

CUBA: THE INTELLECTUAL DEBATE OR THE LITTLE WAR OF EMAILS

THE “E”s (by first name of author, alphabetically)

[Table of Contents](#)

EDDY E. JIMÉNEZ PÉREZ.....	2
EDUARDO JIMÉNEZ GARCÍA	6
ELISEO ALBERTO DIEGO	12
EMILIO HERNÁNDEZ VALDÉS.....	16
ENA LUCÍA PORTELA.....	18
ENRIQUE COLINA.....	19
ENRIQUE PINEDA BARNET	27
ERNESTO YEVGENY	28
ESTEBAN MORALES	29
ESTHER SUAREZ DURAN	30
EVA.....	34

Eddy E. Jiménez Pérez

Translated by Regina Anavy and Gustavo Loredó

Compañero(a)s:

I confess that I have been tempted to “intrude,” although since the beginning of this healthy debate it has cost some work for me to write down my opinions. On the one hand, I am not given to the exercise of controversy for the sake of controversy; moreover, at first I felt that the openings by Desiderio and Reynaldo and other interventions, although fair, didn’t overstep the unionist character and could lead to a Byzantine discussion. On the other hand, a few hours later I read the columns/calumnies of the salaried worker Cancio in *El Nuevo Herald*, also those of Duanel Díaz, as well as the (im) partial information of Mauricio Vicent, in *El País*, and I felt anger and nausea: what had to happen, happened.

I’m not allergic to intellectuals residing abroad. I believe that there are also revolutionaries and honest people out there, willing even to give their lives for our country, but it was obvious to me that this opportunity was being used by the right, Cuban or non-Cuban, to try to fan the fire and take advantage. Between 1987 and 1991, I resided in Eastern Europe, and I know very well how the intelligentsia of those countries, in many cases, was manipulated through disinformation, and how, although sometimes justly, their unionist positions facilitated the delivery of socialism. I wondered several times if, as Desiderio pointed out, “in this singular moment in the history of our country in which all our people are awaiting the convalescence of the Commander in Chief,” it was productive to hang out our wash in public. In the end I was convinced that yes, it was, but to make it shine and warm us, not to burn us. Digging up that history and its characters to be taught and to unite is healthy; to spread stench, it’s insane and only causes distancing.

My condition as a writer, a revolutionary intellectual, and a member of UNEAC impelled me to speak out. Not taking sides is inexcusable in a revolutionary and is explicable only in a coward or an automaton, who waits for others to decide. In this regard, I recalled having read that Che, in a meeting of the Ministry of Industries, on March 10, 1962, said:

“There is a tendency to consider man as a number. To treat people as numbers is to reduce everything to very simple expressions and produce automatons, and the Revolution, the last thing it can think about is producing automatons. It has to produce people who are with the Revolution, may it be in the place that corresponds to the Revolution.”

I also remembered that funny story that Che enjoyed telling and that Tirso Sáenz relates in his book, *Minister Che*:

“Question: What is the difference between Renaissance, Expressionism, and Socialist Realism paintings?

“Answer: In the Renaissance, the painter painted what he saw. In expressionism, the painter painted what he felt. In Socialist Realism, the painter painted what he heard.”

Should we speak about what we hear—from above, whether from the left or the right—or do we have the duty and the right to express ourselves? Two events also prompted me to abandon silence: first, the Declaration of the UNEAC Secretariat published by *Granma*; second, the wise and honest interventions by Orlando Hernández and Pedro Campos. Let's get to the first.

The opaque and concise Declaration left people in limbo. Many neighbors and friends asked me what was happening, why this Declaration had been published. None had seen those programs in Open Dialogue or Imprint. The Difference had an audience, but the interviewees who remembered were Carilda and Luisa María Jiménez, and no one mentioned Serguera. Simply, the majority of the population believes that Alfredo screwed up in one of the programs (but nobody knows which one) and will be reprimanded. That's the rumor. In short, the vast majority don't know the underlying causes that imposed the Declaration. As they say, there is uproar in the system.

This “uproar” is logical if we take into consideration that today, around 80 percent of the population is under 55 years of age; therefore, when Serguera administered the ICRT, the vast majority of people were either very young or simply not born. Furthermore, the interviewee lacked the slightest charisma and no one was interested in what he said, except for those of us who knew who he was.

I happened to witness that show. Years ago I saw one that seemed in such bad taste and so corny that I never sat in front of the television to watch something like that again, because I'm not here to waste my time. However, I was reading when my colleague called me to see and laugh with her at the horrible program that was happening on television, and when I turned it on, Alfredo was interviewing “Papito,” and among other things, he thanked the interviewee for having paid him his first salary, so that his family could eat. I was outraged.

But hey, let's go to the positive part of the Declaration of the UNEAC Secretariat. The fact that the official newspaper of the Party spread it is very important because, on the one hand, it calms the concerns of the Cuban intelligentsia, and, on the other, it goes against the enemy's propaganda abroad and frustrates those who, outside or inside the country, have as their true intent the dismantling of socialism, our socialism, which although imperfect, requires the struggle for perfection, for adaptation to the present reality in Cuba, and for the awakening of the Socialism of the twenty-first century, which is already making its way into Our America and from which we have to learn, humbly, even though we have had the glory of being the founders.

It never hurts to say that Cuba has a glorious historical responsibility to fulfill on the Continent, and we are facing it with disinterest, courage, and energy, even at the cost of many sacrifices. We were the first socialist country in America; we knew how to stay upright and uncompromising when fake socialism collapsed. And despite the aggressiveness of the U.S., despite all the hardships, difficulties, and mistakes, here we

continue, giving light and strength. Cuba is a bastion that must be maintained at all costs. A setback in Cuba would have catastrophic consequences for all of America. I believe that although the Declaration is opaque, concise, of little depth, and leaves unanswered questions that people aren't aware of, our partisan and intellectual authorities have acted with wisdom. The unity of all sectors of the country must be maintained, and in the case of intellectuals it's crucial.

For Karl Marx, the intelligentsia represented the living consciousness of society, and for us Cubans, maintaining the unity of that living consciousness is a matter of life or death, since we intellectuals are also ideology makers. It's not that we all think alike; that is impossible and holds us back. Honest debate is enriching, but we must maintain unity around essential, strategic ideas, which for me are homeland, anti-imperialism, and socialism.

Now more than ever, at a time when Fidel is convalescing and the enemy is on the prowl to create divisions; now, 40 years after the assassination of that great communist teacher, sower of ideas, struggles, unity, the eternal fighter for perfection and for the Revolution within the Revolution, which was Che, true revolutionaries have to be informed and inform: try to influence. As for the wise and honest interventions by Orlando Hernández and Pedro Campos, I also believe that deep down and on the surface the issues that have been honestly and bravely debated in the "Little War of Emails" are not a matter of brotherhood but rather of Cuban society as a whole. We are all Cubans, and the Revolution is also ours; we are and will be against any type of annexationism, and we have the right and duty to express our opinions, help in the search for solutions and, above all, save Our Revolution from the dangers that Fidel has already enunciated to us.

Debate and popular participation in decisions are essential tools for building a socialist society. If the productive forces of the nation are not liberated, if we don't make the manual and intellectual workers feel themselves owners of their destinies and the real owners of the means of production, we will be trapped in the networks of fake socialism and will be betrayed by bureaucracy. We can't sing the praise that we have less than two percent unemployment while in our country, with its centuries of sugar tradition, which once was a world exporter of this product, a worker is paid to work in a *guarapera* that has no sugar cane to make *guarapo*, and we must pay in Cuban convertible currency for a child to have a piece of candy.

We have to pay a taxi driver ten pesos to get to work, when the average daily salary of the Cuban is precisely that. Could it be that no one questions where the money comes from to pay for that taxi ride when in reality the taxi driver is paid more than we earn in a day? Where does that money come from? Doesn't the bureaucracy realize that a Cuban cannot live on his salary, that this is simply not enough for anyone? Why do we have an underground economy to which a good part of the population has no choice but to turn, even against their will?

Our new generations are being educated in this dire environment. We can't allow it. That would bring the end of the Revolution; the ideological consequences can be

irreversible, just as the Revolution can be reversible. I don't think that we should talk about who was to blame for this or that event but to present ourselves to the historic generation as soldiers who, by right and by duty, are fighting to perfect our Socialism, so that those who made the Revolution can save it, now that there is still time, together with us and the people, and we must let them know that they can have confidence in us.

Eddy E. Jiménez Pérez

Writer and journalist

Ever onward to victory.

Twenty-first Century Socialism is possible.

Note: Between 1992 and 1993, I wrote a book called *La revolución de los camaleones* [*The Chameleon Revolution*]. It's a personal essay on the fall of fake socialism in Eastern Europe. It was first published in Brazil and Portugal; last year it was published in Chile. I can send it to colleagues who are interested in reading it.

Eduardo Jiménez García

Translated by Regina Anavy and Gustavo Loredó

Yesterday, late at night, I commented to Pedro Campos via e-mail: "... beyond the tasteless and intellectually short declaration (?) of the UNEAC Secretariat, I go to bed tonight with great joy: today have poured in by email the reflections of dissimilar people (artists or not, intellectuals or not), all patriots, who in addition to showing their dissatisfaction with the very low profile of that note, do not want to let the real debate of these days die, the climate of frank and free exchange that we have all experienced for a week. I thank Orlando Hernández, Desiderio Navarro, Jorge Ángel, Miguel Barnet, Reynaldo González, Francis Sánchez, Zenayda Rumeo, Pedro Campos, Roberto Cobas, Arturo Arango, Jorge de Mello, and many others who kept alive this space—alternative but very effective—of debate, even when at times it seemed on the verge of being empty or diluted. I am especially indebted to Orlando for having made this exchange an event that went beyond the guild to become an inclusive forum of sensitivity and social commitment where we all fit, whether or not we're artists ..."

