



Nahuel  
Moreno

# **Bolshevik or Spontaneist Morality**

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1969

(Translated from mimeographed version printed in 1976)

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# Foreword

In the year of 1969, when he was being held in a prison in Lima (Peru), for his alleged connection with the bank robberies of 1961-62 carried out by a Trotskyist sector, Nahuel Moreno wrote the work we reproduce here. The pamphlet was written responding to concrete problems that arose in the work of party construction in Argentina. Shortly after he was acquitted, he regained his freedom and returned to Buenos Aires.

This edition was based on a mimeographed version that circulated in Colombia around 1976.

All notes are by the editors.

**The editors**

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# Bolshevik or spontaneist morality

## PART I

### Bolshevik or spontaneist morality?

My contact with the party, given my situation, during these months has been through correspondence. I cannot complain because it has been quite intense. Unintentionally, hand in hand with the exchange of letters, I got immersed into the moral problem, diverting myself somewhat from my project to write a paper on the Peruvian situation. It happened because several male and female comrades who wrote to me outlined or defended positions on morality they considered to be alien to our traditions and conceptions.

“You have to be honest with yourself”, they write to me, repeating an old phrase of mine learned from the masters; “I have a yearning to live and I want to satisfy it”; “Spring, the smell of flowers, the talk with comrades or friends means anything can happen and everything that happens will be fine”; “our morality is to do what we like at any moment”.

From these theoretical formulations, a concrete program of moral action was presented to me... “how stupid comrade so-and-so who lives thinking about his partner in prison, he says he loves her increasingly more, when physical separation for objective reasons inevitably causes indifference, estrangement. With my partner in prison I act differently, I have or try to have sex with other women, thus I achieve an ‘active and not static’ wait”, and so on. All these are textual or almost textual quotations, with slight modifications to avoid their identification.

Before the division [between PRT-*La Verdad* and PRT-*El Combatiente* in 1967-68], the *combos*<sup>1</sup> attacked the northern region comrades for having, according to them, this morality. At that time we rose indignant against such infamy and falsehood, which came precisely from leaders whose personal morality was truly nauseating, the worst I have seen in my long years as militant. I believed this controversy with the *combos* had clarified the panorama. It seems this is not the case.

In the last party cadres’ school, I had the intention to touch on this subject, since I considered it an important part of militant education, for reasons of time it was impossible for me to do it. I think the great number of new comrades, the weakness of their formation, the lack of revolutionary Marxist tradition, and the grave danger the prestige for being part or having been part of the national leadership be used to encourage these false positions.

<sup>1</sup> *Combos* was the name used by the party to designate members of PRT-*El Combatiente*.

That they may influence the new party cadres demands that, once and for all, we address the problem.

Without beating around the bush, I will say I believe there is a whole sector of the party that, through a serious degenerative, social, and political process, its lumpenisation, has adopted positions on the morality issue that undermine the progress and strengthening of our organisation. The topic delves, on the other hand, much more profoundly in contemporary reality. We live the most revolutionary time in history, the leap from class society, from human prehistory to its history. This means we are going from forms of life, customs, economic relations, between the sexes, the different spheres of social activity, from archaic to new. But the latter is far from having crystallised precisely because we are in a time of transition. In these historical periods no norm is fixed, crystallised. Some collapse, others rise. Morality is no exception; on the contrary, it is one of the aspects of life that suffers a greater commotion. The old values enter into crisis before the new ones triumph and these have finished becoming structured. All the eras of revolutionary changes have shown us a similar situation of moral confusion, of official amorality, of the clash of different moralities.

The Italian Renaissance with its popes, the Borgias, or its artists like Penventol, Cellini, shows us an amorality that leaves us stunned. The decadence of the Roman Empire, with its orgies, its emperors "husband of all women and woman of all the husbands of the court" is another proof of what we have been saying: from these eras have arisen the tremendous moral of Savonarola and Calvin. The first, the Catholicism of the first centuries; the second, as part of Protestantism reform, does nothing more than confirm in the fight against official, decadent amorality, a new moral has been structuring, reflecting a new era and class.

The comrades we recruit, mainly belonging to the student milieu, come from a society that is bankrupt, nauseating, with parents separated or who cuckold each other, with friends or acquaintances who tell of real or imaginary sexual orgies, with films which enjoy describing all the variations of sexual perversion, with daily reading of the amount of marijuana or lysergic acid consumed by American or European youth, with Japanese or Swedish pornographic films that surpass anything done in the war by the French or German, with paedophiles, with crimes or assorted assaults, with public criminals transformed into great characters who enjoy all the favours and social prestige at an aristocratic scale, where the film and television actresses, surrounded by playboys, are the desideratum of fashion, customs, and morality. With a coldness between the sexes in the advanced countries, where the women liberation that worries the sociologists, with the pill as a fundamental element of the women liberation, is taking place. These comrades arrive at the party from a totally corrupt society, with no values of any kind, where family, friendship and relations between the sexes are totally in crisis. This cannot but be reflected in the own party ranks since we do not live in a vacuum but in this society.

Faced with this situation, it is imperative we specify then, what kind of morality we have and even if we have any.

## **How our teachers addressed the problem of morality in practice and theory**

The Old Man [Leon Trotsky] in his well-known pamphlet *Their morals and ours* gave the general guidelines of revolutionary morality. Fighting the conception of the petty bourgeoisie, especially the intellectual petty bourgeoisie, who held and holds that there is a morality above the classes that obliges all men to respect certain moral principles or duties; he vindicated the relativity of the class character of our morals, as of morality in general.

None of absolute, general principles of morality: the basis of our morality is the proletarian revolution. Everything that favours it in our conduct is moral, fits our values, everything that weakens or goes directly against the revolution, is immoral. These principles

compel us to consider the eternal problem of means and ends. How do we know that such means or moral attitude serve the revolution? "The ends justify the means", said the old Jesuit moral. Trotsky replied, "yes, provided the means lead to the ends". That is, between ends and means there is a dialectic relationship since not all means are viable, useful. Lying to the mass movement is useless, even if it is done with the best of intentions, as it lowers the level of understanding of political and social phenomena by the workers. It is, therefore, not only a political mistake but a serious moral failing; but a comrade who has a mission within an enemy environment has to lie systematically, because his lie goes in favour of the development of the party and the revolution. If, for example, a comrade from the Kaiser [automotive factory] in Cordoba comes to Buenos Aires looking for a job, because he has been included in the blacklists of the Cordovan bosses, logically he will not tell the truth to the new bosses — "I was fired from Kaiser because I was a trade union activist". His lie is valid, strictly moral.

The petty bourgeois intellectuals are frightened by those who say there is a sacred moral principle, "not to lie". Therefore of that comrade from Cordoba, they would say, "he is a first class immoral, he lives lying to all the bosses of Buenos Aires, to whom he asks for work". This moral principle established by Trotsky, to serve the revolution as a basic criterion, leaves much free rein for independence and personal development in the field of relations between the sexes, the family and other comrades. The appreciable differences in the life of the relationships of our great masters show this. It is no secret Marx had personal relationships that some modern critics consider as of "Victorian morality" — absolute fidelity in marriage, exaggeratedly serious relationships with his daughters, who had courted and married following all customs (including the daughter who freely joined to his English companion who later committed suicide, she also did so in a very serious way). Marx apparently had a contemptuous attitude towards Engels' relations with his Irish partners, the two sisters who never visited the Marx family (although I do not know for certain, I have been told that Bernstein, in one of his books, says Marx's relations with the Irish women were very ill-considered). Engels is the opposite of Marx. Instead of a single girlfriend who was later his wife like Marx, Engels had relations with a good many, "when the German revolution of 1948 he arrived several days late to his appointment because he had passed through Alsace and Lorraine on foot, where there were very beautiful women and good wines", such was his apology. Marx was frightened of Engels' craze for horse riding and "social relations". The gossiping Europeans, who also exist in large numbers, were very concerned about whether he laid with the two sisters at the same time. The Old Man, commenting on the correspondence of both friends, says they emerge as human wonders, mainly Engels. I share that opinion.

