

I

CRITICAL HISTORY AND
SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

HISTORY

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An Emancipatory Practice for Latin America

What does history mean in the midst of the profound, painful, and complex social, political, economic, environmental, and territorial transformations that Latin American societies undergo in the 21st century? This question, along with others we might ask, is an essential starting point for reflecting on the role of history and the historical notions that have underpinned inequality and social asymmetries on our continent. Although the objective of this chapter is not to focus solely on highlighting these realities, it is precisely these realities that motivate reflection, since the role of history is not limited to achieving a rational or descriptive end, but must also generate a profound critique of social events, especially those that perpetuate the exclusion and distancing of large sectors of the population from their own history.

Today, social scientists have the task of stripping history of all scholarly pretensions and its positivist domain, in order to place it in a space-time that allows for the construction of a forceful disquisition of the barbarism of capitalism and its process of dispossession, dehumanization, and destruction of Latin American societies. As Walter Benjamin pointed out in his *Theses on the Concept of History*, “There is no document of culture that is not at the same time a document of barbarism” (Benjamin, thesis VII, 2005, pp. 22-23). This idea invites us to think of history not as a neutral account or a mere record of the past, but as a field where narratives that legitimize or question the established order are contested.

Thinking about history from a critical tradition necessarily implies revisiting the contributions of the philosopher Karl Marx. Although Marx was not and did not claim to be a historian, his work represents one of the most devastating critiques of the historiography of his time and of the Hegelian philosophy of history. His interest in establishing the scientific foundations of socialism and his scathing critiques of the capitalist mode of production led him to develop what he called the “materialist conception of history”. Marx demonstrated that, beyond human will, social circumstances, and ideas, it is the material conditions of existence that determine the way society is organized and functions.

In Marx’s words, “It is the mode of production of material life that determines the general character of social, political, and spiritual life processes. It is not man’s social consciousness that determines his being, but, on the contrary, his social being that determines his consciousness” (Marx, 1968, p. 71). This approach allows us to understand that the material conditions of existence—i.e. the way in which a society produces and reproduces the material goods that sustain it, as well as its division into social classes—are the basis on which social relations, institutions, and ideologies are built.

Marx’s theoretical and political contributions not only helped to shape critical thinking, but also laid the foundations for what is known as Marxist historiography. This historiographical current, in contrast to traditional historiography, is characterized by its focus on economic and social structures, as well as its commitment to social transformation. As Eric Hobsbawm, one of the leading exponents of this tradition, points out, “[...] the object is not simply to discover the past, but to explain it and thus provide a link with the present” (Hobsbawm, 1998, p. 217).

The historical present in the Latin American context takes on particular relevance in the critical tradition of history. Societies in our region have historically been marked by processes of colonization, exploitation, and exclusion that have shaped a profoundly unequal reality. Thinking about history from this perspective involves deep reflection that allows for processes aimed at decolonizing knowledge and recovering the voi-

ces of the oppressed, the subaltern, and the excluded. The approach behind these ideas leads us to the need for a decolonial project, i.e., a project of epistemic, social, political, and cultural unlearning.

For Quijano, epistemological decolonization paves the way for renewed intercultural communication, where the exchange of experiences and meanings lays the foundation for a different rationality, capable of legitimately aspiring to a certain universality. It is irrational to impose the specific worldview of a particular ethnic group, such as that of Western Europe, as if it were universal. This is nothing more than granting provincialism the title of universality, something that lacks foundation (Quijano, 1992, p. 442). This means not only denouncing the power structures that perpetuate injustice, but also rescuing the struggles and resistance that have sought to transform those conditions.

In this sense, critical history cannot be limited to being an academic exercise; it must be, above all, an emancipatory practice. As the Peruvian thinker José Carlos Mariátegui reminds us, history is not merely a repository of past events, but a dynamic terrain from which we can understand, question, and act in the present (Mariátegui, [1928] 2007). Thus, far from being static and fossilized, history allows us to understand it as a tool for seeing, judging, and acting from a praxis that transforms the present reality and social, political, economic, and other contexts. This vision requires us to use history as an instrument to unravel the roots of oppression and to imagine and build alternatives that allow us to move toward more just and equitable societies.

Thinking about history in the critical tradition means assuming it as a space for dispute and transformation. It involves questioning hegemonic narratives, recovering silenced voices, and using historical knowledge as a tool for political and social action. In a world marked by inequality and the crisis of the capitalist mode of production, critical history becomes an indispensable path to understanding our present and building a more humane and humanizing future.