But I forgot to "modify" all of the above with a qualifier that, in my opinion, could not be absent: the personal, intellectual, and social courage of all of them to defend not only this reserve of reflection, but the most urgent need for a national debate about the country we want. Orlando's lucid, agile, and humble inquiry, and the entry into the arena of historians and economists like Pedro and Cobas, moved me greatly. Mariela Castro's note to Reynaldo that spread like wildfire on the Internet yesterday also made a pleasant impression on me, as she seemed, as I mentioned to Pedro, to be sympathetic.

It was obvious, although we were afraid to admit it, that the so-called "little war of e-mails" was not only "a matter for artists" but also a "matter for Cuba" and that it was not an exchange instigated, nor orchestrated, nor financed by any CIA agent. Many truly revolutionary voices—although marginalized and punished countless times by the representatives of dogma and immobility—suddenly found themselves united on the Internet, and from there they expressed themselves. They are also the Revolution, whether or not some bureaucrats like it. They are the dissatisfied, sincere, emancipatory, intelligent, and creative voice that every True Revolution needs in order not to die. They are not the "strange" or "confused" part of the Revolution, although they are apparently the minority. No. They are the very soul of the Revolution. They are its vindication. They are why it's also still alive.

Believe me that at times I had felt a certain great loneliness. Are I, and some of my friends, I have wondered, the only ones who, feeling revolutionary and anti-capitalist, don't fit into the molds of what bureaucratic thought has called "revolutionary"? Are we condemned to "maladjustment"? Or will we start to pretend, decidedly, that everything seems fine to us and "Yes, boss"? And with this last, I CANNOT. In those molds, "I don't know, I can't get in." But I have seen, with happiness, that I'm not the only dog on the outskirts, and that in this unrecognized periphery of God, there are many enchanted and dignified dogs that don't want to walk, making serious concessions, through the center of the city that they love so much.

I remember that one day, at the beginning of 2002, a TV manager called to inform me that I could not continue in the analysis space that my friend Pepe Alejandro and I had founded almost two years ago in Morning Magazine, because I was “outside the information line of the revolution.” They had received “strong complaints” from the leadership of the Communist Party in Santiago de Cuba, and especially from its first secretary, Juan Carlos Robinson, about a program that I dedicated to commenting on the serious problem of children begging in the tourist area of Santiago. The anger of that chief, together with other protests from entities questioned on previous occasions, such as the Ministry of Public Health and the CIMEX commercial network, were “reasons” enough to remove me. I only managed to answer that character: “Do not speak to me in the name of the Revolution. Tell me that you are afraid, that you are under pressure, that you are taking care of the position. You have the power, but you are not the Revolution, and Robinson is not the revolution.” They suggested to my friend Pepe Alejandro, whom I loved and respected even more after those days, that he do the program alone or with someone new, but he wouldn’t do it and resigned with dignity.

I tell you this, without further details or names, because I believe that at this point the important thing is not the name of the executioner (against whom I honestly do not hold a grudge), but, as I mentioned yesterday to Pedro, the undesirable culture of exercise of power that, unfortunately, is not alien to the functioning of many areas of our present society, and in which the truth is silenced, the legitimate and sincere commitment of the professional with his society is punished, and in which the assent, chameleon character and “the unrestricted cult of authority” (as Ché said) exists. In my opinion, the email controversy held during these days has also essentially dealt with these problems. But that evil, which Pedro analyzes very well in his *Chaos on the Net* articles, is nothing more than the concentrated political expression of an excessively centralist economic scheme that almost naturally makes room for this type of “order and command” attitude and many others, no less negative, because on the basis of reflection and collective participation in decision-making at all levels, such a scheme couldn’t survive. All this, unfortunately, brings about an unavoidable lack of commitment on the part of people, as they feel more like objects than subjects—dominoes—within the process of historical construction. And all this is another gigantic danger—no less so than American aggressiveness—, and some would prefer to ignore it in order to sleep peacefully.

Fidel was already asking himself, just over a year ago at the University of Havana, “What would be the ideas or the degree of consciousness that would make the reversal of a revolutionary process impossible?” I think this is what, basically, this whole movement of electronic reflection is about, caused by the unusual appearance on TV of people like Pavón, Serguera, and Quesada. And I agree with Mariela Castro that the dramatic episodes of the so-called “five-year gray period” should be deeply analyzed TO AVOID THEIR REPEAT. That is why Desiderio’s initiative—although some believed it to be demobilizing at first—seems so valid to me. Yes, we have to talk, and a lot. Report. Be assertive. Exorcise those demons that many times castrate our courage and clarity to interpret—as social entities, not as union members but as revolutionaries—the current reality and its urgent need for changes. But the reflections shouldn’t keep bouncing off the walls of a bishop’s cloister. If we still want an even more emancipated and fair country, a country where capitalism cannot be restored, then it’s necessary to involve

everyone in everyone's affairs, as Martí said. I see no alternative but commitment and creation.

For all of the above, the statement of the UNEAC Secretariat has seemed to me very bland and intellectually simplified. It simply does not measure up to what happened. Many people find it difficult to accept a problem being announced without giving the slightest explanation about it. That, it is logical, has caused a certain feeling of being scammed for several recipients of the message and seems to establish a limit to the discussions about the subject at a more socialized level. Most of the Cuban people have been left without understanding what the note was about.

As an eminently unionist and cryptic theme—"abstruse" I would add to emphasize the irony (what else is it if not "the intellectual sector"?)—this legitimate uproar has been dealt with, which, thanks to some of its participants, managed to go in its analysis beyond the painful and unforgettable anecdotes of a not-too-distant yesteryear. "To the intellectuals, what belongs to the intellectuals," and the paraphrase is worth it. The matter has been handled, in the order of politics and mass communication, as if thought were not the result of socio-economic and historical development, as if artistic ideas and intellectual exercise of any kind were separated from social reality and its dynamics. "Things of artists." Why explain to people, in detail, the conflict that arose in the cauldron of a club of sullen sorcerers, if no one is going to understand anything? In this way (some wise bureaucrat will think), people are going to get mixed up in necromancy. Better not to know.

I don't know what Mella, Villena, and Pablo, for example, would think at the moment about those who broke definitively and very early with the Ivory Tower of the alienated intellectual of the 19th century, to become what Gramsci would later call the "organic intellectual," a fearless socializer committed to thinking, constantly involved in "public affairs" and the Nation's pulse, conscious agents and enthusiasts of social change. Martí—undoubtedly—had left his fertile stamp. Ay, Martí! What a great artist, what a great intellectual, and at the same time what a great politician.

Anyway ... How good that all this has happened and is happening. And for the good, if one knows how to take advantage with intelligence and wisdom of the true Revolution and its very sense of being: the increasing emancipation of the individual and of society. Of course, as a dear friend says, after so much effort something good has to come out of all this. The REVOLUTION belongs to everyone. Sincere thanks, again, everyone.

A hug,
Eduardo Jiménez García

Message from Eduardo Jiménez García to Enrique Colina

Dear Enrique Colina:

First of all, my respect—which from now isn't only that of a viewer towards the good communication professional that you are. And many thanks for allowing your ideas to be shared.

I have read, with progressive and undiminished admiration, your brave, sincere, and insightful “download.” Right now there seems to be no other way to be consistent. It's obvious that yours is a position of rooted and indisputable commitment to the REVOLUTION that many of the participants in this discussion via email have also defended. I believe as never before that hygiene and dignity exercises like this one of yours are urgent: reflective and respectful, but at the same time open in their complaint, without ambiguity. It is, in my opinion, about helping our society do something better, about emancipating all of us in the very exercise of emancipating everyone. It is a duty and a right. It is dialectical. It is, although many do not like the word, MARXISM. To assent like obedient altar boys before the dogmatic faith of the bureaucrats and to resign oneself to transfiguration through their inaction, helping to squash genuine differences and the exercise of one's own opinion, could never be a Duty, and even less a Right.

We know that static revolutions don't exist, just as there are no revolutions by decree. Bureaucratic thought and action don't make revolutions, nor do they recreate them: they de-substantiate them by slowly and effectively annihilating them. Gorbachev and *Perestroika* drew on that (including *Glastnost*). They were no more than the executioners who applied a death sentence passed long ago for the lack of a true socialist democracy, for the lack of citizen participation and supervision, for the bankruptcy of that arch-centralist and inoperative economic model, for the terrible existence of an obese bureaucracy that was depriving the working class of power in the name of socialism, and by many other twists, some extremely serious. And that is more than known. *Perestroika* was not a cause, but a consequence.

I believe that recreating the REVOLUTION, extending it alive and magnetized among generations, can only be the result of the participation of ALL of us who in good faith (but never blind) want it, because without PARTICIPATION there is no commitment, and without COMMITMENT there will be no responsibility, and without RESPONSIBILITY there will be no possible and positive exercise of FREEDOM. There will be plenty of mimicry, double standards, and convenient obeying.

It is not only material improvements that we need, even when they are of the utmost importance. Re-enchanted and feeling subject to a just and humanistic social project does not depend solely on the elevation of the material quality of existence, but on the active involvement of the subject (sentimentally and consciously) in the modeling, change, and improvement of that social project. Counting on everyone to change and growing with everyone. But to really CHANGE, without alienating verticalisms. Start doing it.

I would hate it—as I believe you and many of those who have been participating in this informal debate—if the maxim for transformation was the one that Nicholas Machiavelli recommended to his Prince 500 years ago: “Change, change a lot, so that nothing changes.” What we need are not fictions of change, but profound changes that banish fictions and the not-remote possibility of a capitalist restoration in Cuba. Changes that are neither Soviet nor Chinese (as Dimitri Negroponte wishes), nor Vietnamese, but Cuban. Changes that respond to the best of our roots and traditions, with attention placed on the most creative contemporary revolutionary thought, will make this society an unquestionably more democratic, more participatory, more natural, more functional, freer, happier, and superior space. A change where the sovereignty of the country is as sacred and unquestionable as respect for the sovereignty of its individuals and their right to participate with their own opinion in the process of building their own nation, their own REVOLUTION, without fear of being “marked” and “punished”—subtly or not—by the occasional bossy bureaucrat with too much power. CREDIBILITY and a sincere and non-exclusive debate on our problems are the basis of IRREVERSIBILITY.