Between Lenin and Trotsky there are differences similar to those existing between Engels and Marx respectively. Trotsky marries twice and has serious, almost "Victorian" relationships, according to his European kitchen critics. According to what Isaac Deutscher insinuates and the assurances of the gossipers on duty, Lenin seems to have had some relations with his assistants. According to comments circulating in Moscow at the end of the 1930s, the secret of the capitulation of his magnificent partner, Krupskaya, to Stalin, was the blackmail she had been subjected to by this jackal — if she did not capitulate she would have been revealed as not having been Lenin's partner and [Stalin] would pull out of his sleeve some of Lenin's affairs to unseat her. On the other hand, Pola Negri, in her memoirs, which I read and "I was not told", relates that in Switzerland, where she worked in a cabaret or something similar, she had intimated with a small man who had been the most extraordinary person she had known all his life. That person was Lenin. If this were true and not a publicity manoeuvre by Pola Negri, I doubt very much the friendship between both has been just to play tic-tac-toe.

From a problem Trotsky had at the end of his life with his partner, we have learned the type of relationships they had. It seems the Old Man and Diego Rivera's wife, the painter Frida Khalo, had been too agreeable, enough to provoke the anger of the Old Woman [Natalia Sedova]. This caused a moving exchange of letters between the two Oldies. Don

Leon told her in his letter he had never asked her for an account of her relations with his secretary during the civil war, despite the presumptions or comments they had had relations. This reveals that Trotsky had the concept that each of the spouses was free to do what he wanted, without having to answer to the other, an absolute personal independence. Leaving aside that the Old Woman clarified the misunderstanding and the false version or presumption and that the Old Man no longer received Mrs Diego Rivera, the position that arises from their correspondence is contradictory because although in it Trotsky states he never asked for an accounting, in fact in the two letters exchanged there is an indirect and subtle attempt of accountability, of establishing frank, true relations between them and not of total, absolute and secret individual freedom.

From this brief summary we can draw a conclusion: that our teachers, within the general morality all of them observed to develop the revolution, had pronounced different nuances, even contradictory in the daily morality with the other sex, the family and the comrades, caused by reasons of time, of individual education. The establishment of this fact can lead us to a hasty and dangerous conclusion: there is no relation between the general revolutionary morality and the one we have to use every day in our life of more intimate relationships. In other words, there are no rules or concrete lines in our morality, but only generalities.

I believe, on the contrary, this is a field, like so many others, that we have not delved on and this is the reason we can draw this false conclusion. It is no coincidence that at this stage of the revolution and of our party, we begin to study the problem, trying to solve, to discover, the laws that allow us to extract from the general law of our morality — that everything that helps the revolution and the revolutionary party is licit —, the fair rules of daily action mainly in relation to the comrades, our families and especially with the other sex.

## What is morality?

To advance in this field we must begin by agreeing what morality is, what moral values and duties mean.

Man lives in society, forming part of human groupings, classes, groups, families, nations, neighbourhoods. To be maintained and developed these social structures need to impose on the individuals who are part of it a series of norms, of obligations that guarantee the achievement of its objectives, such as the strength of those structures. Of those norms that every social structure imposes on its individuals, the most abstract are studied by ethics and the more concrete, the duties, are analysed by deontology or science of the duties. I do not want to lose *[illegible in original]* in these details that in our case are secondary. What is important is to understand the fundamental social role that social norms fulfil: they are the means of guaranteeing that the individual, pressured by the values and duties of his social organisation, respond to the needs of it. An example: a union is a social organisation; therefore it has moral norms and duties for its members. They, among others, are: always to abide what the workers resolve by a majority, to be in solidarity with all personnel on strike, never to be a scab. These norms guarantee the solidity, development, and achievement of the aims of the trade union organisation. If they did not exist or if they were not fulfilled, the organisation would disappear in the short term. These moral norms are imposed by the conviction of individuals and by moral and even physical pressure of the social organisation on them. What is characteristic of it is the moral pressure, that is, the collective opinion of the organisation.

Around this last aspect, the points of contact and the differences between law and morality arise. In a sense, the law is morality plus a club, of the State or of any other superstructure. But the law is much more than that since it regulates many more relationships than morality. While morality only gives norms for individual action within the organisation, jurisprudence gives the laws or resolutions that attempt to regulate all



existing relationships in society, between classes, groups, individuals, all of them together, but for the benefit of a class and applied by a State serving the same class. Hence, the law uses directly compulsory means, jail, and penalties, typical of the State, while morality uses persuasion or moral repudiation, that is, group opinion.

Something similar happens with the customs. All social groupings have their habits of life; they greet each other in such a way, we say, for example, “hello comrades”, other organisations of the left say “hi, comrade”. They do dances or meals, or both activities at the same time. Each social grouping has its own daily habits of living, they are the customs, and they make to the practice of existence of that grouping. These habits or daily customs are fundamental for the subsistence of the grouping but do not make to the essence of their relationships. The customs or some of them can change without affecting at all the grouping. Also, some individuals may be odd, they do not greet with “hello comrades” but “hello boys and girls”; this goes against the custom but does not affect at all the structure of the grouping, in this case, our party. The customs are the spontaneous element of the grouping taken in its statistical average. Morality is rooted in customs but it is quite different; it is not the whole daily life like customs, but a privileged aspect of this, the aspect that makes to the survival of the social structure in question and therefore with strict, severe, essential rules to be applied by individuals.

The three steps of this aspect of social life are thus clarified. Customs are the spontaneous, the general and the daily life and praxis of any social grouping. Morality is the rules, norms, duties that guarantee the survival, the development and the aims of the social grouping, through the individuals part of it. The law is a superstructure that tends to regulate all relations, not just the exceptions and the essential, like morality, but all of them, from the timing of a party meeting to relations between classes in the public law of the bourgeois State.

Every class, every social organisation, then has its customs, morality, and law; our party, the Argentine Bolshevik party, is no exception. We all know we have our customs; some seem to have forgotten we also have a morality and we have our law (the statutes).

## **The crisis of bourgeois morality**

The bourgeoisie, in its time of rise and prime, imposed a solid morality. The basis of this morality was given by the needs of primitive capitalist accumulation. The fundamental cell of this morality was the patriarchal bourgeois family with many children and absolute dominion of the father; relatives were of highest value; the future with eagerness of aggrandizement conditioned all the moral values. The savings, the frugality, the servile obedience of the children and the wife to the head of the family, the accumulation of a capital before marriage, which led to marriage at an already mature age, the arranged marriage between families so that the daughters would marry as soon as possible, girls almost, so they were not a burden to the process of accumulation, these were all characteristic of this morality. As we see, family organisation and a morality suitable to that organisation, whose objective was capitalist accumulation, predominated. Everything was sacrificed to the future, especially the present. Men married already mature because they had sacrificed their youth to the accumulation of fortune that allowed them to make up a bourgeois home, with the accumulation assured. First fortune, then marriage; this was the morality rule. Girls, to secure their future, were forced to marry old men who could be their fathers or grandfathers; they had their instinctive possibilities frustrated for life to ensure an economic future.

Between this official morality and biological needs a dichotomy took place, a serious contradiction, insoluble within the strict framework of the official morality. Hence this morality entered into contradictions with customs, it was hypocritical since it solved or tried to solve its contradictions by hidden or hypocritical means; for men brothels, for young men, especially of the bourgeoisie, the “*vedettes*” or “bad guides” as the French

at the turn of the century defined them with a joke because they were picked up by their candidates from the stage, or directly the expensive lover. For the sorry women, condemned to an official masculine morality, the cuckolding of their old husband or, if circumstances prevented it, romantic infatuation, “impossible”, full of corny verses, which hid more realistic appearances. But in general, bourgeois women were condemned under this morality not to satisfy their biological or cultural needs, since postcards or little verses of the lover of the day could not meet those pressing needs. In the last century and much of the present, according to sexologists, most of the matrons of the bourgeoisie died without having known the sexual act in its entirety, and those who obtained it were an exception, which almost always took place at a relatively mature age, after the age of 30.

Parallel to these problems of morality and customs, another one developed as the bourgeoisie accumulated — the need to enjoy what it had conquered. The consequence of this has been that the two sides of bourgeois morality, the public and strict, and the hypocrite or hidden (the cuckolding, the lover, and the brothels), the capitalist development began giving prominence to the latter. This means the necessity of primitive accumulation gave way to the *[illegible]* normal, not pressing of such accumulation. We could speak of these two bourgeois moralities, one of primitive accumulation, another of the bourgeoisie in its heyday. The first dominates the future — everything or almost everything is sacrificed to it. The present is hidden and solved in a clandestine way. In its prime, there is a bastard balance between the future and the present, hypocrisy becomes public, the bourgeoisie accepts enjoying the present without denying the future, but the great contradictions continued to exist.