Karl Marx's remarkable interest in explaining historical changes as social constructions, rather than mere products of chance, allowed

him to highlight the socio-historical transformations of the society of his time and analyze the external factors and forces that drove them. However, despite his contributions, the idealistic conceptions of history that prevailed in his time distorted the creative capacity of the historical subject and underestimated their ability to construct and transform history. This was largely because the idealistic conception of history reduced its study to the realm of philosophy, where social facts were interpreted through reason, thought, and the transcendence of the spirit, ignoring the material conditions of existence, which are ultimately the true determinants of human action.

Marx and Engels, in works such as *The German Ideology* (1845-1846), warned about the limits of the idealistic conception of history. They argued that this view ignored the real basis of history: the material conditions of existence. These conditions, which include the way societies produce and reproduce their material life, were considered by idealists to be mere accessories with no relevance to historical development. As Marx and Engels pointed out, the fundamental condition for human existence and, consequently, for the development of history, is that people have the material conditions of existence necessary to live, since only then can they participate in the creation and transformation of history. This statement underscores the importance of understanding that, before any intellectual or spiritual activity, human beings must satisfy their basic material needs (Marx and Engels, 1974).

In contrast to idealistic thinking, Marx set out to construct a critical and scientific theory that would explain the changes brought about by the European Industrial Revolution and the social transformations that resulted from it. This theory, based on the “materialist conception of history”, argues that historical events can only be understood in their specific context, which is constantly changing and linked to the socio-spatial dynamics of each era. As Marx stated in the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), “It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness” (Marx, 1895, p. 2). This revolutionary approach invites us to analyze history

not as a succession of isolated ideas or events, but as the result of material conditions and social relations of production.

In this sense, continuing to speak of “history” in the singular is a mistake that must be corrected by studying particular histories, local processes, and social memories. This is especially relevant in the context of Latin America, where ethnic, cultural, and social diversity is the rule rather than the exception. As philosopher Enrique Dussel points out, the other is not simply different, as defined by the totalizing power of universal history, but is distinct, always other, with its own history and culture. However, this other has not been respected nor allowed to truly be other. Instead, they have been absorbed by the foreign, incorporated into a totality that does not belong to them, which seeks to totalize exteriority, systematize it, and deny its singularity (Dussel, 1996). In this context, it is essential to recover the voices of the subalterns, the dispossessed, and the marginalized, whose struggles and resistance have been systematically ignored by the hegemonic narratives that propose a universal, universalist, and totalizing history—in short, a history whose interest lies in the alienation of the subject.

History, understood as an ever-changing social construction, manifests itself as a synthesis of multiple social, spatial, and temporal determinations. It is presented as a concrete, structured, and dialectical totality that establishes the relationship between society, and nature. In essence, it is about understanding that history is not merely an account of events that took place in the past, but rather, history must be understood as an instrument that allows us to comprehend the contradictions of present life and the urgent search for alternatives to a future where equity and social justice prevail. This vision allows us to understand that history is not a linear or predetermined process, but rather the result of struggles, conflicts, and negotiations between different social actors.

The social and critical construction of history is closely linked to the material aspects and processes of life and social organization. This means that the starting point for any social analysis must be an understanding of the material conditions of human existence. In other

words, material life—i.e. the way in which a society produces and distributes its resources—determines the nature of social, political, and economic processes and relationships. The materialist conception of history invites us to think of history not as an abstract or idealized narrative, but as a concrete and dialectical process, marked by material conditions and social struggles. In an increasingly unequal and fragmented world, this critical perspective becomes an indispensable tool for understanding our present and building a more just and equitable future.

The above reflections allow us to address the initial question of this chapter in greater depth and, at the same time, give it even more relevance in order to gauge the magnitude and potential of history as a critique of capitalism. This mode of production, in addition to being intrinsically exclusionary, racist, and xenophobic, has shaped a series of historical conditions that are deeply unfavorable to Latin American populations. In this context, history written under the parameters of capitalism has relegated women, Afro-descendant communities, and indigenous peoples to a marginal role, treating them as outcasts instead of recognizing them as historical subjects and protagonists in the long process of building our Latin America.