But that irreversibility, to become true, cannot be understood as a process of Numantine resistance, but rather as a process of sincere and positive overcoming of so much accumulated contradiction. That is why I found your letter to Desiderio Navarro so interesting and necessary, since I consider it another valuable personal vote for open, honest, and free dialogue on old and current problems, which exceed what is actually artistic due to its lively resonances in social, economic, and political terms for our country. I hope that the conference organized by *Cristerios* (now with restricted participation through the allocation of invitations) will add to your memories and opinions, which are as sincere and committed as those of you and other *compañeros*. The important thing, anyway, has already happened and is happening.

A few years ago I heard Fernando Martínez Heredia say something devastatingly free, profound, and satirical that has helped me a lot not to fall into that cynical, silent, and disenchanted conformism that abounds so much. Fernando said that time, referring to his criticized and stubborn irreverence: “I live in a free country, and I also believe it.”

Thank you very much again,
Eduardo Jiménez García

Message from Eduardo Jiménez García to Abelardo Mena

Dear Abelardo,

Yesterday I read your response to a person (I don't remember his name) who supported Desiderio Navarro with worrying elitism.

I share with you, and I thank you, for not having missed the opportunity to remind (us) that every Cuban and every opinion interested in the destiny of the country has the right to this debate, and that it should not become a gateway of intellects (which some strongly want) if we want it to remain a legitimate and respectable space for reflection—even for ourselves. All the richness that has sprouted in these crossings of e-mails,

whatever they look like and wherever they come from, seems great to me. They are the living portrait of our intellectual and ideological diversity, and above it we can see common points that are, in my opinion, the most important.

I also thank you for your feedback, and I hasten to reply to you. Although I don't share them, they give me food for thought, and they have also been the object of my own questioning at certain times. "Evolution" is closely linked to the so-called "natural order" (always respectable), and we should ask ourselves if what we are experiencing is not already for many people (with or without power) a "natural order of things," a culture of assimilated life. Would we want more of the same? Would we let so many serious problems that were "evolutionarily" created be "resolved" by the law of natural evolution? Will we rest and let the hand of God take account of our things and in our favor? Then what would be the point of participating in this valuable debate and risking our own opinion, if everything will evolve the way God wants?

Another evolutionary variant would be the return to capitalism, another "natural order," perhaps the most recognized as being old and from the devil, but that is not my option, although I respect that for others it is. I prefer to participate in the creation (engineered like all social constructions) of a new society, in the creation of a new natural order and a new common sense that far exceeds the current mode of relationship between human beings, in Cuba, and in the world. All social study is construction (laws, norms accepted or not of behavior, economic system, ideology, common sense functional to the scheme, etc.). I'm not afraid of revolutionizing, nor do I think it's a worn-out word. There is another way in Cuba to understand the revolution and another way to defend it that is not the bureaucratic doctrine that has done so much damage. That prostituted use of the word "revolution" is broken, and I think a good part of our country understands that.

I believe in the concept of revolution that Che has. I believe in the inevitable development of common sense, and I believe in Marxism as a method of interpreting reality and its great complexities. I believe in human power to transform life. I believe in socialism—that other socialism, really more humane and freer, that we could and should knead together before putting it in the oven. Another thing is whether, in reality, the majority (silent but thinking) are willing, conscious, and emotionally prepared to embark on a conquest of such magnitude, as one would wish. I think many people are.

I think that these reflections of both could be useful for the debate. If you allow me, I would like to share them with several friends, as it would help us all.

I thank you again for your sincerity and your previous interventions in this virtual forum that sincerity and courage have opened.

A hug,
Eduardo Jiménez
January 29, 2007

Eliseo Alberto Diego

Translated by M. Ouellette

My Point of View

“When I close the door, I never know whether I’m inside or outside.”
(Judith Vázquez)

I open the door. The unexpected and inexplicable (and as yet unexplained) return to TV of Jorge Papito Serguera, El Gordo Quesada, and Luis Pavón Tamayo, a.k.a. (some say) Leopoldo Ávila, has awoken a logical agitation in Cuban intellectual circles, and this email turbulence has gone beyond the Island’s servers to arrive, as a choral ensemble, on the shores of the Cuban exile, where many of us follow with attention, surprise and, almost always, anguish about what happens in Cuba, for better or for worse. Those of us on this side of the border are up-to-date, if not up-to-the-day. We belong.

On January 8, the first email correspondence between Jorge Ángel Pérez, Reynaldo González, Desiderio Navarro, Sigfredo Ariel, and Arturo Arango began to appear on the Internet. Messages came, messages went, the recipient list of such stinging correspondence (at first private, and then public) grew into a very long list of addresses in just a few hours. Reason tried to impose itself on passion without complete success because ideas were running, rushing around with vibrant impatience, without time to consolidate a firm statement: so intense was the need to advise each other of the danger. Necessity and consternation.

From Havana, these unexpected “resurrections,” or the somber interpretation of the same, were not considered (as I thought from afar) more or less alarming coincidences, but rather clear indications that “some” thought that the past was better and, in the face of the current situation of the country, unpublished and critical, drastic measures should be taken. The infected areas, for “those of the Old Guard,” were the margins of relative intellectual liberty that local writers and artists had gained thanks mostly to the renewed value of their works and also to personal stances, ever more autonomous, more independent. There are enough titles left over. Also actions.

The shout provoked the echo. In this case, if the echo reverberated from wall to wall it was due to the enormous and thick retaining walls that “official history” has tried to raise throughout thirty years of distorting truth for its own benefit. The shriek bounces and rebounds; it pleases some and weighs on others. At times, the resonance is more bewildering than the shout. Just five minutes of Cubavisión prime time entirely dedicated to praising the man (Luis Pavón) who still carries on his conscience the responsibility (not exclusively) of the worst period of cultural politics of the government and the Communist Party of Cuba, was more than enough to open old wounds. Memory has a heart. Memory can also have heart attacks. One day later, Tuesday, a surge of messages overflowed the banks of the cyber-dialogue, and the first handkerchiefs

emerged from the bowler hats of exile—almost all in support. From the pigeon loft where I have lived for 17 years, I sent this email to Reynaldo Gonzalez:

“Dear Reynaldo: Messenger pigeons arrive at my rooftop flat in Mexico City from Havana with references, or parts thereof, to the anger that has been unleashed on the Island by the televised resurrection of Pavón. I listen, excited, to the choir of dignified people. Count on my voice, my scars, and my words: add my anger to that of friends. May the waters return to their level and loose judgements not stir up the wasps’ nest; although, if they sting our memory, let’s call bread ‘bread’ and wine, of course, ‘wine.’ I feel I am on the Island and together with you all as always. If you can, give a hug from me to everyone—to Antón, to Desiderio, to Arturo, to Sigfredo. First to you. Lichi.”

In his response, quick and brief, Reynaldo asked me for “positive energy.” The author of *Siempre la muerte* [*Always Death*] was right to ask me for “positive energy.” I understood that the choir was gaining new voices. Most didn’t question the possible motives of such a ridiculous return to the past in depth, but rather expressed their “solidarity” with writers who had dared to raise a hand and send out the alarm, on time and in haste. At least for me, the solidarity concept continues to have deep meaning: it’s more than just a word.

However, something must have happened that Tuesday night (they say an urgent meeting in the Ministry of Culture), because on Wednesday the 10th the debate grew quiet, and a heavy silence settled on Havana. Perhaps “the misunderstanding” was cleared up. Maybe. Who knows? Perhaps the injustice wasn’t as grave as we thought. Having seen the case and tried the evidence, it wouldn’t be a bad solution worse. In silencing Havana, some took advantage of the recess to bolt.

Encuentro en la Red gave a space to various critics who are too severe, in my opinion, unjust and for many reasons inappropriate, with self-sufficient resentfulness, that intersperse. I say there are jabs of intolerable tension among undeniable truths. I respect and admire José Prats Sariol and Jorge Luis Arcos. They are my friends. I don’t know Duanel Díaz personally, but that’s not necessary to appreciate his intelligence and analytical rigor; it’s enough to read his writing. As they say in Mexico, colloquially and without offense, I have the suspicion that the three missed an excellent opportunity to be silent.

It was not, it is not, the moment to delve into a past that we, its witnesses, remember painfully, and to look for the big culprits and name them at our own risk. We would all lose this inappropriate and suicidal bet. Who doesn’t know the rules of the game by heart? There’s no need to recall them. They haven’t changed in 48 years, or they have varied only slightly. What has changed are the players on the field and the spectators in the stands, neither the managers nor the judges. They remain there, on the bench, the old executioners. But we are in this game, not out of it. “He does not want to be a hero / not even the romantic around whom / a legend could be woven / but he is chained to this

life and, what terrifies him even more / fatally condemned to his era,” said Heberto Padilla in his poem *El hombre al margen* [*The Man on the Margin*].

Some accept it, others don't. Why be embarrassed if this is (was, and will be) our life? The life that both those who stayed and those who for some reason decided to leave—or they kicked us out—had to live. In complex situations like this, how much we miss those who are dead! How we miss Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, our irreplaceable Titón, as smiling as he was brilliant! What would he have said? And Jesús Díaz? I seem to hear him: he snorts! And Moreno Friginals? And Lezama from Trocadero 162? Gastón Baquero warned us, with the innocence of a fish that leaves us its testament written in the sand, that “culture is a place to meet,” and that clear-sighted motto turned into the *raison d'être* for the magazine *Encuentro*.