The great discoveries of Freud cannot be explained if they are not viewed as a consequence of the observation of these serious contradictions of the predominant morality of his time. In Vienna, Freud used science to reveal the hypocrisy of that morality and the hidden side of it, the biological side. This [20th] is the century of the decadence of the bourgeoisie, with it, it falls to shreds its morality. This morality comes to a crisis as brutal as the regime that sowed it.

The bourgeois patriarchal family of the rising stage, disappears, is broken, to give rise to relations between the sexes and members of the anarchic, critical family, where the fundamental element is the transformation of each individual into enjoyer of the world and the other sex. This morality reflects the passing from desperate capitalist accumulation to the attempt by the bourgeoisie to enjoy the present. It is the putrefaction of bourgeois individualism carried to its last extremes, that of personal and sexual relations. The most cultured, rebellious, or under classed sectors of the bourgeoisie itself, impudently appeal to a return to the biological, or immediate, that is, the abandonment of all morality, of all perspective for the future. Psychoanalysis becomes fashionable in the 1920s, especially in the US. Everything spontaneous and the biological needs find a justification and explanation in psychoanalysis; everything is well and allowed. The past and the biological justify and explain everything. A class without a future logically would have to fall, like all classes in history that lost all their perspectives, to amorality.

But the moral putrefaction of the bourgeoisie had to go even further. With neo-capitalism, with control of markets by the great monopolies that characterise it, with the manipulation of consumers through propaganda, the loosing of morality is total, not even amorality, since it is transformed into consumption, in conditioned reflexes, solved by the great monopolies. Already morality, or lack of morality, has nothing to do with people of flesh and blood, but with objects or person-objects. Even the most primary biological needs are managed, manipulated by those who control the market, thus lowering morality to one more branch of the monopolistic market. Life becomes boring, morality has disappeared; it is no longer duties that men impose themselves to defend a social structure, but conditioned reflexes, customs, satisfaction for those reflexes of biological or social needs. We enter a time of lack of morality or of frozen ethics.

This morality of the bourgeoisie in decadence is combined with its characteristic features to the other morality, which is its rebellious shadow, in a sense its true face, the morality of the sectors displaced from the big cities.

## **Lumpen morality**

In the shantytowns of this neo capitalist stage, crowds gather which are relatively on the margins of the capitalist market; their attachment to market, with its fetishes, is much weaker than the attachment of other consumers, their life regime is unstable. They are large concentrations of the underclass, the lumpenproletariat. Many of them are transformed into workers, others are not, but the decisive element is given by that characterisation. The comrades who have worked on the port strike know firsthand the truth of what we are saying, what morality these groups have.

We need not investigate much, there is a magnificent book that not only has studied a family of this conglomerate but has drawn some significant conclusions. I am referring to Oscar Lewis' *The Children of Sanchez*. The author, after pointing out that the conclusions can apply to large cities, says the following: "Other traits include a strong present-time orientation with relatively little ability to delay gratification and plan for the future, a sense of resignation and of fatalism based upon the realities of difficult life situations. [...] Members of the middle class and this, of course, include most social science researchers, tend to focus on the negative aspects of the culture of poverty and tend to associate negative values with traits such as the focus centred on the present moment, the concrete versus the abstract orientation. I do not pretend to idealise or ornament the culture of poverty. As someone has said, "It is harder to praise poverty than to live it". Nevertheless, we must overlook none of the positive traits that can arise from these traits. Living the present can develop a capacity to export, the enjoyment of the sensual, the acceptance of impulses, which are often repressed in our man of the future-oriented middle class. Frequent use of violence means an easy way out of hostility so that those living in the culture of poverty suffer less from the repression than the middle class."

Lewis has given it a name to this phenomenon typical of American sociology: the culture of poverty. Apparently, it has nothing to do with Marxist categories; it is a definition by place of abode. But Lewis is an extraordinary observer as well as a scholar. This leads him to do Marxism and of a good kind: the culture of poverty, he tells us, would only apply to the people at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder, the poorest workers, the poorest peasants, plantations workers and that great heterogeneous mass of small artisans and merchants to whom generally are alluded as the lumpenproletariat". And in order to leave us with no doubts that it is the morality and culture of the lumpen, he clarifies to us, "I would like to distinguish clearly between impoverishment and the culture of poverty". And rounding up his conclusions, he says: "when the poor become class-conscious they become members of trade union organisations or when they adopt an internationalist vision of the world, they are no longer part of the culture of poverty; although they are still desperately poor." Lewis does not know that affiliated to our party, to our international, there are scoundrels, let us call it that since they are not beardless militants, who are in the culture of poverty, in the meaning of Lewis, who have no "capacity to postpone their desires". But this exception does not negate the correct definition of the author who has no reason to know the exceptional and degenerative processes.

## **The bourgeois and petty-bourgeois rebellion against their morality: Existentialism and spontaneity**

Given the specific purpose of Lewis's book, he does not draw all the general conclusions of some of his most important observations; he even enters an apparent contradiction in some of them. Lewis senses the culture of poverty, of becoming social outcasts, of

lumpenisation, with all its moral values is not unique to the traditional lumpen, but that all classes can be lumpenised. For example, he emphasises that “the culture or subculture of poverty is born of a diversity of historical contexts, it is more common for it to develop when a stratified social economic system goes through a process of disintegration or substitution by another, as with the transition from feudalism to capitalism, or in the course of the industrial revolution”. In this case, he does not link directly the culture of poverty to the low social economic level but to a stage of transition, which leads to becoming a social outcast, although he does not say it this way.

This is confirmed by the formal contradiction in which he falls by pointing out as opposing the culture of poverty, in our terms lumpen, with the culture of the middle class, but in passing he gives the best definition I know of existentialism as a philosophical-social current: “Perhaps this reality of the (present) moment that middle-class existentialist writers try to recover so desperately, but the culture of poverty experiences as a natural and everyday phenomenon.”

Lewis does not know the middle class, like any class, has its strata and a dynamic. Precisely, the middle class, since World War I in some of its strata and in an increasingly majoritarian way since the World War II, finds it has no future, that imperialist or neo-capitalist society condemns them to the present of a life automated by the reflexes of the market, the irrationalism of life under capitalism, that is, they are condemned to have no future and therefore to have no morals. A rebellion then takes place within the own bourgeois framework against the values of the bourgeoisie in the name of its own categories. Both surrealism and existentialism reflect this situation of being trapped in a dead end of very important strata of the petty bourgeoisie. But being petty-bourgeois intellectuals, after all, their rebellion consists in taking bourgeois and petty-bourgeois principles to their ultimate consequences. Individual freedom as an option is one of the main moral categories of existentialism, that is to say, the principle of doing what one wants. Satisfaction of the most primary needs, the immediate, the biological is the other demand, life, existence. Individualism is the third category. It is a philosophy and morality of the lumpenised petty bourgeoisie, outcast, without perspectives, that takes refuge or desperately looks in the biological issue and in the individual for a table of salvation. Its morality is the amorality since placing as the supreme norm to individually satisfy and choose is to eliminate the fundamental element of all morals, the relation of necessity between the group and the individual that forms part of it. This last postwar period explains the rise and heyday of existentialism when still capitalist Europe had not been able to recover and Stalinism frustrated the revolutionary perspective. Between the two fires of the total decadence of European capitalist society and the opportunism of the great mass parties, a third way emerged, that of the most extreme individualism, that of existentialism, that of philosophical and moral conceptualization, that of the rebellion of that petty bourgeoisie along with becoming outcasts.

But let us be clear, rebelliousness comes to formulate the conceptual apparatus of the lumpen, rediscovers the lumpen morality, without the spontaneous richness of these, with the original sin of being intellectualised. While the lumpen are individualistic to the extreme, enjoyers of life and all their impulses, living in the present, who live by opting “freely” denying the necessity, although this always ends up imposing itself (sending them to jail or burning their shanty town), directly without a program, without a voiced line, they are so because so they are and that is it Existentialists make a program and a philosophy of that amorality and individualism. It is their misery and Achilles’ heel to elevate to a religion what for the lumpen is their life. On the other hand, the process is very deep because it reflects the lumpenisation of sectors of the petty bourgeoisie produced by the own crises of bourgeois society.

