institutionalized.”

The so-called middle classes are closely tied to the existing economic and political structure, and lack an internal dynamic which could transform them into promoters of an independent economic development. Their relative numerical importance is one thing, and their condition and capacity to make decisions as a class which could affect economic structures and processes is altogether another thing. It is noteworthy that the authors who are most attached to the idea of the growth of the middle class give little or no importance to the fact that the lower strata still constitutes the largest part of the Latin American population.

G. Finally, the thesis of the middle class tends to obscure the fact that there are tensions, oppositions, and conflicts between ethnic groups as well as between classes in Latin America; that the social and economic development of the Latin American countries depend, in the last analysis, upon an adequate solution to these conflicts; and that the growth of the “middle sectors” (as one North American author calls them), though very impressive in certain regions, does not contribute to the solution of these problems. At times, such growth may even postpone a solution and sharpen the conflicts.

The sixth thesis:

National integration in Latin America is the product of miscegenation.

This thesis is frequent in the countries which have major ethnic problems — those that have a large proportion of Indians in the population, and Brazil, with its Negro population. It is argued that the Spanish and Portuguese colonization of America brought two main racial groups, two civilizations, into confrontation, and that the process of national integration represents both a biological and a cultural mixture. In the Indo-American countries, it is thought that *ladinoization* (acculturation of Indians) constitutes a universalizing process in which the major differences between the dominant white minority and the Indian peasant masses will disappear. It is said that out of the traditional bi-polar social structure a new, intermediate biological and cultural element is appearing — the *Ladino*, or *Cholo*, or *Mestizo*, or *Mulate*, as the case may be — who bears the “essence of nationality” and who possesses all the virtues necessary for progress in Latin American countries.

The fallacy in this thesis is that biological and cultural mixing (a common process in many parts of Latin America) does not constitute, in itself, a change in the existing social structure.

National integration, as an objective process, and the birth of a national consciousness, as a subjective process, depend on structural factors (i.e., on the nature of the relations between men and between social groups) and not on the biological or cultural attributes of certain individuals. National integration (in the sense of full participation of all citizens in the same cultural values, and the relative equality of social and economic opportunities) will be achieved in the Indian areas not with the development of a new bio-cultural category, but with the disappearance of internal colonialism. In the internal colonies of our countries, the *Mestizos* (or racially mixed population) are, in fact, representatives of the local and regional ruling class who help to maintain the Indian population in a state of oppression. They have not the slightest interest in true national integration. On the other hand, in the increasingly important urban centers, the immigrant rural population, often of Indian stock, is rapidly “integrated” from the national point of view; but this is due more to the positions which it occupies in the class structure than to the process of miscegenation.

Furthermore, the thesis of miscegenation very often hides a racist prejudice (which may be unconscious); in the countries where a majority of the population has Indian traits, biological miscegenation signifies “whitening,” and in that sense citing the virtues of miscegenation really hides anti-Indian biases. The same prejudice is found in the cultural version of this theory — indeed, it means the disappearance of Indian culture. Thus, making miscegenation the prerequisite for national integration condemns the Indians of America, a group which numbers in the tens of millions, to a slow cultural agony.

The seventh thesis:

Progress in Latin America will only take place by means of an alliance between the workers and the peasants, as a result of the identity of interests of these two classes.

We cannot leave this discussion of Latin America without referring to a thesis which is quite prevalent among the orthodox left. Indeed, on the basis of theories developed by Lenin and Mao Tse-Tung, it is said that the success of the democratic revolution in Latin America depends on the ability of the working and peasant classes to forge a common front against the reactionary bourgeoisie and against imperialism. In this regard, it would be well to consider the following facts:

A. One of the indisputable steps in all democratic revolutions is agrarian reform. But the acquisition of land by the peasantry through a non-collectivist agrarian reform transforms them into proprietors whose class interests are those of other landed proprietors.

B. The objective interests of the peasant and the workers are not identical in the matter of agrarian reform. An agrarian reform usually implies an initial diminution of food deliveries to the cities, the effects of which are first felt by the working class. It also means the channeling of public investments into the rural sectors, with a consequent disfavoring of the urban sector — which, as we have seen, is about the only sector that really benefits from economic development in a situation of internal colonialism.

C. The struggle of the urban working class (which is politically more powerful than the peasantry) for higher wages, more and better public social services, price controls, etc., finds no seconding in the peasant sector because benefits obtained by the working class in this way are usually obtained at the cost of agriculture — i.e., the peasants. In other words, the urban working class of our countries is also a beneficiary of internal colonialism. That is one of the reasons why a truly revolutionary labor movement does not exist in Latin America.

D. In 19th century England the expulsion of peasants from the land and their migration to the industrial sweatshops signified a diminution of their standard of living; in Czarist Russia, rural-urban mobility was strictly limited and the worker-peasant alliance was made in the field of battle; and in People's China the same alliance was forged in the fight against the Japanese invaders. In sharp contrast to all of these examples, rural emigration is not only possible for the discontented of the countryside in Latin America, but in most cases it represents an improvement in economic and social conditions (even in the favelas, the Barriades, the Ranchos, or the Colonias Proletarias — the shanty-towns — of the Latin American cities), as compared with conditions in the countryside. One can theorize that the revolutionary consciousness of the peasants increases in *inverse* proportion to the possibility of their individual upward social mobility, and that this relationship would hold even more strongly if the latter also implies geographic mobility.

E. We may also suppose that the more severe the internal

colonialism in Latin America (i.e., the greater the difference between the metropolis and its internal colonies), the further the possibilities of a true political alliance between workers and peasants will be reduced. The example of recent events in Brazil and Bolivia should illustrate this point.

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These seven theses do not include all the erroneous theories and concepts about the social structure of Latin America; but most of the others are related in one way or another to these, and are derived from them, and the reader will be able to recognize them when he next encounters them.