Also from the magazines *Temas* and *Criterios*, each in their own way. I would have asked the opinion of Santiago Álvarez, Reynaldo Arenas, or Guillermo Rosales; of Mirta Aguirre or Juan Marinello; of Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, Guillermo Cabrera Infante, or Nicolás Guillén. And although I might not have shared their judgments or premonitions, I would have taken them into account, because “respect for different opinions,” as in Martí, is also something I am a fanatic about.

I will not try to respond in detail to the articles of Prats, Arcos, and Díaz. They needed to write them and express their points of view, well thought out with the advantages that an exercise in reflection provides, and not with the light logic of someone who writes an electronic SOS on the fly. I am only putting forward, through the same Internet path, a pair or trio of observations, and I'm sending them to the long list of senders involved in the matter.

For my good friend Pepe Prats Sariol, “[W]hat is not transparent or insinuated in the Aristotelian rhetoric of the reports against the media's homage to the three Pavóns [Pavón, Serguera, and Quesada] is, simply, if they have already lost their little remnant of faith in the dome of Power. This is, it seems, what eludes them.” Who knows? Revolutionaries also can “lose their faith” and still feel committed to what has been, until today, their main reason for living. Hope is a lifeline for many.

To the author of the excellent and little-known novel, *Guanabo Gay*, my favorite among his books, it is evident “that the falcons have flown the coop,” and I predict that in a few weeks we will know if there will be changes “in the officials directing the Government's cultural policy” or not. And one wonders, without anticipating ahead of time, *Are we seeing the renewal of the undisguised repression of artists and writers that the Power knows to be dissidents? Did limbo end?* Yes, without a doubt, for the time being (I think), purgatory is over, that field of bad weather without visible leaders, angels, or demons, in the middle of the sky between heaven and hell. So, are they really dissidents? No. Dissidents on the Island are closed in prison or in their houses, valiant, besieged by the same press that today silences the controversy unleashed by the resurrection of dangerous figures, corralled within fences of repudiation. Pepe Prats knows it well; he was one of the few that defended and aided our brother Raúl Rivero from his wooden house in the neighborhood of Santos Suárez.

Jorge Luis Arcos doesn't stop being astonished. For him it is "simply incredible" that this means denying what to him seems "evident": that the events do not "respond to a strategy of power as it was in the past and as it is in the present," and it leads him to suppose "that a considerable part of Cuban intellectuals take it for granted that the current regime is going to continue existing with them in it, in all their varied range of complicity, silence, opportunism, or even happy approval." The gradation that Arcos proposes is no different, but rather repetitive. He forgets to mention that, in spite of the sorrows and "due to the many blows that life gives you," as Fayad Jamis said, many Cuban intellectuals are revolutionaries. And they have the same rights as us not to be.

Duanel Díaz focuses his attacks against what is expressed in Desiderio Navarro's letters and inverts the spyglass to exaggerate his own sentences, those of Duanel, as if the amplification of a truth was enough to sustain it, while forgetting that, misunderstood, reality seen through a magnifying glass at times only serves to distort it, not to rationalize it. Díaz strictly guarantees that the Revolution does not allow for "critical conscience": that to "really criticize it, one has to be placed outside the game, get out of his own language: pass from the use of 'Fidel' to calling him 'Castro'. As long as 'Fidel' exists, not only as a physical being but also as a concept that provides legitimacy, the symmetry between 'politicians' and 'intellectuals' that Navarro suggests turns out to be false. In fact, there are no 'politicians' in Cuba since there are neither parties nor parliament."

What is serious is not that there are no "parties" but that there is only one—plus an Assembly of Popular Power composed almost in its whole of the militants of that single party. At these heights of the "Party," after so much rain on a flood in Havana as in Miami, after having barely heard the proposal to choose between "Fidel" (as the "revolutionaries" do) or calling him "Castro" (as his adversaries do), considering both alternatives is a symptom of theoretical obfuscation.

Many years ago, during a visit to a work center in the port of Havana, during those exorcisms prior to the Fourth Congress of the Communist Party, Titón and I were listening to a high-ranking official, who came out with this Musketeer nonsense: "All for one and one for all, or what is the same thing: divide and you will conquer." Which demonstrates, as if necessary, that the extremes meet.

The classic slogan that the unit is equal to its opposite: when they are matched, both strategies cancel each other out. What it's about now is to add: the one who subtracts loses. It would be a very serious mistake to make the wrong opponent because there is the possibility of ending up being our own enemies. The ones who only see spots on the sun don't count with me. Someone warned us: "Whoever seeks the truth deserves the punishment of finding it."

I close the door.

Eliseo Alberto Diego
Mexico

Emilio Hernández Valdés

Translated by Regina Anavy and Gustavo Loredó

Dear Desiderio,

Since Jorge Ángel's initial message, I have followed with increasing interest, astonishment, and indignation the escalation of exhumations of figures who were, as many have already said, nothing more than complacent and even joyous executors of a policy that left so many tears and losses not only in the sphere of culture, education, and even sports, because there it was also felt, although perhaps to a lesser extent, but also in the rest of the sectors of national life.

As it didn't seem appropriate at first for me to speak out, because I didn't want anyone to think that my wounds are still bleeding or fall into complaints and personal lamentations about what happened, I considered it better to let others, who can better guide the protest in its essence, so that the profusion of the forest that has grown so much wouldn't prevent us from seeing the trees.

Everything continues to show that it wasn't chance or ingenuity, much less lack of control or ignorance in all this. It's nothing more than a test of strength and perhaps an early and anticipated riot by those who think their time has come to leave their bastions again to impose their criteria, styles, and excesses. Unfortunately, they have chosen a bad time, but they were the ones who made the choice and given this, the eternal postponement is unacceptable. But, in my opinion, their analysis of the circumstances, of the context, has been terrible: "If they weren't able to do anything before, they let it 'happen' without doing anything because they were and are jerks"; they were wrong, because "We, those of that time, are no longer the same," nor the country or the new generations either.

It's not about settling scores, asking for heads to fall, or taking over the Bastille. It's simply that the nation belongs to everyone, including many who are no longer here because they were made to leave. "We put them on the steps of the plane," as an interviewee said in that series that was made for a TV anniversary, entitled *With the Last Breath*, if I remember correctly. And if it's about planes, the sad memory of a night in Rancho Boyeros comes to mind in which by pure chance I could see the face of fear and anguish of Ivette Hernández, the pianist, despairing because her flight was leaving on which she would travel to Prague with her son and husband—by the way a former ambassador of ours in that country—because he was one of the victims with whom Quesada had been enraged. I don't want to see an expression like that again; and just to keep within the municipality of Boyeros, nor do I want to see another artist like Carucha Camejo, who almost lost her mind, sitting on her Fontanar porch, absent, gone from the world. For the record, they were not my friends, not even acquaintances.

Therefore, it's a civic duty, as Colina pointed out, to raise the need to address this and other problems, because this project is ours, and no one has the right to exclude us due to a supposed lack of orthodoxy or different ideas. Not long ago I read with astonishment on the front page of *Granma* the statement of a high-ranking official from

the Academy of Sciences who recommended, literally, that “we must return to a single thought.” As can be seen, the problem is not limited to culture, literature, TV: the Academy is also threatened. It’s the national life. Therefore, today we cannot accept, as in the 1960s and 1970s, when almost all of us saw with fear or indifference, the misfortunes of others and remained silent, at the expense of what could one day happen to us. And that is all I have to say.

Emilio Hernández Valdés

Ena Lucía Portela

Translated by Regina Anavy and Gustavo Loredó

Dear Reynaldo González:

In the midst of the avalanche of e-mails that Luis Pavón's return to the stage has caused, I have read your opinions on the matter. I am writing just to let you know that I totally agree with you, with every word you say there. Only in some places where you refer to "errors" I understand that it's for elegance, not to be obvious. I would put "criminal acts," which of course continue and will continue to be so as long as they are not openly and publicly recognized as such, with absolute transparency, something that I fear is not going to happen in the current circumstances of our country.

I take this opportunity to tell you that it caught my attention—although not much, to tell the truth—that in the Cubavisión program "Today" on December 19, José Lezama Lima's date of birth was not included among the important anniversaries. Could it also be a coincidence? I don't think so. Nor do I believe that our lamentable television (the same one that showed mutilated versions of "Philadelphia," "Kiss of the Spider Woman," and that glorious spot to alert us to the danger of drugs as harmful substances that make young people become homosexuals; the same one that has never transmitted a single image of the gay pride parades that take place in other parts of the world, the same one that is always pleased with anti-gay jokes of the worst kind, among other niceties), is an entity apart from our culture. No, it's not. Come on, at this point in life we would have to be too naive to assume that. As our Desiderio rightly says in his magnificent and very timely article "Symptom of what?" let's ask ourselves about the causes of things; these troublemakers, to put it mildly, are signs of... something. And not exactly something good.

Dear RG, I first thought of sending you this little message privately, just for you, partly because I'm not accustomed to shouting in the agora and partly because you and I, if memory serves, don't know each other personally and... Well, I was afraid that you might perhaps misunderstand me. But then I thought that if one is going to show support and solidarity with someone who has shouted, one shouldn't do it in a low voice. So I'm sending copies to other people. I hope you don't mind.

A cordial greeting,
Ena Lucía Portela

Enrique Colina

Translated by Regina Anavy and Gustavo Loredó

I have decided to join the debate with these lines that I hope will stir a little the memory of the concern that now mobilizes us by referring to my experience related to cinema. By the way, I want to express my gratitude for the opportune and courageous denunciation that you have made, which has served to shake us up and remind us of our civic responsibility. Please acknowledge receipt.

A hug,
Enrique Colina

I directed the film program *24 por Segundo* (*24 per Second*) for Cuban TV for 32 years. The program was conceived at the ICAIC, technically produced at the ICRT, and from there submitted for approval to be broadcast nationally every week. It thus existed on the border of two organizations with dissimilar approaches to culture, politics, and ideology; that is, with a different interpretation of the precept that presided over and governs revolutionary cultural policy to this day: “Everything within the Revolution, nothing outside the Revolution.”