## Spontaneism

The underclass petty bourgeoisie from the last postwar period was assimilated by the “European miracle”, that is, by neo-capitalism. It found a future in the “American way of life,” automobiles, refrigerators, apartments, and vacations. Existentialism disappeared, remained as the surrealism of the previous war, relegated to the attic of philosophical or moral curiosities.

But within neo-capitalism, the petty bourgeoisie, the student body as a reflection of the whole of society, would suffer as much or more, albeit in a different way, than during the postwar period. Alienation, proletarianisation, the sale not only of their labour but of their personality, and the lack of scientific and human perspectives for the students within neo-capitalism provoked a new rebellion with common characteristics and with pronounced differences with those of their parents and grandparents, the surrealists and existentialists: the spontaneism, of the great student revolts from 1968 onwards.

First, this was not of small strata, intellectuals or other sectors of little numerical significance, but of large student masses accompanied by sectors of the working youth, as in May 1968 in France. It is a much more progressive movement than the previous ones because it is not only an individual rebellion carried to the extremes of attacking all the taboos and present and past values of the bourgeois society in the name of a morality of the underclass but a movement that tends to be of masses. In reality, the intellectual process suffered by Carlos Astrada, the great Argentine philosopher has taken place. Astrada began as a convinced existentialist and then overcome existentialism in one point: from the individual, he transformed it into collective, of the masses. He accepted all existential categories — choice, existence or life, freedom — but denied that of the individual. He believed all these categories were linked to large human groups, including the classes. There were options and existence of classes. His next step was to accept the determinant was the world of necessity, the leap from existentialism to Marxism. Leap, by the way, which our party helped him to achieve. This has happened with the intellectuals, the students, and sectors of the middle class of the great movements of 1968. They applied the concepts of Astrada to reality; this is spontaneism.

This step from existentialism to spontaneism can only be understood by the existence of neo-capitalism. This with its great monopolies that control not only the market but all contemporary life with its political and trade union agencies, the great parties and unions that control the mass movement, at the service of the State and the great monopolies, even if they call themselves Communists, whose function is to castrate all movement or action of the masses. This has caused an understandable reaction in the youth, the repudiation of any intermediary by the youth, repudiation of any intermediary organiser of the mass movement, let these spontaneously do what they want, action for the action itself. It is pitiful the youth have not yet elevated itself to the understanding that what must be questioned are the organisations and intermediaries of the mass movement, that it is about breaking this control and the need for parties, unions, soviets, and revolutionary guerrillas to dispute the role of intermediaries to the organisations affiliated with monopolies; it is pitiful, but it is an understandable fact. Spontaneity is the repudiation of these traitor organisations without having yet found the path. As such, it is very progressive. It questions the opportunist organisations and vindicates the actions of the mass movement.

On the moral ground, this spontaneism is not so progressive; on the contrary, it is a relapse into existentialism, for a simple reason. As opposed to the political line that coordinates and gives goals to the actions of the mass movement, morality rules the relations of the individual with his group, giving norms to be applied by individuals. Hence spontaneism, an action for the action itself, in the moral ground take us by the hand to amorality, to the morality of individualism, to choices, to “doing what we want”, to having no rules. This lack of norms in politics at this moment of suffocating dominance of the great bureaucratic apparatus is positive, not so much in the moral ground or at least it is not superior to the progressive aspects, of vindication of the immediacy versus the taboos

and norms of the bourgeoisie that already had the previous surrealist and existentialist moralities. It is a reaction to them. Therefore, it does not exceed the frame of a rebellion within the bourgeois structures themselves.

A conclusive proof of all this, of how the bourgeoisie falls apart and how moral spontaneity is ultimately defined as Lenin defined anarchism — bourgeois liberalism with 40 degrees high fever — is given by a symptomatic fact, the moral program of the left wing of the British Conservative youth.

By chance, I read an article in the *Daily Telegraph* of 25 September 1969. The subject seemed at first uninteresting, how are the young conservatives?, by one T. E. Utey.

After pointing out it is a “serious mass movement that grows with immense speed”, he continues elsewhere to say what its program is: “there are, on the other hand, noisy minorities, such as that represented by the capable and strident young couple Eric and Linda Chalker of the Greater London Conservative Youth.” These young conservatives have prepared a Bill of Rights with 15 freedoms that include “freedom of sexual expression” and “freedom to take addictive drugs”, and “these young conservatives demand a liberal legislation many of whose aspects are the application in the moral sphere of economic principles”. A conclusive proof of what we have been saying — young conservatives carrying the absurd the bourgeois freedoms come to have a moral program equal to the spontaneists and existentialists.

Unfortunately, also, it is the same as the personal moral program of some relevant party comrades. This morality is identical twin with the culture of poverty morality. None of this means absolutely that this moral program of the young conservatives cannot be useful to revolution at any given moment, as we shall see in another chapter of this work. But what we can already assert is if an old comrade or a leader has this same morality, in him it is a clearly degenerative process, from a Bolshevik and proletarian morality to lumpen morality, where it meets the outcasted sectors of all classes. With him, the under-classed of the Marxist movement, perhaps for this reason, the only who is repugnant and despicable.

## **The guerrilla morality**

Against all these moralities and policies of decomposition, of change, of transformation, of emptiness, or lack of politics and morality has emerged in this postwar period the guerrilla morality, and a consciousness of the duties that must make us meditate very much, because it is so objective, i.e., its existence, as all those we have reported, can be recounted and even touched.

Although the spontaneists vindicate and defend the guerrilla movements, they are light years away, in the antipodes of the guerrilla program and morality, although deep class reasons make them have common points, for their non-proletarian character.

The guerrilla is not a sporadic struggle, but quite the contrary, a long war that requires iron discipline and organisation. It is the negation of spontaneism, precisely the maximum expression of the organised, of the anti-spontaneous. It is a war with thousands of battles; as such it has a morality adequate to those needs. Their morality is as severe as their organisation and as sacrificed as their struggle. Everything immediate, like the sexual, food, like all immediate and mediate cultural needs, is sacrificed to the needs of the armed struggle, the decisive factor that constrains or mediates everything, including morality.

The scoundrel who went about doing moral spontaneity, who said or did the monstrosities I have been written to, would be shot in the guerrilla. All desires, all needs, are subordinated and even postponed to the needs of the guerrilla struggle.

They may spend years not having sex, harassed on the forest by enemy forces, and when they find the peasants, they are forbidden to have sex with them. They may be starving but they will have to endure those physiological needs of any order, before stealing, looting

something from the peasant. His comrade will be wounded in an enemy ambush; he must stay beside his comrade to drag him outside the ambush while he is alive, at the risk of his own life. The life of the comrade is worth much more than his because he is healthy and can save himself and the injured comrade. But the guerrilla morality demands no guerrilla falls alive in the hands of the enemy to avoid tortures.

This guerrilla morality has carried to the last extremes the liquidation or castration of the immediate and the cultural in benefit of the future, the struggle, the guerrilla. Thanks to this sense of duty as one of its main elements, it has triumphed. It has denied all human needs to impose the greatest need, the need of the revolution and civil war against the exploiters.

There are elements or sometimes a sectarian line in this guerrilla morality, there are reminiscences of puritanism. It is no coincidence, since guerrilla morality synthesises many elements surpassing them of the earlier progressive, revolutionary morals, from ancient Christianity to puritanism, the denial of the immediate and other human needs for the sake of the main need.

Of this morality, we can say what we said of its greatest exponent, Che Guevara. It can have errors, it has errors, it is not the balanced, total, solution but, essentially, it is the maximum objective expression, in this postwar period, of revolutionary morality. It is the only morality coexisting with ours, which still has no much weight.

At last, after the usual dirty tricks in a sector of the party, of the lack of morality of all the bourgeois, petty-bourgeois and lumpen currents we have studied, we have arrived at a safe port, a revolutionary morality, as Trotsky had designed: all the actions are contingent upon the victory of the revolution. Our morality is the negation of all the others, although it may have common points with some of them at certain moments yet it is a first cousin of the guerrilla morality. We have now come down to earth; we enter the road of the revolution, its politics, mysticism, theory and morality. We are out of the catacombs; this is the important thing. How good is fresh air!

## PART II

# How we face the morality issue

We have completed the first part of our work paying tribute to the guerrilla morality. When we have criticised the other morals we have pointed out, in passing, that on some points and at certain times we can agree with the spontaneist morality, while still criticising it. It is a matter of seeing for what reasons and with what methods we approach our analysis of the moral problem that explains these formal contradictions.