As Peruvian sociologist Aníbal Quijano (Quijano, 2000) points out, capitalism is not only an economic system, but also a power structure that has imposed a coloniality based on power; i.e., a form of domination and classification of humanity according to categories such as race, gender, and class. This coloniality is reflected in traditional historiography, which has rendered large sectors of the population invisible, denying them their place in the historical narrative that tells the story of the rulers, denying the narratives of the ruled, suppressing their voices and versions of history.

Today, large sectors of the Latin American population are strongly demanding the right to be recognized as historical subjects of social change and transformation. This demand not only questions hegemonic narratives, but also calls for a historical practice and a profession of historians committed to the construction of a critical historiogra-

phy. This historiography must highlight the evolution of human collectives, reclaiming their knowledge, and make visible their visions of their own past, especially when we accept that history and memory are contested spaces and permanent tension in Latin America, particularly because historical narratives either legitimize and perpetuate inequality or question hegemonic and totalizing power.

In this sense, critical history must be a tool for decolonizing knowledge and recovering the voices of those who have been silenced. History cannot be told exclusively from the perspective of the victors; it is also imperative to include the perspectives, memories, struggles, and stories of the vanquished, the excluded, and the resistant. This perspective invites us to think of history not as a single, homogeneous narrative, but as a mosaic of experiences, knowledge, and resistance that have shaped Latin American reality.

The challenges to construct a historiography that not only criticizes capitalism but also recognizes and values the diversity of historical subjects who have participated in the construction of our societies. This implies broadening the horizon of history to rescue and give voice to those who have been silenced, forgotten, or deliberately excluded from official narratives, thus recognizing their fundamental role in the construction of the world we know today. In the case of Latin America, this means recovering the struggles of women, indigenous peoples and their organizations, and Afro-descendant communities, whose contributions have been systematically ignored.

History as a critique of the capitalist mode of production must go beyond denouncing structures of colonial oppression to vindicate marginalized historical subjects. As Walter Benjamin suggests in his *Theses on the Concept of History*, the past should be understood as an instrument of struggle rather than a mere chronological record. On a continent deeply marked by inequality and exclusion, this task demands an ethical and political commitment to constructing a historiography that is inclusive, diverse, and rooted in justice and historical memory.

History and its potential for social transformation

Conceiving history as a critical practice implies recognizing that historical events are part of an ongoing, open, and collective construction in which all individuals—regardless of gender or generation—participate as agents of change. Reflecting on history and its potential for social transformation in Latin America requires acknowledging that social being and historical consciousness constitute the ontological essence shaping our understanding of the world. As Karl Marx stated, ‘it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, it is their social being that determines their consciousness’. This premise underscores that history is not an abstract narrative, but the concrete product of the material conditions and social relations that shape human existence.

In Latin America, the historical consciousness of our societies oscillates between the colonial legacy and the fetish of modernity, which has distanced us from the possibility of building just and equitable societies that transcend this colonial vision of history and the modern world, in which Europe stands as a universal model and a benchmark of civility that excludes the “other”. This duality has perpetuated structures of exclusion and inequality, where territories are valued not for their capacity to sustain life, but for their potential to generate profits within the framework of predatory capitalism.

Critical history and historical criticism of the material conditions of existence in Latin America must be rethought, denaturalized, and exposed as elements that, far from promoting the common good, dehumanize and exclude large sectors of the population. This statement reminds us that official history has been, to a large extent, a narrative constructed by and for the powerful, silencing the voices of the oppressed, the dispossessed, and the excluded.

This arduous task of historical reconstruction is only possible if history is brought into classrooms, public squares, and spaces where history is discussed and written. This is not merely a pedagogical exercise, but an ethical and political commitment to the millions of people who have

been marginalized from historical narratives. In this sense, critical history must be an instrument for rescuing silenced memories and making visible the struggles and resistance that have shaped our reality.

This call cannot be limited to a commitment to history for its own sake; rather, it demands the creation of spaces to problematize both history and historiography as catalysts for transforming and illuminating Latin American societies. As social actors, academics, and leaders, the responsibility lies in highlighting the social being and its material conditions of existence, while critically analyzing its social, political, and economic thought. Only through this approach can scholarship contribute to building alternatives to the capitalist mode of production, which currently threatens not only human dignity but life itself on the planet.

Today, more than ever, we must approach historiography as a social process that seeks to expose the tyranny and the profound and painful transformations that affect our continent. At the same time, historians and academics must act with an ethical and political commitment that makes the historical subject visible as an agent of social transformation. However, undertaking processes of change in contexts as asymmetrical as those in Latin America involves not only transforming social, economic, and political structures, but also transforming ourselves as subjects: as historians, as mothers, children, friends, and siblings. It is a matter of reflecting on and problematizing our condition of being, existing, and inhabiting the world, recognizing that our own subjectivity is marked by the inequalities we seek to overcome.

