

## **The Struggle for Culture Today is the Struggle for Life**

The struggle for life today is the cultural war.

Cultural WARFARE: the struggle for life.

Culture begins with man. According to Levi-Strauss culture is the combination of customs, beliefs, habits and attitudes acquired by man as a member of society. It is because culture is a historic phenomenon that we must refer to it not just in past and present tense but in the dialectical effect one has on the other, as well as dialectically with other cultures.

I believe that much in the same way that the unconscious affects instinctual residues in man, civilization emerges as the gathering and use of past experiences, more or less done in an intuitive way.

Culture is the living history of a society and of man in that society. Its characteristics are the ways and means of organizing the life and activities of the people within that culture. It is represented by material and spiritual values created by the members of that culture. In other words culture is a social production for social consumption.

To establish his empire over nature it has been necessary for man to dominate other men and to treat part of humanity as objects. This has had a detrimental effect on both man and nature. With the acquisition of writing, essential to imperialism (as it provided the condition of accumulating past experience) man acquired control of a different kind of power: knowledge.

Knowledge has been used as a weapon called: PROGRESS.

Progress is the capitalization and totalization of knowledge which has culminated today in TECHNOLOGY.

Knowledge has been and is used in order to establish man's empire over nature and economic power over other men.

Ancient empires used violence to expand their territories in order to gain economic power. The XV, XVI, XVII and XVIII centuries are characterized by this type of colonization. Violence was the methodology implemented as well. The colonization of the Americas, in which the natural inhabitants were submitted to a violent system of inhuman exploitation which cost the lives of thousands of them, including the extinction of whole cultures and peoples (i.e. the Antilles), is evidence

of this type of colonization. The colonization of the Americas also used the largest process of coercive traffic of human beings known in history. According to Moreno Fragnals, 9.5 millions black Africans were brought to this continent for the simple purpose of economic exploitation.

In the XX century, however, it incorporated a new type of colonization. No longer will open brutal violence be implemented. Colonization and neo-colonization will be disguised by modern techniques to paraphrase the leading ideologists from the Great Colonizing Potencies: "to elevate the underdeveloped people to a higher standard of living."

In the past as well as in our own century, in order to facilitate the expropriation of the natural richness of a territory and/or use the people as labour, the process which has been and still is very much implemented is DECULTURATION, its purpose being to uproot the culture of the people to be exploited. In fact to destroy the culture is a prerequisite for conquered territory. During the conquest of the Americas this job was given to the missionaries who developed with extraordinary efficiency the cultural destruction of the indigenous inhabitants. What a clever way of consolidating their task by implanting the Christian ideology that they would enjoy the goods after death! Today, the same techniques are used by the colonizing powers, as was the case of the Smithsonian Institute with the Indians of western United States and through other organizations such as the Peace Corps in South America and Africa.

Deculturation can be seen as a technological resource applied to expedite the goal to be achieved. Western civilization's most pervasive task has been the spread of technology and its claim to culture seems to be devoted to the assimilation and spread of technology. Who speaks for the US today? – The advertising agencies.

North American Imperialism has produced and controls the international means of mass communication and information. The bombardment of false information and half truths is conducted at such a scale that millions of people live amongst a big lie.

The ruling class in the US pushes to paralyze the social development of man in an effort to have all of society identify with and serve their own interests. Films, radio and television as well as the news services are in charge of spreading, massively and systematically, thousand of films and programs that idealize and propose ways of lives and behavior with

a vision of social reality and history that causes conformism and submission. The influence of these concepts that are called "commercials" but are above all POLITICAL has immersed in cosmopolitanism the lack of authenticity, superficiality and the concessions that come with it. They banalize, mix, distort, simplify life, they have no use for anything pure or real. They call it STYLIZING. And in this way they create a product, a style which dominates mass communication and now also the ARTS. They call this advanced international style. Imperialism is no longer a problem of expansion so much but of reproduction.

The US, the greatest imperialist power, rich in material as well as in technological resources, maintains some of the most shameful, hurting and inhuman forms of racial, economic and social discriminations amongst its own people. The overflowing of its frontiers, aggressions and military occupations and colonial and neo-colonial politics of the United States imperialism have denaturalized and violated the cultural and artistic tradition of other peoples as well as within the US itself. The Imperialists caricature, reduce and divide people from their historic traditions, domesticating them. The very existence of these traditions and authentic artistic manifestations in other cultures as well as within the US denounces & exposes the falsehood of the so called civilizing mission which the US imperialists claim for themselves and appoint themselves the expropriators and interpreters of peoples cultures and destinies. The General Director of UNESCO, Amador Mahtar M'Bou, has pointed out that the relationship between communication and culture constitutes "the axis of the struggle for cultural autonomy and a liberated culture."

But total deculturation is impossible, because the history of social development is the struggle of the classes. The ruling class applies maximum power to its mechanism of deculturation to create a homogenous culture and the powerless class takes refuge in its own cultural traditions as a way to preserve their identity and survive.

We are now witnessing a great moral, ideological and economic crisis in the ruling class culture. It is true that in the past some developed capitalist countries projected the image of great cultural progress and achievement. However in these times such an image does not coincide with reality. That reality does not have today the force and spiritual richness it had 40, 50, 100 years ago. Reality has changed, the world has changed.

And in this political framework we know that imperialism needs the artists and intellectuals at the same time that it despises them. The artists who make "a pact with Mephisto", the intellectuals who sold their souls will live with the price of their actions.

At the beginning of the third thousand years of our era, it will be decided whether man will choose to live like an animal or like a man. If the first, barbarism; if the second, culture. Because there is nothing as beautiful and humanizing in a work of art than that which sharpens sensibilities and opens new worlds to man. The function of an artist is not a gift but a commitment.