The key to our entire analysis and the solutions we will propose lie in the fact for us, morality is relative and adapted to certain objective relations among men. Of these relationships we believe that there is one that is privileged — the relationship as party militants. But it is privileged does not mean it is unique, that it is the only relation of a man, a member of a class, a worker or student of such factory or such college, boyfriend or husband of such woman, member of such club and member of such family, affiliated to such a union, activist of a strike; we establish a multitude of relations and we are part of a series of social structures. Specifically, the militant is not just a militant, *homo politicus*, but a man of such society and situated in such sectors.

This creates a contradictory situation, since there are as many moralities as social structures exist, as we have seen previously. It is the main contradiction we suffer in this aspect of our life and conduct, the pressure of different morals on each one of us.

To the pluralistic solution of the problem — that we yield to the morality of each of these sectors — we respond with a unitary solution of these contradictions-pressures. All of them must be mediated by the morality and our status as militants, student-militants, worker-militant, etc. All our different locations with their moral pressures and of other kinds, we combine and try to achieve a synthesis, in this case moral, with our condition of militants.

Our participation in the life of society has three levels; we may consider perhaps four. One is in the objective structures, external to the party and to our circle of class, the sector, the neighbourhood, the union, the union or artistic current to which we belong. The other, the privileged one, is our membership in the party structure. The last is the intimate relationships with our friends, comrades, family, etc., including relationships with ourselves as biological and culturally conditioned individuals. At each of these levels and



sectors, a dialectical solution of the problem must be established, like the one we found for the militant man. It is, on the other hand, the same issue seen from another angle.

Between all these levels, ranging from the most objective to the most intimate and subjective, there is a dialectical relationship, everything is mediated by the partisan level, foundation, beginning and end of all our behaviours, including morality, at all levels. In the class and in the union or in the neighbourhood, we will act as party militants and be trying that our behaviour, including our moral attitude, assists the development of the party and the revolution. The same in the most subjective, personal, ground of our intimate relationships. The great mediator of our morality, at its various levels, is the party. This does not mean that there are no tensions, sharp contradictions sometimes. Precisely when we say mediator, we mean there is a dialectical — i.e., contradictory — relationship between the different levels that must be synthesised by the morality and behaviour as a party militant.

## **Our morality towards the working class, the other exploited classes and the struggles of the mass movement**

The exploited classes, our working class among them, have according to their level of consciousness and organisation, different morals. It is very different the morality of a union that comes from achieving many victories through great fights, to that of another union that has endured defeat after defeat. The same in relation to peasants from one region to another.

The moral, also the ideological, organisational, and political differences between guerrillaism and spontaneism obey these objective reasons, the different level of their struggles and their conscience. While spontaneism reflects the first great wave of the rise of the mass movement in Western Europe, after almost two decades of stagnation and retreat, guerrillaism reflects a pre-revolutionary situation, a consciousness and organisation that launched itself to the civil war, the maximum expression of the class struggle. Spontaneism, on the contrary, expresses only the first stages of the struggle. Hence their profound differences and the proximity between guerrillaism and us in the moral problem as opposed to other problems, without being the same. This proximity is brought about by our agreement on the continuity and organisation of revolutionary action, of the methods of civil war. After this agreement, our differences in all areas are emphasised.

The morality of our working class, for example, is very different from both guerrillaism and spontaneism. Its level of consciousness and organisation has been, still is to a large extent, essentially trade unionist. It has developed a morality suitable to its behaviour of several decades of a high trade union discipline, support and sacrifice for its trade union organisations and all other characteristics of trade union morality. It has very little of guerrillaism and spontaneism, although now some youth sectors, linked to the vanguard of the student movement, begin to have another behaviour and logically another morality that approaches objectively certain spontaneist and guerrillaist characteristics and that can be breeding ground for the urban guerrilla deviation.

As party members and as national parties of a world party, we cannot give up being active in those movements, at whatever level they take place, observing their morality. But our political and moral action has an aim, to show ours is superior, to raise them not only politically but also morally. To do this, we must be the best in their own morality. Trotsky has already said this in a famous formula: we must be the best soldier, worker, union activist. In its simplicity, he has synthesised everything we have been saying — we are the best in the class morality of the exploited at all levels, from the lowest to the highest. In the factories, the slack workers are frowned upon, they go against the morality of the more responsible, better workers. Trotsky made a logical moral conclusion; we have to be the best workers, the ones who work the hardest, to be the ones who best represent their morals. If at a given moment in the class struggle an important sector of the movement

considers it is unnecessary to produce anything for the boss, we will change by the roots our morality and will stop being the best workers to become, from the productive point of view, the worst. The shape of our morality will have changed but its content and objectives will not since we remain the best representatives of the morality of the working class or those exploited at their level.

But if our morals remained there, we would do moral tail-ending. Our moral goal is to establish a bridge from this common moral behaviour towards our morals. Each member of the party not only has this morality, but they combine it with the party morality, and therefore, at every moment, try to exceed, primarily, the union-based or worker-based morality, towards a superior, of class, and internationalist morality. We will be not only the best workers, the most disciplined, sacrificed and combative trade union activists but also those who will argue we must strike for Che Guevara, and we must be morally supportive of the Vietnamese guerrillas or our own martyrs. Because each member of our party reflects morally and politically the party in its daily behaviour and not only the class sector to which he belongs.

## **Our morality towards the party**

We thus arrive to the morality we have in our actual external life, the party morality. This is the decisive morality since as we have seen before, the morality and politics of the party are the intermediary of all our actions. Our entire morality, both objective and subjective, is conditioned by our status as a member of the party.

The number one moral obligation is to strengthen the party, to respond to it with one's life, to consider the most sacred— for want of a better way to put it — moral duty the party life and the development of the organisation. All the sacrifices are too few; we live for and in the party.

This approach has its reflection in our moral relations with the comrades of the party. With a party comrade, a moral relationship of a unique and new type is established, not known by any of the traditional moralities, which the revolutionary religious sects carried to the maximum or in the family relations of the bourgeoisie at the time of its rise. The principle is that there is nothing superior as an individual than a party comrade.

It is the overriding principle of our morality in this field of personal relations within the party. Therefore we owe the comrade frankness, an absolute sincerity except for reasons of security of the own party. But much more than that, the party comrade deserves all the care and considerations. There is not and there cannot be a sacrifice in favour of the comrade we do not do. We are, we must be, much more than his family, brothers, children or parents in the stage of rising of family morals. For the comrade of the party, we risk our lives, we make any sacrifice. The moral principle is that the life, the morale, the conscience, and the physical body of the party comrade are worth much more than ours. It is an abstract-concrete relationship of a unique personal type, precisely what makes it superior to everything known to date. The comrades of the party in their vast majority do not know each other, but the moral obligations are no less peremptory, they are comrades and that is enough, everything said above about our principles is valid. A Bolivian comrade persecuted by the repression comes to our party and each of us will risk our life, if needed, to protect him, although we may have never heard of him. At the interpersonal level, this moral duty is the other side of the main moral duty at the level of the whole party, to strengthen it, to develop it. This is achieved not only with a good political line, but, specifically, by raising and strengthening, safeguarding, and enriching the morale, the body, the personality, the level of the comrades of the party. Our moral obligation is to make all the sacrifices to achieve this.

This is why our agreement of principle with guerrilla morality, this high level of class struggle, regarding the comrade of struggle. We believe in this regard as they do, with the difference that they specifically apply it in in a fundamental relation to their life and their

body, given the unilateral nature of their struggle, while we develop it in relation to all aspects of the personality of the comrades.

## **Our duties regarding friendship, love, our partner, and our family as the rearguard of the party**

If life in the world and within the party imposes on us specific moral obligations, the same happens with subjective relationships, intimate, and at the same time more concrete: friendship, love, partner and family. These are our daily, concrete, person-to-person relationships. They are the most atomised social relations; nevertheless, they do not cease having, as any social relation, their morality. This morality is also mediated by the condition of being party members, but with its specific characteristics.

First, these relationships do not have to be relationships between militants. Although this can provoke, rather it does provoke, conflictive situations, these can be overcome, including achieving the non-militant pole of the relationship become a militant, breaking the relationship, or achieving a relative balance. Each of these relationships has its own well defined moral obligations. All of them are characterised by establishing relationships that link the individual, the cultural, and in some of them the biological. This is why it is the sector furthest away from macro-society, as sociologists say. The relationship is neither essentially political, as in the party, nor the objective relationships imposed on us, such as by the class struggle.