This affirmation, analyzed with rigor and not with the idolatry that gives the value of an article of faith to decontextualized declarations and makes them lose the historical relativity of their meaning, shows the sinister permanence that supports and gives its character of dogma to the understanding, only apparently ambiguous, of who is responsible for deciding what is or is not revolutionary, what is appropriate or not to say or discuss, the information that can or cannot be received, the right or not that one has to disagree with one or more decisions, what does or doesn't correspond to a revolutionary morality, and so on *ad infinitum*. I would like to direct my participation in this debate to refresh, with my modest experience, the historical memory that underlies the causes of these muddled concepts.

In plain words, and without going into the contradictory aspects that any policy suffers from the imperfect human nature of its creators and from the historical coordinates in which it has to express itself and operate, for many years ICAIC signified in this country a more open, tolerant, and anti-dogmatic cultural policy, which allowed a varied cultural and recreational offering in its cinematographic programming. It also meant a production of national cinema that has tried to bear witness to its time, with greater or lesser rigor in the conceptual depth and artistic expression of its filmmakers, although always within the framework of the coordinates imposed by a censorship that has marked its unwritten taboos through a silent but well-known code, until now and with few exceptions, with more resignation suffered than fought.

ICAIC meant, above all—although not always—the resistance and recovery against the “errors” of that intolerance and dogmatism, marked by the other policy that, openly or covertly, depending on the situation and the tactical convenience of the moment, has exercised the control of the media following the direct guidelines of the Party's ideological apparatus, which, against the mystifying will of certain bureaucrats who hide

behind their invisibility, isn't an abstract entity but rather a human association that holds the virtues and defects of men with names and surnames that make right or wrong decisions. This trend has historically manifested itself aggressively against culture and its creators and has represented during certain periods the expression of a concrete and powerful official policy against which this other conception, branded hypercritical, lazy, soft, elitist, and *perestroikista*, has had to fight to survive and, in more closed circles, was considered anti-patriotic and counter-revolutionary. A conception that is also, and to the misfortune of the inquisitors, part of that current of ethical thought integrated into a genuinely revolutionary process that has sought not to turn into a negationist paradox the will to offer education and culture to its people and then deny them active intellectual participation in the recognition and transformation of their reality, not only obeying or following guidelines, but giving their opinions, agreeing or disagreeing as a critical conscience of their own status as citizens.

Immersed in this context, simplified by the need for synthesis of these lines and because we all know what we're talking about, *24 por Segundo* passed through the confluence of all the white, gray, and black periods, all marked by systematic mistrust of the spontaneity of an opinion, the direct language that calls things by their name, the critical reference that departs from an official *diktat* and analyzes a phenomenon in its ideological complexity. In a veiled effort to make it disappear, the program changed its time and channel countless times. Many times I had to argue heatedly to defend its conception and not a few times protest its suspension. From the sublime to the ridiculous and for the most dissimilar reasons, the program didn't go on air either because of the appearance of a nude or a sex scene dramatically justified in the fragment of a film that served to illustrate a more significant theme; by the image of a foreign actor or the mention of a director who somewhere had signed a dark declaration against the Revolution, unbeknownst to the viewing public, of course; for a bad word said in a timely manner but that "per se" contradicted the principle that the medium should promote good education; for the affirmation, heretical in the days of brotherhood with the socialist countries, that most of the films from these film makers didn't establish communication with the general public; and of course, for many other considerations that I don't remember now. However, the most conflictive area of the program was the comments on topics related to national cinema that addressed controversial aspects of reality, in contradiction to the aseptic image historically spread by the information media. Thus, the content of the program was censored many times, and its broadcast was prohibited due to my refusal to cut what bothered the small and large censors who applied the regulation of what could or could not be said publicly, always under the pretext of ensuring the educational and ideological character of the medium. That is to say, undervaluing the much preached high cultural level of our people who, according to the standards of these watchmen of revolutionary orthodoxy, should be "oriented." This is the reason for the deformed policy of giving the population pre-digested concepts. The interpretation is entrusted to the specialist, the analysis carried out by those who know and are endorsed to tell people how they have to think, although demagogically they are invited to form their own opinion. The specialist, be he art critic, journalist, historian, sociologist, scientist, artist, politician, or whatever, is needed as an instrument of revelation and not in his deformed mediation as a damper of

contradictions, a concealer of reality, or a substitute for the necessary debate and participation of the listener.

Likewise, many Cuban films were and are prohibited on TV because they don't conform to the pattern of ideological stifling advocated by a univocal vision that rejects, as judge and jury, the essential principle that keeps a Revolution alive and enduring: dialectics, recognition of contradictions, and the need for change. A brief count made without much rigor and only as an example reveals more than 20 Cuban films produced in different decades, especially those produced after the crisis of the '90s, which have never been shown on TV. Considering the number of cinemas closed due to the deterioration of their facilities and others that struggle to stay open despite the poor quality of their projections, the lack of air conditioning, and the terrible state of their seats and hygienic conditions, in addition to the difficulty of transportation that has also affected frequenting them, it's worth wondering how many potential viewers our cinematography loses due to this unwritten or officially recognized prohibition that alienates its production, conceived by and for its national audience. The list may include others and perhaps some more recent ones that I unintentionally forget. I'm not mentioning the films for their artistic quality or their conceptual rigor; there are good, bad, and average ones, and I don't think that the reason why they are not exhibited is due to aesthetic considerations. There are plenty of references to poor quality foreign films shown on TV.

However, there are prohibited films that deserve a separate consideration and justify my opinion that there should be an open debate with this appearance of the ghost of the *pavonato* and its other executor, whom the "parameterized" called "Torquesada." As far as I know, he has been serving as the secretary of the PCC cell and advisor in the area for television programming for several years. It's surprising that a person linked to such serious errors recognized by the Party as those committed during that period could occupy a position of such responsibility in the most important media outlet in this country, and in an area that decides and watches over the content of its programming! I repeat, therefore, with this well-assimilated parenthesis, why I consider that this debate should be opened to a deeper reflection on the ideological roots that feed this latent tendency, a constant in the historical experience of all the socialist regimes of the 20th century, which has been tarnished, over and over again, with sectarian and repressive distortions and deviations. Those of us who support the debate welcome the healthy expression of a deep humanism to which we all aspire.

An open debate that is managed and authoritarian will only generate apathy, simulation, or rejection, and I think that, like ostriches, we won't get any benefit from this situation if we don't discuss this. To begin with, I would like to single out the film that marked a schism in relations between Cuban filmmakers, ICAIC, and the political leadership of our country: *Alice in Wondertown*, directed by Daniel Díaz Torres, a director who, together with Rolando Díaz and Fernando Pérez, worked for years at the Latin American ICAIC Newscast, under the direction of Santiago Álvarez.

There, between 1977 and 1979, in those periods of critical openness against wrongdoing that regularly mark the cycles of official rectification of government policies, there were

innumerable monothematic, critical newscasts on national current affairs, with demonstrations of institutional disorganization, carelessness, irresponsibility, economic waste, corruption, etc., until the order came again to stop this type of criticism marked by an increasingly bitter irony due to the persistence and dimension of the problems, whose economic consequences, social and political, exploded in the 1980s with the Mariel exodus. Seen now, those newscasts are striking because of their timeliness; the recurrence of many of their topics still persists despite the fact that 30 years have passed since they were reported. They were and are the product more of systemic dysfunctions than of the individual inefficiency of unconscious administrators. In the infested waters of this murky well, maintained in the 1980s before and after the policy of rectifying errors and negative trends. The absurd, irrational demonstrations that pretended to change the policy with indictments against officials—supposedly the individuals responsible for these errors—didn't eradicate the causes but contributed to accentuating and preparing the path of deficiencies that culminated in the terrible decade of the Special Period, heroic for the resistance and nobility of the people, but also tragic for the lives of many. The filmmakers drank from this fountain once again to warn, admonish, and criticize that which should be submitted to an urgent debate.

Remember that already at the time there was an Association Hermanos Saíz with a generation of young filmmakers who mostly emigrated from the country in the 1990s due to the frustration of inserting their documentaries into a public debate that questioned what they blamed as shortcomings in official cinema and that, once they tried to assimilate in the structures created, collided with censorship from the same source that had encouraged them to face the supposed passivity of the oldest directors of ICAIC, apparently already tamed and trained. Another story of manipulation of this trend that ended up distorted for its maker but didn't change the loss of that generation.

The consequence of the appearance of Alicia [*Alice in Wondertown*], its prohibition and consequent counterrevolutionary and fifth-columnist demonization for its subversive message, generated the most explosive cultural conflict that the revolutionary process would face, internally and internationally, at the moment of its highest economic and social vulnerability. The low profile, the determined and consistent attitude of the Cuban filmmakers who opposed us took precedence over our passion and ethical convictions. We had no leaders to guide us, and a measure of the Council of State led to the decision to dismantle the ICAIC and turn it into a dependency of the ICRT and, by transitive nature, into an appendix of the Party's ideological apparatus, then led by the infamous Carlos Aldana, today anathema but yesterday an arrogant and ambitious commissioner who treated us as enemies of the Revolution. In a measured way that prevented outside manipulation, the filmmakers avoided the consummation of this wrong behind closed doors. Then came the political vindication of the film and its director; it was exhibited at a film festival and the chapter was closed. Before the ban, the film had been shown publicly for only four days in a few cinemas in the capital, with a mobilization in the municipalities of the PCC's militants so that they would go to the cinema and react to those spectators who liked the film.

