

On the promulgation of the Agrarian Law

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TWO MILLION CUBANS WILL FIND THEIR INCOME INCREASED

- *We do not make laws by hate.
- *It is not fair that our country keeps on marching toward misery.
- *Great landowners must adapt themselves to the new times.
- *Nobody has the right to distribute land by his own initiative.
- *Cuba will have the honor to be in first place among latinamerican countries.

We believe that this Law initiates an entirely new era in our economical life, and that a wonderful future awaits our country, if we dedicate ourselves to work with all our might.

We are aware that this law will affect some private interests; we are aware that it will find strong opposition, as all revolutionary measures. Of course, we are conscious of our duties to the citizens and of all the advantages that this law may offer.

However, we must declare, as we always have under such circumstances, that we make laws only for the benefit of the nation, even if these laws must some times damage certain interests. We do not make laws by - hate, as we do not hate anybody. We understand perfectly that we are a consequence of the past, we have the obligation to correct past mistakes.

What we have done, what we are, what we represent and what we do, are mainly consequences of the past. In fact, anybody in Cuba who thinks about what this country has been up to now, about the destiny which - would have been Cuba's destiny if changes were not introduced, if this person who thinks is conscious and honest, she will have to admit that these measures are absolutely necessary. It was not fair that our country continue to go toward misery, toward chaos.

It is not our fault if the nation is what it has been up to now; the mistakes of the past generations are not ours. You do not understand this until you go to the country, until you visit the peasant's houses, until you see shoeless, hungry, sick children who cannot read nor write. In spite of all this, you are surprised to see how much kindness remains in the hearts of our peasants. When you notice those things you fell the absolute conviction of the justice of the measures we are taking, which are necessary and of benefit for the country.

These measures pretend to eliminate a situation that was legated to us and of which we are not responsible.

The Agrarian Law damages an insignificant section of the people but even these persons are not entirely sacrificed, as they will keep a considerable amount of land; their standard of living will not be seriously affected, and at the same time thousands of poor families will be benefited. We can very conservatively estimate that two hundred thousand families will receive these benefits.

.. What I can say today is this: when the Agrarian Law be entirely - applicated, two million Cubans will have their income increased and they will become buyers in the domestic market, which will be the basis of our industrial development. Through this, we expect to solve the economical problem of Cuba. On the other hand, the owners of the lands we intend to distribute shall not be robbed; they will be compensated. They will be paid in government bonds, payable in 20 years, which will produce 4.50% interest yearly.

Cuba will have the honor of being in first place among all latin-american nations, thanks to this Law, so rich in consequences.

Great landowners must understand that their duty is to adapt themselves to the new circumstances. They shall have to produce more in reduced extensions of land. They will have to produce technically, economically, trying to obtain all which is possible to obtain from the land, because this measure is fair, because not a single Cuban must suffer from hunger. It is criminal that there be uncultivated land in a country where people is hungry. These landowners must not allow selfishness to blind them. Nobody has the right to be selfish when his people is hungry. Nobody feeling like a Cuban, no real patriot, can fail to understand that this measure will be of benefit to the Nation.

The Agrarian Law does not mean of course that a man has a right to grab the piece of land he likes, that anybody has the right to distribute land by his own initiative. It does not mean disorder. Now, more than ever, we need absolute discipline, nobody has the right to act ignoring the authority of the National Institute for the Agrarian Reform. Those who have taken lands without permission will have to give them back. We make this warning because we do not want our peasants to make mistakes.

The benefits of the Agrarian Law will attain the remotest places of our country. It is not necessary to speak more about it, because this Law speaks by itself and because it will provoke a lot of discussion in days to come. We wish that all Cubans accept it as a fair measure which will offer extraordinary benefits to our Country.