Our revolution was essentially the product of a guerrilla movement that initiated the armed struggle against the dictatorship and brought it to fruition in the seizure of power. The first steps of the revolutionary state, like the whole of the primitive epoch of our management of the government, were strongly tinged by fundamental elements of guerrilla tactics as a form of state administration. “Guerrillaism” translated the experience of the armed struggle in the Cuban mountains and countryside into the work of the different administrative and mass organizations, and this meant that only the main revolutionary slogans were followed — and often interpreted in different ways — by bodies in the administration and in society in general. The method of solving concrete problems was chosen at will by each leader.

Because they occupied the whole complex apparatus of society, the fields of action of these “administrative guerrillas” clashed among themselves, producing constant friction, orders and counter-orders, and different interpretations of the
laws. This reached the point, in some cases, of state institutions countering laws by issuing their own dictates in the form of decrees, ignoring the central administrative apparatus. After a year of painful experiences we reached the conclusion that we had to totally revamp our style of work and reorganize the state apparatus in a rational manner, utilizing planning techniques known in the fraternal socialist countries. As a countermeasure, the strong bureaucratic apparatus that characterized this first period in the building of our socialist state began to be organized. But the swing went too far, and a whole number of institutions, including the Ministry of Industry, initiated a policy of centralization that put too many restrictions on the initiative of administrators. This idea of centralization can be explained by the shortage of middle-level cadres and the previous anarchic spirit, which required enormous zeal in ensuring that instructions were being carried out. At the same time, the lack of adequate control mechanisms made it difficult to correctly spot administrative errors in time, which were often hidden by the general chaos. In this way, cadres — the most conscious ones as well as the most timid ones — curved their initiatives in order to adjust them to the sluggish motion of the administrative machinery. Others continued doing as they pleased, without feeling obliged to respect any authority, and this called for new control measures to put a stop to their activity. This is how our revolution began to suffer from the evil called bureaucratism.

Bureaucratism, obviously, is not the offspring of socialist society, nor is it a necessary component of it. The state bureaucracy existed in the period of bourgeois governments with its retinue of hangers-on and lackeys, as a great number of opportunists — who made up the “court” of the politicians in power — flourished in the shade of the government budget. In a capitalist society, where the entire state apparatus is at the service of the bourgeoisie, the state bureaucracy's importance as a leading body is very small. The main thing is that it be permeable enough to allow opportunists to pass through, yet impenetrable enough to keep the people trapped in its nets. Given the weight of the “original sins” in the old administrative apparatus and the situations created after the
triumph of the revolution, the evil of bureaucratism began to develop strongly. If we were to search for its roots today, we would have to add new motives to the old causes, coming up with three fundamental reasons.

One is the lack of inner motivation. By this we mean the individual's lack of interest in rendering a service to the state and in overcoming a given situation. It is based on a lack of revolutionary consciousness or, at any rate, on acquiescence in things that are wrong. We can establish a direct and obvious relationship between the lack of inner motivation and the lack of interest in resolving problems. In this case, whether the weakness in ideological motivation is due to an absolute lack of conviction or to a certain dose of desperation in the face of repeated insoluble problems, the individual or group of individuals take refuge in bureaucratism, filling out papers, shirking their responsibility, and establishing a written defense in order to continue vegetating or to protect themselves from the irresponsibility of others.

Another cause is the lack of organization. Attempting to destroy “guerrillaism” without sufficient administrative experience has produced dislocations and bottlenecks that unnecessarily curb the flow of information from below, as well as the instructions or orders emanating from the central apparatus. Sometimes, the former or the latter take the wrong course; other times, they are translated into poorly formulated, absurd instructions that contribute even more to the distortion.

The lack of organization is fundamentally characterized by the weakness of the methods used to deal with a given situation. We can see examples in the ministries, when attempts are made to solve problems at an inappropriate level or when problems are dealt with through the wrong channels and get lost in the labyrinth of paperwork. Bureaucratism is like a ball and chain weighing down the type of official who is trying as best he can to solve his problem but keeps crashing time and again into the established way of doing things, without finding a solution. It's common to observe how the only way out for many officials is to
ask for more personnel to do a task, when an easy solution requires only a little logic. This in turn creates new reasons for unnecessary paperwork.

As a healthy self-criticism, we must never forget that the revolution's economic management is responsible for the majority of bureaucratic ills. The state apparatus was not developed by means of a single plan and with well-worked out relationships; this left a wide margin for conjecture about administrative methods. The central economic apparatus, the Central Planning Board, did not fulfill its task of leadership and could not do so because it lacked sufficient authority over the other bodies. It was unable to issue precise orders based on a single system and with adequate supervision, and it lacked the requisite assistance of an overall plan. In the absence of good organization, excessive centralization curbed spontaneous action without replacing it in time with correct methods. An accumulation of minor decisions obstructed our view of the big problems, and finding solutions for all of them came to a standstill without rhyme or reason. Last minute decisions, made hastily and without analysis, became characteristic of our work.

The third cause, a very important one, is the lack of sufficiently developed technical knowledge to be able to make correct decisions on short notice. Not being able to do this meant we had to gather many experiences of little value and try to draw some conclusion from them. Discussions became endless and no-one had sufficient authority to settle things. After one, two, or more meetings, the problem remained until it resolved itself or until a decision had to be made willy-nilly, no matter how bad it might be. The almost total lack of knowledge, which as I mentioned earlier was made up for by a long series of meetings, led to “meetingitis” — basically a lack of perspective for solving problems. In these cases bureaucratism — the brake that endless paper shuffling and indecision place on society's development — becomes the fate of the bodies affected.

