

These twenty theses on politics are primarily aimed toward young people—that is, toward those who need to understand that the *noble vocation of politics* is a thrilling patriotic and collective task.¹ It is true that political activity has become largely corrupted, especially in postcolonial countries, because our elites have been governing for five hundred years in the interests of the dominant metropolis of the time (Spain, Portugal, France, England, and today the United States). There is little press or prestige to be gained by taking into account those at the bottom: the national political community, the poor, oppressed, and excluded *people* (see thesis II).

Recently, Latin America has seen a sort of “political spring,” which has been developing since the birth of many new social movements—the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, the Argentinean *piqueteros*, the movements by the landless and by the coca farmers, the indigenous movements in Ecuador, Bolivia, Guatemala, and elsewhere—that have come together at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre. These movements have coincided with the unexpected elections of Nestor Kirchner, Tabaré Vázquez, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Hugo Chávez, Evo Morales, the perennial and proverbial figure of Fidel Castro, and the symbolic figure of Sub Marcos. These movements and events represent signs of hope, in the face of which we must begin to create a new theory—a coherent interpretation of the profound transformation that our *people* are experiencing.

This *new theory* cannot merely respond to the presuppositions of the past five hundred years of capitalist and colonialist Modernity. It cannot set out from bourgeois postulates or from those of “*real*” socialism (with its impossible perfect planning, its squared circle of democratic centralism, its ecological irresponsibility, its bureaucratized cadres, its dogmatic vanguardist theory and strategy, and so on). What is coming is a *new transmodern civilization*, which will be as a result *transcapitalist* and *beyond liberalism* and *real socialism*.

The “Left”—that position occupied by progressive groups in one of the assemblies of the French Revolution—requires a complete ethical, theoretical, and practical renewal. The Left has either governed through its Central Committees or has been in the opposition. Transitioning to the democratic political responsibility of exercising *obediential* power is not an easy task: it is intrinsically participatory and without vanguardism in having learned from the *people* to respect its millennial culture—the mythical narratives within which it has developed its own critical thought and the institutions that must be integrated into this new project.

The twenty-first century demands great creativity. Even socialism, if it still has any meaning, needs to take the form of the “cultural revolution” suggested by Evo Morales (a revolution that has nothing to do with the events in China in 1966). Now is the time of the *people*, of the originary and the excluded. Politics consists of having “the ear of the disciple every morning,” so that those who “command, command by obeying.” The delegated exercise of *obediential* power (see thesis 4) is a vocation to which the youth is summoned, without personalistic clans, without currents that pursue their own corrupt interests that become corrupted through fighting for the interests of a group rather than that of the whole (whether it be the party, the *people*, the fatherland, or humanity).

The twenty theses in this book, situated at first on an abstract level, become progressively more concrete as they develop. Hence, theses 1 through 10 are the simplest, the most abstract, and the most fundamental, thereby providing the basis upon which the rest of the work is constructed. As Marx suggested, it is necessary to ascend from the abstract to the concrete. Accordingly, theses 11 to 20 are more complex and concrete, since they include the contradiction of the *people* speaking up and taking center stage, thereby entering into action collec-

tively. In the future, new theses should situate these levels with an even greater degree of complexity and concreteness, taking into account the integration of the subjects of colonialism, postcolonialism, metropole, and Empire, and the struggle for liberation from these international forces. There still remains room for other theses, in which all levels of domination and alignment would enter into play on the highest level of complexity, and in which normative principles would confront one another, forcing us to choose one over another (within a situation of inevitable uncertainty). And this is because the *people* do not act as a pure subject, but rather operate through contradictory blocs that frequently throughout history betray their most fundamental demands. How else could entire nations elect Hitler, G. W. Bush, or governments like those of Menem and Fujimori?²

ENRIQUE DUSSEL

near Anenecuilco, Morelos,

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