Inspired by real events, documented over and over again in the weekly ICAIC newscasts of the seventies and in its second round of the eighties, and without its satirical

hyperbole surpassing the absurdity of everyday social life lived by Cubans on the street, the experience of *Alice* questioned the infallibility of a single judgment that decides what is or is not revolutionary. “Within the Revolution everything, against the Revolution nothing” emerged as a Solomonic commitment proclaimed in different historical circumstances, when the Revolution had not been consolidated and was the object of invasions and sabotage that threatened to frustrate the attempt to create a state of social justice, when it became necessary to maintain the union and creative participation of intellectuals within a framework of trust in the political vanguard that had created a multiform cultural space, when the revolutionary project was still a dream and the transformation had not been consummated at the level of reality. Well, what now? Now almost half a century has passed and there you can see the unsealed scars of the mistakes made by those who have interpreted this article of faith by exercising intolerance and repression against those who also hide behind this fluctuating motto to have the right to express their interpretation of their Revolution, what they have in their hearts, in their thoughts, and what remains valuable and recoverable in what has been built, not what needs to move and change to enter this time of change, in this socialism of the XXI century so heralded and necessary that it means shaking off the narrow, dusty, and sectarian criteria that claim to have the truth by the horns.

Then came *Strawberry and Chocolate*, protected by the umbrella of the political error that had been committed with *Alice*, with the endorsement of Titón’s artistic personality and with the intelligent support of Alfredo Guevara to maneuver in a sea agitated by the spasms of the Special Period. *Strawberry*, co-directed by the also renowned filmmaker Juan Carlos Tabío, had a successful international career, favorably endorsing the political prestige of the Revolution for its ability to keep the channels of critical questioning open despite the difficult circumstances in which the country lived. In Cuba, the reception of the national public that was able to see it showed that it shared its message of tolerance and human solidarity, alien to the revenge of those who retreated and had to put up with it. However, *Strawberry* was only shown in theaters and has never been shown on television. It would be surprising if it weren’t because it directly denounces the problem of the period of homophobic “parameterization,” and some of its executors still today have decision-making power in the programming of this medium, which belongs to the people and not to any reactionary trend that debases the humanist values that have been and are inspiring this Revolution, at least, as I understand it.

Here I could also dwell on what happened with *Guantanamera*, the last work by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, co-directed with Juan Carlos Tabío, which was branded as counterrevolutionary due to the rancor and mistrust of schemers specialized in sowing discord within the artistic sector at the highest level, and only vindicated by the position of intellectuals who came out in defense of the memory of Titón, the best and highest exponent of Cuban revolutionary cinema.

I have made this account, without a doubt riddled with insufficiencies and perhaps poorly expressed concerns, and at the risk of appearing incendiary for some and temporizing for others, because I feel that the ultimate goal of this debate is to turn the analysis of the past into the retort of the present where the future of our country is cooking. There will be a meeting that needs to break the public isolation of this debate.

It is unacceptable that the communique published in *Granma* by the UNEAC Secretariat turns out to be so parsimonious and bureaucratic, using the same political jargon that speaks to us of annexationists who seek to appropriate this debate and excluding reference to its causes, making, as always, the concealment of the essence of the problem, the same thing that someone jokingly mentioned as “...and I shit on you!” I believe that these signed emails are already a clear political signal that an opening is imposed that goes beyond verifying and ratifying what we all know has been an insult and an attack on our culture. Citizens need to know, and there are many things that prevent citizens from finding out what is going on behind their backs and that nevertheless affects their lives. The “mystery syndrome” that was questioned in a Congress of Journalists 20 years ago: will it continue to be activated?

Without public repercussion, the rectification would also be inconsequential and hypocritical. It is the Party that controls the information policy and programming of national TV, which controls its official organ, the *Granma* newspaper, and also controls, through its ideological apparatus, all the rest of the publications and radio stations in this country. Blunders have been committed by some high officials, and a succinct note that always finds a scapegoat is not enough.

The many rectifications that have occurred throughout our history have had the inveterate and unhealthy habit of sweeping the dirt under the rug. It's not a question, I insist, of demanding, humiliating, or justifying accounts from anyone, but an institution that exercises political power in the name of what has been an ideal for us and has shaped the meaning and political choice of our short lives must assume with transparency the permanence in its ranks of this trend that allows itself, at a time like the present, to ignite a provocative spark, whose only virtue has been to fuel an awareness that it must be fought in its very essence. The future of trust depends on transparency towards this and other issues. The assimilable legacy of what we incorporate as an enriching experience for the future of our people, who have that inalienable right above all, depends on the opening horizon of that historical and present information.

For this reason, I propose that this debate be broadcast on TV and, if not live, that it be edited under the supervision of three members, without official representation or public office, and that they be elected by vote at that meeting.

I think that these emails should also be published and whoever wants to question them should also respond in writing. It would be a sign not of weakness but of confidence in a true rectification, and it would give an unusual vigor to a battle of ideas within and about the problems that are omitted on TV. It would be truly controversial, with round, square, or rectangular tables that look inward with the same critical rigor with which the problems of the imperfect and crooked world outside Cuba are analyzed. There would be dissenting points of view and discussions animated by the desire to call things by their name, against leaders who respond publicly to journalists who ask them uncomfortable questions. The solution for these pressing issues depends not only on the imperialist blockade or on good faith, but also on correct decisions that demonstrate their efficiency not only on an ideological level but also in practical solutions for the problems, in an

improved quality of life, and the recognition of the inalienable right of citizens to demand accounts from their representatives. I'm not naïve, and I understand that if there is a desire for change, this will result from a progressive, delicate, and complicated readjustment in the correlation of internal forces, inside and outside the Party, which will necessarily require an honest and courageous contribution from its intellectuals. And I'm not just talking about artists, but the thaw has to start somewhere and I consider this situation appropriate, although some may consider it dangerous and explosive because the valves are blocked, as is obvious, and under pressure accumulated over the years.

I also propose that our films be put on National TV, and if those who prohibit them consider them politically inappropriate, they should say so publicly. This can't be postponed. The light that we radiate shouldn't continue to be fueled eternally only by the humanism of our doctors or because of the brilliance of our education, of which I am proud and know very well that it counts for a lot. However, there are contradictions that undermine the democratic sense of the system and its economic efficiency, which cry out for reforms and internal changes. Hope for the future is not a bottomless barrel, and resources are needed to sustain and preserve the entire scaffolding of social justice. For people to produce and create wealth, they have to be stimulated materially, and the doors to their creativity and initiative must be open. If we continue assuming that the State controls and takes care of everything when it's not able to do so, if we don't face the distortions we all recognize and go to the core of the problems, the essential issue of these concerns, I sincerely believe that the light will eventually go out, and we will remain only as a historical reference of chivalry, resistance, and dignity, but we will lose the battle.

Enrique Colina
January 25, 2007

Below is a list of films not shown on National TV.

ALICIA EN EL PUEBLO DE MARAVILLAS [*Alice in Wondertown*]
ADORABLES MENTIRAS [*Adorable Lies*]
FRESA Y CHOCOLATE [*Strawberry and Chocolate*]
EL ELEFANTE Y LA BICICLETA [*The Elephant and the Bicycle*]
MADAGASCAR [*Madagascar*]
LA VIDA ES SILBAR [*Life is for Whistling*]
SUITE HABANA [*Havana Suite*]
PON TU PENSAMIENTO EN MI [*Think of Me*]
AMOR VERTICAL [*Vertical Love*]
LA OLA [*The Wave*]
NADA [*Nothing*]
TRES VECES DOS [*Three Times Two*]
VIDEO DE FAMILIA [*Family Video*]
HACERSE EL SUECO [*Acting Stupid*]
PERFECTO AMOR EQUIVOCADO [*Perfectly Wrong Love*]
GUANTANAMERA [*Guantanamo*]

LISTA DE ESPERA [Waiting List]
DIARIO DE MAURICIO [Mauricio's Diary]
AUNQUE ESTES LEJOS [Although You're Far]
ENTRE CICLONES [Between Cyclones]
MARIA ANTONIA [Maria Antonia]
PAPELES SECUNDARIOS [Secondary Papers]
LEJANÍA [Distance]
TECHO DE VIDRIO [Glass Ceiling]
UN DIA DE NOVIEMBRE [One Day in November]
HASTA CIERTO PUNTO [Up to a Certain Point]
LA VIDA EN ROSA [Life in Rose]
BARRIO CUBA [A Cuban Neighborhood]
MIEL PARA OCHÚN [Honey for Ochún]
LAS NOCHES DE CONSTANTINOPLA [The Nights of Constantinople]

It would be worth making a list of documentaries made by young filmmakers who also suffer from this unwritten censorship. It would be sad if their efforts and concerns, and I am talking about some truly significant films, were relegated to the consolation of presenting them only once in an annual *Muestra* competition that would omit any type of censorship, to later circulate on records or cassettes from hand to hand, or by this compensatory virtual space, which is restricted and insufficient.

Enrique Pineda Barnet

Translated by Regina Anavy

The attached text by Anton Arrufat, added to the previous ones of Arturo Arango, Reynaldo González, and a significant list of valuable Cuban intellectuals, express my thoughts in such a way that they save my words. I thank history that, on days like these, we can declare our dignity with memory in this way.

This doesn't mean that I'm not able to say the same things with the same energy, it's that I'm filming.

Enrique Pineda Barnet
January 8, 2007

Message from Enrique Pineda Barnet to Reynaldo González

Dear Rey:

You know I'm filming and that locks me up and misinforms me. I have received with fear, everything that is resurrected from Pavón. I have insomnia again. I am between nightmares of beaten friends, of the Guignol assassinated, of those persecuted, those who fled, those who are terrified, of phones with broken sentences, innocent documents burned or hidden, lost poems, and mutilated dreams. Words and signs reappear, like burns marked on the skin: parametrization, UMAP, censorship, condemnation, advice, witches, Pavón, Quesada, and their inheritances in repudiation rallies or their consequences, congresses....and etcetera.

Please keep me informed with this documentation, as it's a reliable and secure source.

