

PREFACE

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IT IS A GREAT pleasure to offer this compilation for the public's consideration. It consists of the speeches delivered by outstanding intellectuals, politicians and critics of the dominant thinking and of the horrors of neo-liberal globalization at the Third Latin American and Caribbean Conference on Social Sciences entitled "New Worldwide Hegemony". Options for Change and Social Movements", held in Havana, Cuba, on October 27-31, 2003, within the framework of the 21st General Assembly of the Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO). To Francisco de Oliveira, Samir Amin, Noam Chomsky, Robert Dahl, Perry Anderson and Armando Hart Dávalos go our most sincere thanks for their committed participation in this undertaking and for having allowed us to publish their conferences.

It goes without saying that these wonderful sessions, their intense debates and discussions, their enlightening examination of the situation in Latin America, would not have been possible without the extraordinary backing we received from the Cuban people and government, who decided to sponsor these events, the Conference and the General Assembly. Hence the debt of gratitude contracted by CLACSO toward the President of the Councils of State and of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz, and through him toward the entire Cuban

people, who, overcoming all manner of obstacles, never stinted in their support for this undertaking to be successfully carried out.

We must also underline our thanks to a team, as large as it was outstanding, of Cuban colleagues of the very top rank with whom we not only drew up the academic program but also decided each of the practical matters demanded by the simultaneous unfolding of the Conference and the General Assembly. It must be pointed out that this involved not only work of a bureaucratic character but a permanent dialogue with our hosts until the achievement of the final structure of a program which, in our view, will be remembered as one of the most important events held by the social sciences in Latin America in many years. For this reason I owe very special thanks to Ricardo Alarcón, President of the Cuban National Assembly; to the Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment, Dr. Rosa Elena Simeón, whose Ministry was CLACSO's counterpart in the preparation of all events; to Abel Prieto, Culture Minister, and, in the framework of the Ministry of Science, Technology and the Environment (CITMA), to Dr. Daniel Codorniú, Deputy Prime Minister of that Ministry; to Lina Domínguez Acosta, Deputy Minister of CITMA; to Miguel Lima David, on whose shoulders fell the enormous task of organizing the operative part that enabled events such as these to unfold over the course of a week without any kind of organizational or logistical hindrances or problems. Through Miguel we also express our thanks to all members of the Cuban Organizing Committee. I also wish to state my gratitude to Dr. Daisy Rivero, president of the Cuban Scientific Committee and in her name to all colleagues and friends at the Academy of Sciences and other Cuban educational institutions that cooperated in this effort. Our sincerest admiration and gratitude are elicited by the cooperation of personalities such as Roberto Fernández Retamar, Armando Hart Dávalos, Yolanda Ricardo and Roberto Verrier, and many other colleagues, so many that we cannot name them all but who are those who, from the Cuban side, made it possible to achieve this aspiration of having a very good Assembly that would combine CLACSO's institutional and administrative matters with issues of a substantive nature having extraordinary practical importance for the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Naturally, all the above also enjoyed inestimable support and cooperation originating in other sources. I therefore wish to thank UNESCO in the person of the Director of UNESCO's Office for the Social Sciences in Latin America, with headquarters in Mexico, Dr.

Gonzalo Abad, and in that of its representative of the general office for Culture with headquarters in Havana, Francisco Lacayo Parajón, who from the initial moments of this entire process offered us inestimable help. In addition to this cooperation offered by UNESCO –which is somewhat like CLACSO’s mother institution since, although we won’t formally belong to the United Nations system, we hold the status of “permanent consultative agency” of that organization– other institutions must be mentioned here since their cooperation was fundamental for ensuring that this event could be carried out.

In the first place, we must thank the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), which for a long time has been supporting the work in the field of social sciences not only of CLACSO but also of other sister institutions in Latin America. At a time when military dictatorships seemed on the verge of putting an end to social sciences in this region, when those régimes persecuted, caused the disappearance of, or murdered our social scientists, a specialized department of SIDA –we refer to SAREC– performed an essential role not only for avoiding the collapse of social sciences in the region but also for saving the lives of our colleagues. Suffice it to recall that the number of social scientists who in the 1970s were forced to leave their countries is calculated at 2,000, and the cooperation of SIDA was absolutely decisive to make viable a rescue operation of this magnitude. SIDA has continued to support the social sciences in Latin America and the Caribbean in the new, democratic stage, in which the threats come mainly from the angle of the financial asphyxiation that affects research and higher learning institutions in our countries. For this reason we wish to express the most sincere gratitude of the community of social scientists to its representatives at this meeting, Ms. Berit Olson and Mr. Anders Gerdin, for their unshakable support over the course of so many years.

I wish to state the same with regard to the contribution of new friends who have sponsored the development of critical thinking in this region. In this case we are referring to NORAD, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation, here represented in the person of Lill Ann Medina, which at a recent date has begun a program of cooperation with CLACSO to develop a series of projects aimed at improving the quality of the research into poverty in Latin America. It is indeed insufficient to identify the existence of a problem; overcoming it also requires developing the most appropriate methodologies that enable a precise analysis of the complex, manifold and very vari-

able situation presented by poverty in our countries. For this reason I thank NORAD for its help and also, in this sense, very especially, a dear friend of social scientists in Latin America, because the cooperation program with NORAD has a fundamental academic component and this component is offered by CROP, the Comparative Research Program on Poverty headquartered in Bergen, Norway, whose director, founder and inspiring genius is Prof. Else Oyen. Else has been cooperating with CLACSO for several years, giving material form to this assistance with the help of NORAD. We shall continue to work along these lines for a long time given the success of this program and its importance for the social sciences in the region.

Lastly, allow me to say that this special mention directed at these friendly institutions, UNESCO as well as the diverse cooperation agencies of the Scandinavian countries, fundamentally in Sweden and Norway (SIDA and NORAD), would be incomplete if I didn't thank the staff of CLACSO's Executive Secretariat that has worked side by side with its Cuban counterpart and that thanks to its huge and unflagging enthusiasm and total identification with CLACSO's institutional project gave its all to cause this event to happen. I thus wish to express my gratitude to its members for this exemplary dedication, not only in my own name, as Executive Secretary, but in the name of all the social scientists gathered in this convention.

Buenos Aires, April 2004