These ideas invite us to understand that the transformation of the conditions of existence and the asymmetrical reality of Latin American societies is not only an economic challenge, but also an intellectual and ethical task. Academia, as a socially constructed space, has the knowledge and expertise to contribute to this process. However, it requires a political commitment that goes beyond mere criticism and translates into concrete actions to address the severe deficit in public education policies in our region.

As academics, researchers, and teachers, we have a responsibility to demystify the idea that valid knowledge is only that which is produced under the parameters of Western thought. These parameters, as sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos warns, have established an “epistemicide” (Santos, 1998, p. 208), i.e., the annulment and delegitimization of non-Western knowledge, including the contributions of Latin American social beings. This exclusion has not only shaped the criteria for the validity of knowledge, but has also constructed an official history in which the achievements of great political figures—mostly white, elite men—have been established as the main references for national identity in Latin American countries.

The perversity of these processes lies in the configuration of societies that only recognize the history and knowledge of academic elites, who, for decades, have enjoyed privileges to construct a historiography that institutionalizes exclusionary knowledge. This hegemonic historiography has prevented large sectors of the Latin American population from recognizing their own history, denying them the possibility of undertaking processes of change and social transformation.

These events must be understood as the result of a historiography that has institutionalized a historical knowledge that discredits and denies the experiences and social processes of subaltern sectors. This reality is increasingly evident and undeniable in the critical eyes of many researchers who, like the author, have made an ethical and political commitment to education and social justice. Our task is to highlight the ideological intentionality of this type of history and its effort to consolidate a false consciousness in which the social being is not recognized as the maker and owner of history.

Gayatri Spivak, a postcolonial theorist, helps us understand that subaltern groups have no voice in universal and hegemonic history, not because they cannot speak, but because oppressed and marginalized groups are not heard in power structures. Among those marginalized and silenced are the proletariat, women, peasants, and those who belong to indigenous communities and Afro-descendants. It is precisely on this point that Spivak focuses part of her critique, deconstructing

the notion of “subaltern” as a monolithic category that presumes a unitary identity and consciousness in the subject. This assertion reminds us of the urgency of constructing a critical historiography that rescues silenced voices and makes visible the struggles and resistance of those who have been excluded from hegemonic narratives.

Contributing to the construction of a historical consciousness that recognizes the diversity of subjects and experiences that have shaped our reality is a critical practice that involves assuming an ethical, political, and transformative commitment, even more so in a continent like ours, which has historically been shaped by inequality and exclusion. Embracing history as an emancipatory praxis becomes an academic duty and an act of justice for millions of people and the dispossessed who demand historical reparation.

This situation poses an enormous challenge for us as teachers and researchers: to deconstruct and reveal, in the lines of history, its ideological power. This power has not only shaped historical narratives, but has also influenced the way societies perceive themselves and their past. During my teaching and research practice, through engagement with various sectors of Latin American societies, we have observed a widespread lack of interest in their own history. This disengagement is not the result of chance, but rather stems from a hegemonic historiography that has systematically excluded large segments of the population, preventing them from recognizing themselves as historical subjects and, consequently, as agents of social transformation.

However, for history to fulfill this transformative role, it is necessary for people to recognize themselves in it, to see their struggles, their resistance, and their hopes reflected in it. This implies, as Walter Benjamin argues, “brushing history against the grain” (Thesis VII, 2005, p. 22), i.e., rescuing the voices and experiences of those who have been silenced by official narratives. Based on these reflections, it is vitally important to highlight the role of history and its potential for social transformation in Latin America.

This should be the main objective of research plans, projects, and proposals: to construct a “history from below”, as British historian E.P. Thompson called it. This perspective seeks to highlight class, gender, and race asymmetries, as well as the dynamics of resistance and the alternatives that have emerged in the face of the power relations imposed by the capitalist mode of production and its ways of constructing knowledge.