With my love always,
Enrique

Another message from Enrique Pineda Barnet

I have received with terror everything that is resurrected from Pavón. I have insomnia again. I am between nightmares of beaten friends, of Guignol assassinated, of those persecuted, those who fled, those who are terrified, of phones with broken sentences, innocent documents burned or hidden, lost poems and mutilated dreams. Words, signs reappear, like marked burns on the skin: parameterization, UMAP, censorship, condemnation, council, witches, Pavón, Quesada, and their legacies in repudiation rallies or their consequences, congresses.... and etcetera.

Enrique Penida Barnet

Ernesto Yevgeny

Translated by Regina Anavy

The time has not yet come to criticize our comrades on the island, says Eliseo Alberto Diego in an article that is surprisingly naive. Momentum is not momentum, he says. At certain times, and I think this is the case, so much naivety can be more harmful than praiseworthy. It conditions the exercise of truth, submerges controversy in cheap sentimentality, dilutes the critical capacity that defines the intellectual profession in the name of the culture of “encounter,” good feelings and the *ubi sunt* of cowardly old glories, because Titón, Lezama, Jesús Díaz and Moreno Friginals were, among other much more memorable things, examples of intellectual cowardice. (Some, like Jesús and Moreno, had time to acknowledge it publicly. Others passed by in the name of the circumstances, which doesn’t mean that we have to do the same).

In short, Lichi’s article is anthological because of how unfortunate it is. I extract this paragraph: “It was not, it is not, the time to delve deeply into a past that its witnesses remember in pain, and look for major culprits, name them at risk. We would all lose that suicidal and inappropriate bet. Who doesn’t know “by heart” the rules of the game? Do I remember them? Needless. For 48 years they have not changed. Or they have changed very little. Those who have changed are the players on the field and the spectators in the stands, not the managers or the judges. They remain, on the bench, the old executioners. But we are inside that game, not outside. ‘He does not want to be a hero, / not even the romantic around whom / a legend could be woven; / but he is condemned to this life and, what terrifies him most, / fatally condemned to his time,’,” said Heberto Padilla in his poem The man on the sidelines. Damn, Lichi, that poem by Padilla, in case you haven’t noticed, is a criticism. And even a self-criticism. (Duanel Díaz has already replied, and it doesn’t seem that he is going to stop).

Ernest Yevgeny

Esteban Morales

Translated by M.J. Porter

Dear Rogelio,

I think your observations are very wise. As you well know, I was the Director of the School of Political Sciences and the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities two years later, with the ashes still hot from the “last battle” and the ropes brandished to hang the “children of the Revolution.” The Saturns were walking around our Colina at that time. A dark period, which luckily is now over today and to which we’re not going to allow anyone to make us return.

We, the revolutionary intellectuals of this country, cannot go back to the cavernous dark period that took place in those years in ideology, culture, and mass media. The attempts to resurrect the dead on television, when it could confuse so many and even change history, are typical of opportunists.

The Revolution has matured a lot. But we must be alert, because it’s precisely the moments that we are experiencing these months that lend themselves to revenge, the dusting off of corpses, and the opening of graves. I don’t think we’re facing naivety. And if they’re naive, they can’t have the power to appear on television media.

Greetings,
Dr. Esteban Morales

Esther Suarez Duran

Translated by Regina Anavy

During the late 1980s, I conducted a study—almost completely unpublished—on the authors of drama and their production processes, based on a sample that included several of our most prestigious playwrights. The analysis of the first results, referring to the frequency and rhythm of the completion of the texts and their release, drew my attention to a phenomenon that was unexpected for me: between 1965 and 1976 appeared what I then called the “zone of silence”: a period during which a number of my interviewees didn’t write any new text or play.

Such was the reading that could be made of the data provided by artists such as Abelardo Estorino (from 1968 to 1974 without writing any text except for the scripts for recitals in 1972 and 1974. Nothing released from 1964 to 1974); Tomás González (from 1968 to 1978 without writing and nothing released from 1965 to 1985); David Camps (nothing written from 1970 to 1975 and nothing released from 1968 to 1986); Gerardo Fullada (nothing written from 1965 to 1975); while José Milián, whose production between 1961 and 1988 added up to the enviable figure of 35 titles (13 of which corresponded to the period prior to 1970, during which he had recorded more than one work per year on three occasions), had remained without writing between 1970 and 1974 and without appearing on stage from 1970 to 1979, when another director staged one of his pieces for children with a provincial group.

Examining the matter put me in front of that chapter of ignominy that was the process of “parameterization.” As a consequence, the recent trajectory of a significant part of those whom I considered and still consider my teachers became clear to me. Paths were suddenly interrupted at their highest point. After a civil death of several years, those who had been able to return with the creation of the Ministry of Culture in 1976 would no longer be the same. We won’t know what the scene of the seventies, heir to the burst of audacity, innovation, and originality of the sixties, would have been if its organic development had not been curtailed at its dawn, in the same way that we lost the future work that was announced in the creations by Estorino, Tomás González, René Santana, or José Milián until the beginning of the seventies, among many others where I can add not only theater writers but also theater designers and musicians, directors, and actors.

When in 1986 Tomás shook the theatrical arena and, in particular, the students of the specialty with the staging of *Los juegos de la trastienda* [*Backstage Games*], written in 1977, it wasn’t difficult for me to see signs of a resumption of the path. It could be something tragic, since the journey had been stopped at that same point twenty years before.

In a similar way I receive Milián’s shows, especially those that the Director, Milián, has staged since 1991 with his group: *El Pequeño Teatro de La Habana* [*Havana’s Little Theater*]. The aesthetic of most of them refer us to that of *Otra vez Jehová* [*Jehovah Again*] with the story of Sodom (1968), and *La Toma de Havana por los ingleses* [*The taking of Havana by the English*] (1970), which I was lucky enough to see when I was barely fourteen years old.

Something similar, I feel, could be said about Roberto (Blanco), while the devastated landscape of the National Puppet Theater and the irremediable loss of Carucha and Pepe Camejo, together with Pepe Carril, doesn't allow us to lose sight of the crime's dimension.

I return to the playwrights. Towards 1974, Estorino culminates *La dolorosa historia del amor secreto de José Jacinto Milanés* [*The Sorrowful Story of José Jacinto Milanés' Secret Love*]. He had managed to stay connected to the theater even though his works appeared in the cursed Index together with those of Piñera, Triana, Beckett, Ionesco, and Pinter [i]. He remained in the Teatro Estudio writing scripts for the performances of *Mientras Santiago ardía* [*While Santiago burned*], *Que hable el camarada Máuser* [*Let Comrade Máuser Speak*], and others of that style that, while claiming the political slant of the theatrical programming offered there, allowed a flexible platform for the commitment of acting talent in moments of absolute instability.

After *Ni un sí ni un no* [*Neither a Yes nor a No*] from 1981, Estorino's dramaturgy made a definitive leap in 1983 with *Morir del cuento* [*Dying from the Story*]. The experience would allow him to come back later on *La dolorosa historia ...* to tell it another way. Vague rumors arise.

Since 1967 the playwright combined writing and art direction. It isn't possible to ignore the inter-influence of both occupations, but the truth is that Estorino managed to make the leap in time; he performed a kind of ellipsis with which he managed to harmonize the personal exercise with the poetics of the new theatrical eras. With the arbitrariness terminated by a legal action—the ruling of the Supreme Court—its consequences were felt.

For decades some of these authors didn't exist for our publishers. In 1990 Milián was not published by Letras Cubanas—not even in its Minimum collection—despite having a vast and varied body of work. Something similar happened with Tomás González. *El robo del cochino* [*The Pig Robbery*], by Estorino, released in 1961, had to wait until 1980 for its publication. *Santa Camila de La Habana Vieja* [*Saint Camila of Old Havana*], by José Ramón Brene, a success on stage in 1962, was published twenty years later, in 1982.

Subsequently, I have had to refer in various articles [ii] to the parameterization process, to some of its causes (or, at least, concomitant situations), and its consequences. I share the perspective that places it in the context of a conflict of interests, with the struggle of a sector to obtain hegemony in the artistic field, which returns me to—and reaffirms—the field of ideological struggle.

I continue to think that such a practice was possible because certain ideological values were present, among them a negative vision of the intellectual, which was the opposite not only to the man of action but also excluded him from the socio-class structure (remember that at that time we were not talking about Gramsci or the presence of the petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia in the vanguard of the Revolution), while

denying him the possibility of being part, with the rest of the sectors ideologically aligned with the revolutionary process, of its critical consciousness.

We were then far from fully understanding that unity had to be built from diversity, the only way to achieve true unity. Of course, our country's history had too many bitter lessons in this regard, with libertarian epics steeped in regionalism, *caudillismo*, class and racial differences of which Spanish colonialism and Yankee neocolonialism had known how to take advantage. Insular *machismo*, of extensive ancestry in our national being, was updated in a precise image of determined virility. Homosexuality was considered a scourge and referred to a previous stage, to a capitalist social order or, at least, to a pathology.

As for the somewhat more intangible issue of religious faith, the position assumed by the Catholic Church in the face of the complex initial conditions of internal counterrevolution and external aggression had led to an adverse climate, which associated religiosity with a position alien to the interests of the Revolution and to the very notion of progress. A kind of doctrine known among us as scientific atheism, which in essence meant the absoluteness of a unique way and, in addition, the schematic way of understanding the world became one of the pillars of revolutionary ideology. Being an atheist was among the essential features of the human paradigm of the time.

Consequently, as the culmination of the First Congress of Education and Culture that took place in April 1971, the aforementioned process of artistic parameterization began, in which the parameters were related to sexuality, religiosity, relations with foreigners, and a group of other phenomena of subjective assessment, by virtue of which José Milián, for example, was separated from his position as artistic director and prohibited from developing his creative work on the grounds that his works—specifically those mentioned above—were obscene and pornographic.