These three fundamental causes, one by one or acting together in various combinations, affect the country's entire institutional life to a greater or lesser
degree. The time has come to break away from these malignant influences. Concrete measures must be taken to streamline the state apparatus, in such a way as to establish the strict central control that enables the leadership to have in its hands the keys to the economy while also releasing initiative as much as possible, thus developing on a logical basis the relationships among the productive forces.

If we know the causes and effects of bureaucratism, we can analyze accurately the possibilities of correcting the malady. Of all the fundamental causes, we can consider the need for organization to be our central problem, and we can tackle it with all the necessary rigor. To do so we must modify our style of work. We must prioritize problems, assigning each body and each decision-making level its particular task. We must establish the concrete relationships between each one of them and all the others, from the center of economic decision making to the last administrative unit, as well as the relationships among their different components — horizontally — until we establish all the interrelationships within the economy. This is the task most within our reach at the present time, and it will afford us an additional advantage: redirecting to other areas of work a large number of employees who are not needed, who are not working, who carry out minimal duties, or who duplicate the work of others with no results whatsoever. Simultaneously, we must develop our political work with dogged determination to rid ourselves of the lack of internal motivation, that is, the lack of political clarity, which translates into things not getting done. This can be done, first, through continuous education, through concrete explanations of the tasks, through instilling in administrative employees an interest in their work, and through the example set by the vanguard workers. And, second, by taking drastic measures to eliminate the parasites, whether it be those who conceal in their stance a deep enmity to socialist society, or those who are irremediably opposed to work.

Finally, we must correct the inferiority that comes from our lack of knowledge. We have begun the gigantic task of transforming society from top to bottom in the midst of imperialist aggression, of an increasingly tighter blockade, of a complete change in our technology, of drastic shortages of raw materials and
foodstuffs, and of a massive exodus of the few qualified technicians we have. In these conditions, we must set ourselves the task of working seriously and persistently with the masses to fill the vacancies left by the traitors and to meet our need for a skilled work force resulting from the rapid rate of our development. That is why training is a top priority of all the revolutionary government's plans.

The training of active workers begins in the workplace at the most basic educational level: the elimination of any remaining illiteracy in the most remote areas; continuing education courses and, later, workers' improvement courses for those who have reached the third grade; courses in basic technical skills for the better educated workers; extension courses to turn skilled workers into assistant engineers; university courses for all types of professionals and also for administrators.

The revolutionary government intends to turn our country into one big school where study and success in one's studies become a basic factor for bettering the individual, both economically and in his moral standing in society, to the extent of his abilities.

If we manage to unravel the massive amount of red tape, the intricate relationships among institutions and among departments, the duplication of functions and frequent “potholes” into which our institutions fall, we will find the roots of the problem. We will develop organizational norms, elementary at first and later more complex. We will wage a head-on battle against those who are confused, indifferent, or lazy. We will educate and reeducate that mass of people, incorporate them into the revolution and eliminate what should be thrown out. At the same time we will tirelessly continue the great task of education at all levels, whatever obstacles we may face. If we do all this, we will be in a position to do away in a short time with bureaucratism.
The experience of the last mobilization [during the October 1962 Missile Crisis] motivated us in the Ministry of Industry to discuss and analyze what happened: in the middle of the mobilization, when the entire country steeled itself to resist the enemy attack, industrial production did not drop, absenteeism disappeared and problems were solved with surprising speed. Upon analyzing this, we concluded that a number of factors came together that destroyed the basic causes of bureaucratism. There was a great patriotic and national impulse to resist imperialism, and this sentiment was shared by the immense majority of the Cuban people. Each worker, at his own level, became a soldier of the economy, ready to solve any problem. In this way the stimulus of foreign aggression became an ideological driving force. Organizational norms were boiled down strictly to pointing out what could not be done and the fundamental problem that needed to be solved: to maintain production at all costs, to maintain certain production with even greater emphasis, and to free the enterprises, factories and institutions from all functions that, although necessary in normal social periods, are not essential.

Each individual had a special responsibility, which forced him to make rapid decisions. We were faced with a situation of national emergency, and decisions had to be made whether they were correct or not; we had to make them, and quickly. This was done in many cases.

We have yet to draw a balance sheet of the mobilization and, obviously, it will not be a positive balance sheet in financial terms. But it was positive in terms of ideological mobilization, in the deepening of the masses' consciousness. What lesson do we draw? That we must make our workers, toilers, peasants and office workers realize that the danger of imperialist aggression still hangs over our heads, that there is no peace, and that our duty is to continue to strengthen the revolution day by day, which is also the best guarantee an invasion will not occur. The costlier it is for the imperialists to take this island, the stronger our defenses and the higher our people's awareness, the more they will think twice. But at the same time, the economic development of the country eases our situation and brings greater material well-being. The ideological task is to make permanent the
great example of the mobilization in response to imperialist aggression. We must analyze each official's responsibilities and define them as strictly as possible within limits that must not be overstepped on penalty of severe sanctions. On that basis we can grant officials the broadest possible authority. At the same time we must examine what is fundamental and what is incidental in the work of the different units of the state institutions and limit all that is incidental in order to emphasize the fundamental, thereby permitting quicker action. We must demand action from our officials, establishing deadlines for carrying out instructions from the central bodies, correctly supervising them and making them reach decisions in a reasonable amount of time.

If we succeed in all this work, bureaucratism will disappear. This is not a task for a single economic body or even all the economic bodies in the country. It is the task of the entire nation, which is to say, of the leading bodies, fundamentally the United Party of the Revolution and the mass organizations. We must all work to implement the following pressing slogans of the day:

*War on bureaucratism. Streamline the state apparatus. Production without restraints, and responsibility for production.*