The first of these relationships is friendship. It is the relationship of a militant with another militant or with someone who may not be. This relationship is established by a past, affinities, common cares or activities, often by a combination of all these factors. A much closer and more concrete bond is achieved than between militants. The already historical relationship between Engels and Marx, the friendship between, them is the moral ideal.

Everything we have said about the comradeship relationship within the party gains a new dimension here because not only the life and personality of the other is much more than those of oneself, but his own personal problems, his common worries, or many of them, are worth as much or more than ours. A bond of cares, common concerns is created, at all levels, which almost forces us when considering the friend, the other part of ourselves and at the same time, more than ourselves. I have given the example of Marx and Engels, but I could give at party level the relationship between two female comrade friends who are a fine example of what I have been saying. Not having secrets for the friend, consulting and solving the most intimate problems together is one of the main moral obligations.

Love is a higher echelon of interpersonal relationships since it complements or enriches friendship at its highest level with sexual and sentimental affinities.

If it does not take place at the level of militants, it can cause contradictions similar to those existing between friends in the same situation. But if it is between militants, I feel sorry for not being a good writer to reflect in its full richness what it means in terms of being beautiful, deep, and worthwhile. I believe here we begin to achieve the highest interpersonal relationships history has given, because love among comrades exceeds all levels of this human category that was only discovered in the Middle Ages and which has had a random development through history.

In our movement, thanks to it, this category can achieve its full and complete development. It is a unity, a very delicate balance of biological, sentimental, intellectual, personal and political-partisan type. The main moral obligation before love is to be aware it is being built permanently, that is not something static, but dynamic, a dynamic unity that is always developing.

We have before it all the obligations of friendship, with the individual sentimental and sexual additions, which presents us with the specific nature of this unity. But love is

a delicate balance, as we have already said. When it solidifies, the couple and the family emerge, as a much more solid structure.

The couple is the monogamous structure to which love gives its foundation. The couple is the ideal of moral and interpersonal structure, its highest expression. It is the emergence of a unity that strengthens and stabilises the two components, that increases their strength as a consequence of this higher unity. The moral obligations between the members of the couple are almost total. It is the synthesis of all other interpersonal moral obligations but enriched and deepened. The family, the children, are the expansion of this couple, and raise problems of another type that would take too long to analyse here.

All these structures, if they are authentic, strengthen party militancy, because they strengthen the personality and the development of the militant; what better than having a stable, militant partner, fully integrated with one, who allows us to consult all problems, as she does with us, who allows us to have all the individual problems solved, of any order, from the biological to the cultural ones, in order to have the morale and the sufficient time for our militancy.

They are not antagonistic but complementary structures; because a unique, specific and different relationship is established between the party and its militants and these relationships. It is the terrain of subjective morality that has to do with our objective militancy in the unions and in the class.

The party watches and mediates directly in the objective moral aspects: it expels without compunction the comrade who scabs a strike. In the interpersonal field, party intervention is indirect, and much more subtle, careful, through partisan opinion or reprobation, precisely because they are inter-individual relationships the dynamics and relationships established are unique, concrete, requiring also unique appreciations. This means that the party has more than rules, which it must also have them, but trends, consensus.

Therefore, the party, its militants, must strive to defend with all their strength the couples that are being built and putting pressure through moral persuasion on the needs of these couples. Only in exceptional situations can these moral trends in favour of love and the couple be transformed into strict norms of an objective type. For example, the moral standard of Vietnamese guerrillas of preventing sexual relations between guerrillas to avoid the pregnancy of the female guerrilla is perfectly licit. The avoidance of bourgeois cuckolding in critical situations, such as imprisonment or persecution of comrades, using such a situation, mainly by party leading comrades, can also be transformed into a norm or at least to a moral consensus of a serious fault. But, in general terms, in this field morality is more subjective than objective, acts by pressures and trends rather than by strict rules.

We have defined the party line and of the militants towards the moral aspect we must observe regarding a series of interpersonal structures the party considers very useful, progressive and necessary. We need to specify what line should have the interested militant part of these structures.

This comrade must be more careful than anyone else since he has besides his obligations as a militant, the moral obligations that derive from his character as a partner or lover of a woman or of a partner. Their relationship is also measured by their militant character. Trying to develop your partner; if the relationship goes into crisis, avoiding frustrating the progress of each member; avoiding promiscuity before starting a relationship, trying to make it as serious as possible from the outset, with prospects; taking care before starting the relationship whether the other party will benefit or hurt. Always, at all times, as militant, not thinking about oneself but on the other partner, answering the questions: Does it help? Does it hurt? What do I do to exceed it? Is it desire what I have? Do I see and consider her as an object, or on the contrary my desires are mediated by my militant morality and additionally and mainly I think I can structure something serious, which benefits her and me, which exceeds us both? These moral questions are the decisive ones and the mere fact of them being asked means a beginning of solution to this problem.

To take care of all these aspects by all, the party, its militants, and the interested parties is an essential but very subtle part of our militancy. Trotsky calls the family of the revolutionists the rearguard of the revolution. It seems to me a good call by the Old Man, although he defined it in a historical situation different from ours, which constrained the concept.

He referred essentially to the extended, patriarchal, Russian family, mothers, fathers, brothers. In the homeland of Don Leon the patriarchal family was very strong. All Russian classes, from the bourgeoisie to the lower nobility, and all the exploited, were in the struggle against tsarism. It was logical that patriarchal families should consider and help their children as the vanguard of the general and common struggle of all against tsarism.

But in modern society, the patriarchal family no longer exists, and governments such as the Russian, either. Let us see the reality of our party. It is common for the relatives of the arrested, persecuted comrades to wash their hands or give little help, with exceptions. The concept of Trotsky does not lose its richness because of this new reality, on the contrary, it takes a new magnitude. The role fulfilled by the Russian family of supporting the fighter in all non-political aspects, from sentimental to material, can and must now be fulfilled by interpersonal relationships gained and not inherited, such as friendship, love, the partner, the family. Only those of us who have been imprisoned or persecuted know well what this moral and sentimental rearguard means. Fortifying this rearguard is a partisan obligation of the first magnitude.

The male or female imprisoned or persecuted comrade should not only feel the political and organisational solidarity of the party or the mass movement. Man does not live of politics alone; he must feel the loving support, more loving than ever, of his love, his partner, of his children and friends. Whoever does not act like this or attempts we do not to act like this is a moral traitor, if he is an old comrade, and/or an unconscious if he is a new comrade.

The militant just for so doing does not stop being a man or a woman, with biological and cultural needs very precise and pressing.

We have reached the first step of the moral sincerity of the militant with himself, of looking in the mirror and drawing conclusions on how to act with himself. Beginning with the great needs: food, clothing, sex, mainly this, the great fashion among some “anti-dogmatic” sectors.

Here as on all other levels, mediation to solve these biological needs goes through the character of militant. Does the solution of this biological need, in such a way, benefit or harm the party and the revolution? It is the moral question that has to be asked, giving it an adequate answer.

It has been the custom of some sectors of the Latin American movement in old times, mainly when they went to Chile, to solve that problem through the houses of tolerance; speaking clearly at the level of prostitutes, for example. This solution of the problem I have always considered it morally outrageous, since prostitution is also a relationship and not an individual act in which two elements take part, the one paying and the one collecting. Of the two, the main guilty or the only one is the one who pays. The comrades who paid a prostitute were committing a loathsome moral act, developing one of the most repulsive institutions in class society.

But this extreme case does not eliminate the others, the *[illegible]*, those that take place within the party. There are comrades who have or have had the morale of the *combos*, to take advantage of any party or meeting of the party there is, to see with whom they can go to bed. This had been transformed by the current leadership of the *combos* into a religion. Special parties were held to practice promiscuity, which ended with almost collective beddings, with a sharing out — let us give it the fairly equitable merit of possibilities — where no one was left out. In our party, due to the campaign from the leadership, especially the female student leaders who were the first to rise indignantly against the accusations

made by these swine who precisely practiced this morality, the issue is more disguised, but many wolves hide under the skin of lambs.