When justice was restored, the victims of the ignominy were returned to the ranks of the artists. They were compensated for the salary difference of all these years; they were timidly given, individually, apologies, and a modest cloak of silence was thrown over the event. I still remember the stupefied faces of some and the astonishment and consternation of others when I alluded to the matter in one of the critical colloquium sessions that included the program of the Camagüey Theater Festival in 1986.

Subjects such as those referring to cultural politics, the relations between art and ideology, between art and politics, art and society, the generations in history and in art, the place and role of the intellectual in society, among other things, demand a space in the circulation of ideas and social debate. At the macro level, we need a permanent context of honest, rigorous, and, moreover, updated reflection on our social practice by talking about absolutely everything. Meanwhile, the exchange of opinions, knowledge, and intelligent and responsible debate must animate the geography of the cultural system.

On the occasion of the last edition of the Havana Theater Festival, dedicated to the seventy years of theatrical renewal in Cuba, I elaborated some ideas about the saga of

Teatro Estudio. I say no more, the beginning of that article speaks for itself. Take these words by way of introduction.

Esther Suarez Duran

[i] Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Estorino is among our National Awards for Literature. Together with Roberto Blanco and René Santana, he is on the list of the National Theater Awards.

[ii] See *Otro largo viaje hacia la noche* [Another Long Journey into Night], in *Boletín Indagación* [Inquiry Bulletin], No. 6, 2002, *Centro Nacional de Investigaciones de las Artes Escénicas, La Habana* [National Center for Performing Arts Research, Havana]; *Teatro cubano* [Cuban Theater] 1936-1958: *El maderamen de la herejía* [The Framework of Heresy], in the magazine *La gaceta de Cuba* [Cuba Gazette], No. 4, 2004; *Cuarenta años del Teatro Nacional de Guiñol* [Forty Years of the National Puppet Theater], in *La gaceta de Cuba* [Cuba Gazette], No. 4, 2003; *Teatro Estudio: la espiral infinita* [Studio Theater: The Infinite Spiral], in *Tables*, No. 1, 2006.

Eva

Translated by Regina Anavy

It's good that different generations are speaking.

You know very well my position and commitment to the construction of more tolerant and free formulas of coexistence, wherever they may be, and in this case with our society.

I congratulate any process of self-recognition, memory, and historical justice as healthy, as conflictive and painful as it may be, and this unusual beginning of debate makes me hopeful, even though I still don't know exactly why. The truth is that I haven't experienced many Cuban historical events either, but those I have experienced have made me feel that the consequences are heavy for all of us who inhabit this island, from any sector, origin, and generation, although in different ways.

Even more so when they are facts and processes that don't have due recognition and are not given balance or justice. And there I see the worst of the problems.

To what extent are we not permeated by intolerant and even repressive attitudes, as artists, communicators, educators, or citizens, if we have taken and take as "normal" or at least not publicly and openly reprehensible, the repressive, undemocratic, and perverted policies and institutional methods?

Unfortunately, apart from any five-year gray period and the minimum understanding of its consequences, I have suffered like many from the culture of intolerance, censorship, harassment, and other aberrations from institutions and from people with different institutional positions.

That is why I point out that on many occasions I've seen people with institutional responsibilities or careerist airs exercise abuses of power, repressive intrigues, and other clearly fascist attitudes, who paradoxically tried or believed in (it's possible to justify anything) "alternatives," with aesthetic projections that are apparently progressive and liberating. I've also seen self-proclaimed revolutionaries with whom there is no possible agreement, who immediately, and after demolishing people in the name of their particular vision of revolutionary duty, have taken advantage of the "faster" way and, in other latitudes, have thought to publicly put themselves on the other side (when evidently they were never on our side, all without discrimination or exclusion).

In my particular case, every time I've tried to debate these ideas I've encountered blind and revengeful attitudes, which take refuge in atrocious chauvinism and in even more intolerance of the type "You don't have the right to express an opinion because you were born in another country; you can speak out whenever you want, so if you don't like it, go away and don't criticize; doesn't your country of origin have problems?" I have tried to understand, but "it's not easy."

Few people know, but among them I tell you, that my personal positions with this country have reached quotas of great involvement and, unfortunately, also on many occasions, serious problems. And that I feel like a Cuban citizen, with or without nationality, and not because I dance *casino*, am obsessed with jet skis, or drink soup while waiting for September 28 [anniversary of the Committees for the Defense of the Revolution]. And of course I'm a citizen of the world.

How many times have we argued that there is no single Cuban identity, pre-drawn and exclusive, just as there is no single way to be a revolutionary, no matter how many famous phrases can inspire us in our own ethical construction. Ultimately and broadly speaking, "Cuban" is what is done in Cuba now, and "revolutionary" is what revolutionizes human progress and not what stagnates or goes backwards, etc. But this enlightened despotism that today speaks to us about the massification of education and culture doesn't treat us as grownups, and thinks, criticizes, and decides for us and for our good, just as it decides what we should consume and what pot to cook in.

Yes, I am, despite the damage to my pocketbook and family finances, one of those who has refused to constrain myself in dubious judgments and institutional schemes, among others that of "evaluating" myself artistically. I haven't missed your call.

I simply responded out of righteous rebellion in the face of so many schemes and exclusions, in the face of a measure that I currently consider obsolete in the way it exists. My curriculum, prestige, and merits were highly recognized in the past at the convenience of the institutions, and yet now that I'm trying to achieve some difficult quotas of artistic and pedagogical independence, I'm forced to pass elitist tests that don't respond to the real result and effectiveness of my work.

Amazing. I also respond to another true rebellion against the bourgeois and prejudiced structures of the artistic collective (in this case the stage), in which we demand freedoms but at the same time are repressors. And this is my greater concern. I have been disassociating myself as much as possible, with high doses of loneliness, from as much institutionalism as I can, and it's true that the possibilities are narrowed, sometimes to devastating points, but I breathe easier. How not to?

I also decided to be more aware of my irreverence in my private, pedagogical, and artistic life, and uphold a sense of humor as a tool for analysis, self-criticism, tolerance, debate, and consolation. It's difficult.

We laugh when someone slips on a banana peel, but we can't stand a hint of laughter at our own falls, even when it's healthy laughter, which helps mitigate the pain when you fall on your ass. So I decided to keep laughing at myself, since I stumble so much, and of course smile at almost everything that falls (irreverence is highly censored too).

Especially now that I have a son of school age and experience through him the practice of indoctrination versus education, of instruction and dogmatism versus tolerance and critical thinking, verticalism, and passivity versus participation, I think, isn't this the easiest and most traveled path of the parameterization that we now denounce?

To what extent have we not been and are we educated, and in the best of cases almost callously, to be repressed and repressors? Why don't we feed the word "culture" in all its dimensions, beyond professional executors and elites, and talk about the culture of coexistence, family culture, neighborhood culture, community culture, the culture of participation; and how many last names seem significant in our lives? Will we be able to begin the difficult process of recognizing ourselves as active or passive subjects of an intolerant education, and for the intolerance, will we have the will and the capacity to recognize each personal and group process in which we have been and perhaps still are executioners and victims on any scale?

You are right that parameterization has been and still is in our lives, as citizens and not only as intellectuals and artists. And I'm very afraid that the cleaning process will be long. I believe that we should monitor our passive and intolerant tendencies daily, each one himself, like washing your face when you wake up.

We consider the unanimous, sometimes the majority, but we still have a long way to go to accept the possibility of respect and consideration for minorities and diversity.

There have been and there are thousands of excuses not to face it, to justify and justify ourselves, to delay the democratic process of healing. We have been heard and we are many, some not so well-known or public, perhaps all; and there is no shortage among them of those who want to live committed to progress, freedom, and the revolutionary struggle, to take the form and path that the moment, our moment, takes and demands. Even more paradoxes.

We are all involved; we only have to assume it.

Nor am I sure that involvement is the only form of the healthy irreverence and the call to disobedience that you propose: the renunciation of privileges and ties of membership. We cannot be absolute, although I don't reject the idea. However, the personal questioning of the extent to which we collaborate with the discriminatory and exclusivist character, with the possession of a license and the almost blind acceptance of disciplines that we only privately and sometimes criticize, seems very positive to me.

In the best cases, there are people who take advantage of some of the mentioned privileges and others who share and extend their benefits to the less fortunate as much as possible. I also know that it's not enough. It's true that we urgently need, now that the necessary historical memory is more or less publicly defended together with its even more necessary justice, clear formulas of awareness and insubordination. The debate must be aimed not only at destroying, but also at constructing options, answers, and even solutions.

So I congratulate you, your proposal, in the hope that it stimulates the search for a way.

Because the road or roads, wherever they go, will be long, so it's better, this time, that we be accompanied by respect, endearing tolerance, and a broad sense of humor.

Hopefully we will go from “changing the world” to having meetings with friends and sharing drinks, to strengthening friendships and finding common ground. Let’s reposition our passivity and leave bitterness for the hangovers, exchange proposals, and implement agreements.

“What’s up, dude, how are you?”

“Here, in the fight.”

A common fight this time.

Muleteers we are and on the road we meet.

Kisses,

Eve

PS: Well look, I enjoy sharing this with friends and associates, those who have shared your words through Roxana and a few more, but so you can see the level of my paranoia (not unfounded). Precisely I don’t dare much to share with such a great figure who, fortunately, today we see taking part in the debate. I have no national awards or great public recognition. And it’s not the first time (or the tenth) that people with all those merits have clipped my wings (or have tried more than is possible, although I have finally flown and fly), like so many others, some of them apparently and contradictorily defenders of free creativity and opinion, with the “accusation” of not being a prestigious figure. And it seems to be a basic requirement and an essential condition to having prestige to be able to comment, debate, and raise a theory although with coffee in hand and, still more, to expose attempts or creative works. Either you have bachelor degrees, doctorates, and awards, or you don’t criticize. I’m telling you: we’re all contaminated.

Me too: I recognize that what I have left is a lot of paranoia, but I’m not very upset. I am or try to be many things, but what I most believe in, which deserves all my attention, is being a common citizen.