In this sense, ‘history from below’ transcends mere methodology; it represents a commitment to subaltern sectors—those excluded from hegemonic narratives yet remaining the protagonists of their own struggles and transformations. In Latin America, this task takes on particular relevance. This subalternity/coloniality is reflected not only in economic and political structures, but also in the production of knowledge, where non-Western epistemologies have been systematically delegitimized. Therefore, it is essential that, as academics and researchers, we commit ourselves to demystifying official history and constructing narratives that recognize the diversity of subjects and experiences that have shaped our reality. Only in this way can we contribute to the construction of a historical consciousness that recognizes the plurality of our societies and, at the same time, inspires processes of change and social transformation.

History as an emancipatory practice in and for Latin America stands as an essential starting point for addressing the question with which this essay begins: What does history mean in the midst of the profound and painful social, *political*, and *economic* transformations gripping 21st-century Latin America? The answer to this question is not found in theoretical abstractions, but in the very pages of history, in its narratives, its silences, and its resistances.

Knowledge and criticism of history should lead us to uncover the deep roots and causal links of the inequalities and oppressions that have marked our continent. It is not a question of positioning ourselves as victims or perpetrators, but of recognizing these realities as an incentive to initiate processes that make us visible as builders and possessors of a long and complex history. As Walter Benjamin states in his *Theses*

on the Concept of History, “the past carries with it a secret index that refers it to redemption” (Thesis II. p. 18). This index invites us to question the past not only to recount it, but to transform it, creating options that allow us to move toward more just and equitable societies.

However, this purpose requires an academic practice that is up to the task of current contexts and moments, characterized by a complex, uncertain, and fluid reality. This implies that any emancipatory initiative must be anchored in a critical function of history, understood as a process that feeds on a changing reality, always dynamic and, often, adverse to social processes. Today, more than ever, the situation in Latin America forces us to think about the structural causes of the political, economic, and social crises unfolding across the continent, opening up the possibility of building a different Latin America.

A different Latin America rests with those who believe in and make history, who have turned our classrooms into spaces for reflection and critical practice. It is worth remembering that education does not transform the world, but it does allow human beings to become historical subjects capable of changing the world. In this sense, historical praxis allows the socio-historical context of our students to be transformed, engaging their sensitivity to the complex reality they live in.

Conceiving an alternative Latin America requires appealing to the narratives of the oppressed and the excluded—those who shape history through daily practices within their neighborhoods and communities. Our task as academics is not to validate historical knowledge, but rather to rescue silenced voices, highlight the collective struggles, and organically support the resistance movements that have shaped our reality. In this sense, critical history cannot be limited to an academic exercise; it must be, above all, an emancipatory practice, a perspective that invites us to use history not only as an instrument for understanding the present, but also as a tool for transforming it.

History as an emancipatory project must be the guiding principle of our teaching and research practices, and not merely a straitjacket within academic curricula. We bear a profound debt to millions of Latin

Americans who have believed in history as a practice that vindicates their struggles, their knowledge, and their wisdom. It is in our hands to expose, denounce, and question the hegemonic history, which serves as a vehicle for the ideological project that conceals the dehumanizing power of the capitalist mode of production. This power, as Karl Marx rightly pointed out, not only imposes unfavorable economic and political conditions, but also shapes a system that threatens human existence and the sustainability of life on the planet.

As Latin Americans, we know very well what we mean when we talk about the imposition of economic and political measures that, in many cases, threaten life and normalize a condition of subordination. This reality, however, is not immutable. From history as an emancipatory practice, it is possible to expose and reverse these structures of domination. However, it is imperative to illuminate alternative forms of knowledge that must allow us to dismantle hegemonic narratives and forge alternatives from and for the Latin American peoples.

Highlighting the historical adversities and contradictions inherent in the capitalist mode of production is the starting point for envisioning a project that unlearns 'official' history. This approach opens spaces grounded in historical critique, inclusion, solidarity, collective participation, and civic plurality. History as an emancipatory project does not consist of destroying historiography, but rather of highlighting and recognizing that we are historical subjects, creators, and possessors of history. In this sense, our task is to denaturalize the historical structures of power that have perpetuated the reproduction of patterns of barbarism and human slavery.

Considering history as an emancipatory project implies analyzing historiography in critical terms, contributing to subverting the conditions of existence and bourgeois consciousness embedded in "official" history. History has always been a field of dispute, expressing the power relations hidden in categories of race, gender, and class, which have determined our historiography.

In our America, the use, access, and control of history, historiography, and social memory remain fiercely contested. My call is to break with the idea of the technical and instrumental scientific progress, which has served as a justification for the domination of nature and human beings. In this battlefield, our task is to create and strengthen spaces that allow us to denaturalize the historical structures that have perpetuated inequality and exclusion. In our hands lies the possibility of building a different Latin America, a Latin America that recognizes the diversity of its historical subjects and draws inspiration from their struggles and resistance to move toward a more humane future.

