Now it is time to provide a brief description of Mexico City. . . . The city of Mexico has more than one hundred and thirty thousand inhabitants. Moreover, such is the daily concourse of other people from the city and other surrounding towns that there is a continual ebb and flow of people in the streets and plazas, providing the semblance of a continual fair.

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As for the women, it is true that they are very beautiful and of a fine disposition, spirited, pretty, and with considerable rhetorical talent, so that they far surpass our Italian women. But they are ambitious (as in every other country), proud, dainty, and indolent. Many favor the Europeans (who are called gachupines), and they more willingly marry them, even though impoverished, than their own compatriots called creoles, even though wealthy. They view them—that is, the creoles—as lovers of mulatto women, from whom they have imbibed bad customs with their milk (1). Consequently, the creole men hate the Europeans.

The women adopt the Spanish style of dress—that is, the ladies as well as the merchant and artisan women who can [afford to]. The rest are attired as their status permits. Because there are different castes of people, each person thus dresses not only on a level with her wealth but also according to her caste. If a woman is an Indian, though wealthy, she dresses in accordance with Indian custom, however opulently; if she is mulatta, according to mulatto custom, etc.

The mulattos are born of whites and blacks and vice versa. The mestizos are those who are born of Spaniards with Indian or creole women and vice versa, so that they have a varied physiognomy. Thus, there are six castes of people in this realm: Europeans, creoles, mulattos, Indians, and blacks.

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A few descendants of that emperor [Moctezuma] still survive. When I left Mexico in 1768, a canon of the cathedral, who was a descendant from the direct masculine line of the aforementioned Moctezuma, was still alive. The aforementioned descendants have always enjoyed great privileges, honors, and titles granted by the king of Spain.

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I will move on to provide a brief account of popular customs, mainly involving the Indian folk [who] are more industrious and sharpwitted than the creoles because they readily imitate whatever they observe.

Generally speaking, the creoles, Indians, and mestizos, along with mulattos, are sluggards, drunkards, thieves, swindlers, and lechers—and that is also true of the women. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that there are people of every status, sex, and condition who are very good Christians, are generally charitable, and give alms. They are cordial,
though somewhat averse to foreigners. Though they have an inherent esteem for the Spaniards, they confuse them with other Europeans, whom they all call gachupines, using another term for the others. In view of the affection and esteem for them, it is generally appropriate to pass as gachupín, but not particularly as Italian, French, or German, et cetera.

(1) *Gachupín*, a Nahuatl word meaning “wearer of spurs,” was a Mexican term for men born in Spain; it often had a derogatory meaning. A Creole was a person of European ancestry born in the New World. Mulatto women were often used as wet-nurses for the more well-to-do Creoles.

Furthermore, it was declared that the Cuban policy in the Americas would be one of close solidarity with the democratic peoples of this continent, and that all those politically persecuted by bloody tyrannies oppressing our sister nations would find generous asylum, brotherhood and bread in the land of Martí; not the persecution, hunger and treason they find today. Cuba should be the bulwark of liberty and not a shameful link in the chain of despotism.

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The problem of the land, the problem of industrialization, the problem of housing, the problem of unemployment, the problem of education and the problem of the people’s health: these are the six problems we would take immediate steps to solve, along with restoration of civil liberties and political democracy. . . . Eighty-five per cent of the small farmers in Cuba pay rent and live under constant threat of being evicted from the land they till. More than half of our most productive land is in the hands of foreigners. . . . There are two hundred thousand peasant families who do not have a single acre of land to till to provide food for their starving children. . . . Just as serious or even worse is the housing problem. There are two hundred thousand huts and hovels in Cuba; four hundred thousand families in the countryside and in the cities live cramped in huts and tenements without even the minimum sanitary requirements; two million two hundred thousand of our urban population pay rents which absorb between one fifth and one third of their incomes; and two million eight hundred thousand of our rural and suburban population lack electricity . . . . The little rural schoolhouses are attended by a mere half of the school age children—barefooted, half-naked and undernourished—and frequently the teacher must buy necessary school materials from his own salary. Is this the way to make a nation great?

Only death can liberate one from so much misery. In this respect, however, the State is most helpful—in providing early death for the people. Ninety per cent of the children in the countryside are consumed by parasites which filter through their bare feet from the ground they walk on. . . . Public hospitals, which are always full, accept only patients recommended by some powerful politician who, in return, demands the votes of the unfortunate one and his family so that Cuba may continue forever in the same or worse condition.

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A revolutionary government backed by the people and with the respect of the nation, after cleansing the different institutions of all venal and corrupt officials, would proceed immediately to the country’s industrialization . . . . After settling the one hundred thousand small farmers as owners on the land which they previously rented, a revolutionary government would immediately proceed to settle the land problem. . . . it would establish the maximum amount of land to be held by each type of agricultural enterprise and would acquire the excess acreage by expropriation . . . . it would distribute
the remaining land among peasant families with priority given to the larger ones, and would promote agricultural cooperatives for communal use of expensive equipment, freezing plants and unified professional technical management of farming and cattle raising . . . . it would provide resources, equipment, protection and useful guidance to the peasants. . . . A revolutionary government would solve the housing problem by cutting all rents in half . . . . as each rural family should possess its own tract of land, each city family should own its own house or apartment. There is plenty of building material and more than enough manpower to make a decent home for every Cuban. . . . With these three projects and reforms, the problem of unemployment would automatically disappear and the task of improving public health and fighting against disease would become much less difficult. . . . Finally, a revolutionary government would undertake the integral reform of the educational system, bringing it into line with the projects just mentioned with the idea of educating those generations which will have the privilege of living in a happier land.