The essence of this moral is: I have a biological need and I have to satisfy it as much as I can within and without the party. This morality makes two watertight compartments, totally separate, between the biological and the militant. Any free time, and if there is none some should be sought, should be aimed to the satisfaction of this biological need. From the psychological point of view, he does not know the biological need is never satisfied this way, because when it is transformed into a goal by itself, separated from comradeship, mutual respect, sentimental, cultural, partisan, militant, and activity agreement or coincidence, the sexual act alone solves nothing at all, it is a variation of masturbation or much worse. It only satisfies when it is part of a total or almost total relationship.

But the problem is not just psychological but much more; it is political, of militancy. Does the sexual relationship or the possibility of it benefit the other party, the militant in front of one, or can it hurt them if there is no possibility of it being part of a more stable, dynamic and lasting relationship? It is the question every comrade must ask before dealing with this relationship concretely, neither in this nor in any terrain can we act without a previous line, even if it is provisional. The militant, the Marxist, must also continue to be so when facing the solution of this problem.

Because there are extremes where the Marxist status requires of us not to satisfy the biological needs, such as hunger or sex or more primary cultural needs such as clothing or housing. When revolutionist prisoners go on hunger strike, when the revolutionist comrade goes to prison, both he and his partner fail to satisfy some of the most pressing biological needs, but this cut of his personality is totally justified by the needs of the struggle. Because our morality is not a morality of biological immediacy, we do what our biological needs demand and we satisfy our wants in life, but it is a morality mediated by our method and our militancy, which requires from us before any action, much more if the action falls within the moral or political ground, to have a line even if it is provisional.

## **The individual and the party**

None of this means that in the name of our morality we deny the biological or cultural needs. The young and the old comrades of the party have the moral and individual right to address the solutions of these problems as they see fit — experiencing, making mistakes, making multiple experiences, etc., etc. But all of them must be mediated by the condition of militants, and by the methodological and moral trends we have shown: having a line and always taking care of the other side more than of oneself, always considering the trend towards love and the couple, if it is in the sexual field, as in the friendship or the needs of the party. The same happens with clothing. We are in favour of elegance and that our female comrades make all the experiences regarding clothing, including something far from them as the makeup they want, but that they take into account the situation and that this tendency to experimentation, ultimately towards beauty, does not go against party needs: to spend all their money on clothes or makeup. They are contradictory trends, all of which are licit but which must be concretely synthesised in each case based on of the noblest and most necessary trends, one of them pressing, the character of being a militant of the party.

Our morality is not the morality of the lumpen, of immediacy, but of the infinite mediations, with the main mediation, of being militants.

Specifically, between development and individual experimentation in all fields and the party, a relationship is also established. The party supports to death the great conquest of humanity which is the personality and individualism; that each one keeps forming and developing their personality. But this progressive tendency cannot and should not act in a vacuum, as a determining tendency. Not that someone who is facing a strike poses to himself that “my greatest need for my cultural development is to learn languages, mainly English” (a pressing political need for almost all partisan cadres, in my opinion). If he left

the leadership of the strike for this reason, it would be a political and moral crime. For here, also, there is mediation in the individual development, it is not abstract but mediated by the development and needs of the party and the class struggle.

The party in turn, within its needs, should aim, aims for each comrade to achieve the greatest individual development possible, reflecting the needs of the party itself, on the one hand, the possibilities of the comrade on the other. As Comrade Cannon's partner told us, the party always gives us much more than we give it. Within this relationship there is a wide field for fruitful individual development, to make mistakes, to experiment, without harming the party's progress and the progress of the comrades close to us, because they are our comrades, friends, lovers, partners and children.

## **A morality for freedom and the enjoyment of the need for revolution**

There are comrades within the revolutionary movement who hold or practice a moral of freedom and enjoyment. As long as I am a good militant, everything I do that allows me to enjoy life, especially of women or men, is fine, or at least I have the right to choose, to try, to be free, totally free in this field. The existentialist morality so well defined by its ideologues.

Our morality is not, and cannot be a socialist morality, even if it has some elements of it (solidarity and love for the partner, superior to what we should have for ourselves). Put another way, it is not a morality to enjoy rationally and mediated by all society (the party in this case) all the artistic, instinctive, physical or intellectual possibilities society and nature abstractly bring us, in this aspect also our own nature. Our morality is a morality for a relentless struggle to defeat a no less relentless enemy, the exploiters and imperialism.

Moral spontaneity is the attempt by youth sectors to enjoy as individuals of the neo-capitalist society, i.e., consumer society, without adjusting to the fetishes and conditioned reflexes of that same society.

We believe just the opposite, that our morality is not a morality of choice as it is for the existentialists, nor for enjoyment as it is for the spontaneists but a morality of the need of the revolution.

This issue about need is not a philosophical category but a very real one. Our morality must prepare us to withstand the tortures, biological and cultural deprivations, the terrible pressures to which the implacable class enemy we are facing is subjecting us to, and will continue to subject us to. Whoever does not assimilate this morality is not fit, nor useful, for the fight. Our morality is for hunger, continence, being left with little clothes or makeup or directly without clothes or makeup; it is a morality that tends to distance us from the consumer society. We oppose it in all its facets, including enjoyment, a category in this historical moment of neo-capitalist society itself.

Neither does any of this mean we practice necessity as a matter of principle. We live in the consumer society in many countries, with no pre-revolutionary or revolutionary situation. Then, between enjoyment or relative consumption and our militancy of need, a mediation, a balance can be established. It would be illogical for our comrades not to go on a summer vacation, for example, because there are guerrillas in Vietnam or Venezuela. We would dissolve a concrete situation, of our comrades in the present stage of the class struggle of our country, in an abstract general law that we have a morality of need. Because it is essentially the need of the revolution and the party in the own country; this is the main mediation. Therefore, it would be a crime if the comrade responsible for the Vietnam campaign leave his activity for the summer vacation, or if he did not support the financial campaign for the same reason and also because he has to buy summer clothes. But to reach the extreme of not having summer vacations in principle, would be a serious mistake, as we have already noted.

## The sectarian and opportunistic solutions

As in all orders, in this field too we have a sectarian and opportunist approach. It will serve us well to analyse it.

Sectarianism eliminates the mediations, the contradictions. It presents us with an abstract morality, based on fixed and permanent rather than concrete norms, especially in the most concrete of them, the interpersonal morality. This sectarianism can occur in any of the lumpen. There may be the morality of the party needs, where everything is subordinated —individual development, learning and solution of the biological, love, friendship and the couple — to what the party, or rather, the leadership, legislate.

*Voz Proletaria*,<sup>1</sup> who else!, took these two trends to the limit and at the same time during a good period of its existence. It is known by all the party old guard of our suffering many years ago when we had to discuss with them, mainly with its leaders, for the foul odours caused by the theory-praxis they had at that time of making their most primary biological needs in situ because holding your needs was a bourgeois prejudice. Parallel to this absurd defence of a level of the immediate that caused us great olfactory annoyances, there was another (which continues until now) no less passionate and absurd of the mediate, the needs of the party — members had to be dressed, groomed, married and related as dictated by the party. It was discarded every possibility of option, development, experimentation, that is, of getting through an extremely contradictory and mediated process friends, loves, partners, style of clothing and makeup. The couple, selected by a decree of the party, was policed by partisan leadership, as were clothing and customs. Specifically, between the immediate and the mediate, the party and its needs left no room for logical, necessary, positive contradictions.

Opportunity, as always, is pluralistic. The Viñas current,<sup>2</sup> as several leftist socialist tendencies, has held the moral problem is an individual problem, of each one of us, of each group, that everyone solves as he wants and desires. Gossip, those comments of a personal nature, is the other side of this morality. Let everyone do what he wants, but do you know what so-and-so did in such way? This morality is identical to the lumpen morality and therefore agrees with the spontaneist morality of some of our comrades.

Our solution to the problem is kilometres away from both of them. For us, there is a rigid morality, which is what I have tried to define, but it is concrete and not abstract, relative and not absolute; in one word, it is dialectical. Our morality does not ignore, and could not ignore, the biological or cultural needs or needs of individual development, of freedom, and enjoyment and it could not ignore them because they are a part of reality but it requires they be subordinated and assimilated to the mediation of our standard norms which have a cardinal goal: the revolution and the party.

## For a morality transitional program

In this work we have pointed out systematically we can have some points in common with spontaneism in the ground of morality. Apparently, it is a contradiction but it is only for those who have a formal and abstract conception of morality, not for us who think it is relative. Specifically, with spontaneism, we sometimes agree not only on political but also on moral grounds.