Indeed, industry and technology, far from being elements for the liberation of human beings, seem to have become tools that increase a market infested with fetishized commodities. These objects, as Karl Marx pointed out in his analysis of commodity fetishism, acquire a symbolic value that obscures the social relations of production and alienates human beings, subjecting them to superfluous and artificial needs. Ultimately, this process has led to the subjugation of human beings to a system that prioritizes consumption over dignity and sustainability of life.

Criticism of history, in this context, lies in denouncing the illusion of progress in its exceptional, linear progress". As Walter Benjamin warns (Ms-BA 480. p. 54), "the idea of linear and inevitable progress is an illusion that conceals the catastrophes that accumulate over time". This illusion, which has been promoted by the hegemonic narratives of modernity, has led us to believe that technical and industrial development is synonymous with human advancement. However, rather than liberating human beings, the technical and instrumental progress of science has turned them into key cogs in the capitalist machine, reducing their critical capacity and autonomy, dehumanizing them, and stripping them of their vital force. In this context, history not only has the task of taking up the tradition of the oppressed, but also of founding it.

If we continue along this path, the homogeneous and accelerated pace of technical and industrial progress will only deepen the social, eco-

conomic, and environmental crises currently unfolding. This statement is not mere speculation, but a reality manifested in climate change, biodiversity loss, and growing global inequality, wars and the imposition of some states over others, death and destruction.

Faced with this situation, critical history has the task of dismantling the narratives that legitimize this model of development and making visible the alternatives that emerge from the margins, because another world is possible if we imagine it, weave it, and build it as an alternative to fierce and insatiable capitalism. These alternatives must be based on principles of social justice, sustainability, and respect for cultural diversity. Critical history must not only denounce the illusions of progress, but also propose new ways of understanding and inhabiting the world. It is in our hands to build a future that is not doomed to catastrophe, but inspired by solidarity, equity, and respect for life in all its forms.

In conclusion, history, understood as a critical and emancipatory practice, stands as a fundamental tool for understanding and transforming the social, political, and economic realities of Latin America. This essay has explored how history transcends a mere chronicle of the past; rather, it constitutes a contested domain where narratives that legitimize or challenge power are actively fought. In a continent marked by inequality, exclusion, and the coloniality of knowledge, being, and existence, critical history becomes an ethical and political urgency.

History is not a mere record of past events, but a dynamic process that clarifies the roots of the inequalities and oppressions we face. This history involves rescuing the voices of the oppressed and making visible the struggles that have been silenced by hegemonic narratives. This means recovering the memories of Indigenous peoples, Afro-descendant communities, women, and other historically marginalized groups, recognizing them as active subjects in the construction of our history.

The illusion of technical and industrial progress promoted by capitalism has led humanity into a multidimensional crisis. As Karl Marx

warned, commodity fetishism and alienation have subjected human beings to superfluous needs, while the relentless exploitation of nature has brought us to the brink of civilizational catastrophe. Consequently, critical history has the task of denouncing these illusions and proposing alternatives based on social justice, environmental sustainability, and respect for cultural diversity.

As teachers, researchers, and social actors, we have a responsibility to dismantle hegemonic narratives and build an inclusive and transformative historiography. This implies recognizing that alternative epistemologies are possible and that this knowledge must be at the service of the liberation of peoples. Historical education must be a political act that fosters critical awareness and the participation of new generations in the construction of a more just future.

This future brings us face to face with history from below, as proposed by E.P. Thompson, inviting us to focus on the experiences and struggles of subaltern sectors. In Latin America, this means making visible the resistance and alternatives that have emerged in the face of structures of domination, recognizing that the diversity of subjects and knowledge is the basis for building just and more equitable societies. History as an emancipatory practice cannot be limited to theoretical reflection; it must be translated into concrete actions that transform our realities. In our hands lies the possibility of building a different Latin America, one that is inspired by the struggles and resistance of its peoples to move forward into the future.

Critical and emancipatory history is a commitment to life, dignity, and justice. In a world fractured by inequality and the crisis of the capitalist model of production, this task becomes an urgent necessity. As social and academic actors, we have a responsibility to contribute to the construction of a future that is not doomed to catastrophe, but rather inspired by solidarity, equity, and respect for life in all its forms.