This is due to reasons of method and program. We all know the programmatic application of the theory of permanent revolution is the transitional program. A program that is political, for the action of the mass movement. But which also serves as a technique

1 It refers to the “Posadists”, who had some presence in Latin America and who have practically disappeared years ago. *Voz Proletaria* {Proletarian Voice} was the newspaper of the Group Fourth International, led by J. Posadas and recognised by the Pablo and Mandel leadership of the Fourth International as Argentinian Section in 1948. Years later Posadas broke away and formed his own “International”.

2 It refers to **Ismael Viñas**, who headed a propaganda and pro-Castroist group in the 1960s called MLN (National Liberation Movement).



for any action, as is the case with the theory that gave rise to it, of permanent revolution. Moral action is no exception. The transitional program is characterised not just by having minimum, transitional, and maximum tasks. Nor for the character of these slogans: democratic, economic, political, military power, etc. Rather because some are negative and some positive. For years we have been raising this problem of negative and positive slogans. Like so many other theoretical questions, I could never explore and develop them in depth. However, the general idea is simple; there are slogans of a negative character, against something, and others that are positive, for something. An example: "Down with Onganía" is negative; "for a constituent assembly" is positive. The most encompassing one is the negative, which is why it provokes a more revolutionary or multitudinous mobilisation; ultimately it does not give a solution; it only opens the way, the path for positive solutions.

In the morality field there are not only minimal and transitional slogans but both negative and positive ones. We say all this precisely to understand our position against spontaneism. This is a phenomenon and a slogan relatively positive in the political arena because its slogans went against the apparatuses that control the mass movement and for the independence and free mobilisation of this. Therefore, they were part of our transitional program. "Let's fight independently of the great apparatus, let's fight and fight as we like and suit us" is the programmatic essence of spontaneism and fits as a relatively correct transitional slogan within the mass movement at a given moment, when these begin or are already mobilised from above by the big apparatuses. It would be sectarian pedantry if on behalf of our entire transitional program we did not comprehend, support and incorporate these slogans and movement into our program and action at this time. Something similar happens with the morality problem. Spontaneism, in certain conditions, plays a positive role as a transitional slogan. It is essentially a negative slogan, as in the political field. If in the political field it goes against the bureaucratic apparatus of the mass movement, in the moral field goes it against all obstacles, taboos, conditioned reflexes, and hypocrisies of bourgeois society, inherited from neo-capitalist society itself. "Down with bourgeois morality and prejudices, down with all moralities!", the battle cries of spontaneism are useful and progressive in a sense. Let's see which one.

As with every transitional slogan, in this case moral slogan, knowing its usefulness to the revolutionary process depends on when it is applied. For a sympathiser, an acquaintance, a group, a militant newly arrived or gnawed by the weight of bourgeois fetishes or taboos, it means a point of rupture with bourgeois morality in the society of abundance of neo-capitalism. To this extent it is a very useful and necessary moral slogan. That everyone does what they want, that they have no bourgeois prejudice, that they carry their bourgeois individualism to its ultimate consequences, starting with their own nature, is a democratic slogan, which, like all democratic slogans, jeopardizes the regime of monopolies in the moral ground.

The petty bourgeoisie, that withstands the taboos imposed by the remnants of the old patriarchal morality or, on the contrary, that gnawed by cinema fetishes or by customs in fashion, that do nothing more than to repeat the advertising slogans in all the levels of life, that lives in love with playboys or artists in fashion, that satisfies all their instincts indirectly through advertising fetishes, gives a colossal and very positive leap if it begins to enjoy its own instincts directly, in an immediate relationship with one another, and if they begin to be honest with their own body. It is a progressive leap since it has begun to break one of the strongest links of neo-capitalist society. Laying in bed with whoever you want and desire is positive, if you do it directly and not mediated by neo-capitalist fetishes; it is as positive as to start liking the singing spring water at the fall of the afternoon much better than Coca-Cola. Moral spontaneity, in this case, and only in this case, is progressive. Returning to the immediacy of the senses, and the instincts, breaking with fetishes are what gives it this character. But here it cannot end its permanent process or our transitional program. We can say the first slogan of our moral transitional program is the democratic slogan that breaks bourgeois morality in its own field.

From there two paths open. One is to keep or transform into a morality this way station. Thus the existentialist or spontaneist moralism arises that means nothing other than keeping ourselves in the same path as the bourgeoisie; it arises with a lumpen morality, the immediacy instead of the means of the bourgeoisie.

The other path, which must be ours, is linked to the understanding we live a class war and the main tool of it is the party, with its supreme morality: the duties leading to the strengthening of the revolution and the party itself. Through this new path, we begin to build an entire transitional program, each of us. This leads to a revolutionary morality which, as we have already explained, is not for enjoyment but for revolutionary and partisan duties.

This is what Trotsky has already explained with a luxury of details in a leaflet.<sup>3</sup> But this principled question does not give a solution to the program in itself; it only explains its principles and the method of the new morality. It is here the understanding of the concrete and relative character of our morality and the transitional program that synthesises it gains decisive importance. Because the revolutionary and partisan goal of our morality is combined with each sphere of our activity, to give us the transitional morality task for each of our spheres. And just as the political transitional program ultimately has no other explanation than its ultimate goal of the program of socialist revolution, our morality in every stage or sector of it has no other substance or axis other than the revolution and the party. Our morality transitional program, thus, is very succinctly the one we have been constructing in this pamphlet since all the moral stages of our behaviours have been precisely relationships between that specific sphere and our goal of the revolution and strengthening of the party.

## **Pigpen morality or strong partisan morality?**

All these considerations seem very general and well-known. Not so, however. Nowadays there are party sectors, including at the leadership level, who oppose to this partisan and revolutionary morality their pigpen morality. Far more important than taking care of the morale of party comrades, beginning with those who deserve greater consideration, the prisoners and the wounded, is the spontaneous enjoyment of their own, of their development, their experiences of doing what they feel like, of not being schematic, moving ahead with everything. What is serious about this is that it is not a theoretical position, but a whole morality program, they make a great campaign and as much practice as they can.

As every phenomenon, it is total. At this stage of consumer society pressures, this morality is reflected essentially in the sexual terrain, in a morality of sexual consumption, but its implications are much fuller and deeper. As the class struggle intensifies, a world of implacable need, which demands an identical morality, other manifestations of this morality of enjoyment or pigsty morality will appear. The banner-holding comrades of this morality of enjoyment, it may be sexual or food-loving will also show before the police itself their amorality, their morality of pigs and the lack of a revolutionary morality.

Our party was made with an opposite morality. Our comrades in the sacrifice before police torture have been the first, the example of all Latin America, not only in our countries; there are multiple anecdotes in this regard. There are great symptoms, at the moment very weak, this morality, just when we need it, has begun to change. There are already examples, very few, that we are no longer paradigms of moral behaviour in front of the police. It is the other side of this pigpen morality. The one we have developed in this work is the internal face, for within the party. The other, due to the little persecution, is just beginning to manifest itself, is the morality to face repression.

Because the ultimate question is to know whether some comrades have realised that when entering the party they have entered a brotherhood of persecuted, pariahs of society, who are against all values and lack of values, for other values that we consider much more

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<sup>3</sup> It refers to Trotsky's 1938 leaflet *Their morals and ours*.

solid, dynamic, rich, stable and developing. The question is whether they know they can expect death, mutilation, persecution, torture and that they are surrounded by comrades who because of their revolutionary conception quietly expect all those possibilities. It is a matter of knowing there is little time for enjoyment; this has to be achieved as in a citadel besieged by an implacable enemy, which requires us to be extremely careful because everything must be sacrificed to maintain the high morale of our brotherhood, besieged, hungry, and persecuted. It is a matter of knowing whether they are conscious we want interpersonal relations between those who know of that war and that situation because if they do not, they become extremely dangerous because they can undermine the development of this relentless struggle, which gives no advantages. It is a matter of knowing whether they know we have nothing to do with the morality of pigs, sheep and cattle, that our morality is a limpid, revolutionary morality, which demands everything of the militant, sometimes, in extreme cases, even the frustration of their biological needs and always gives the utmost consideration to the comrade, the fighting brother or sister. Finally, it is a matter of whether they have realised we have a revolutionary morality. §