

# IN DEFENSE OF MARXISM

A REVOLUTIONARY POLEMIC

JOSÉ CARLOS MARIÁTEGUI



Prairie Fire Publishing



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**José Carlos Mariátegui**



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## Original Editorial Note

Between July 1928 and June 1929, José Carlos Mariátegui published a collection of articles in the Lima magazines *Mundial* and *Variedades*, which he later compiled in numbers 17 to 24 of the magazine *Amauta* under the title “In Defense of Marxism.” From this last source and from the slightly corrected text left by the author (mainly with regard to circumstantial references or typographical errors), we have taken the first part of this book, to which have been added the titles of the sections that appeared numbered only in the publication of *Amauta*.

There is no doubt that the author managed to give definitive form to this part, which was found among his writings, contained in an envelope on which Mariátegui wrote, in manuscript, his title: “In Defense Of Marxism.” And the subtitle: “A Revolutionary Polemic.” From a review of his correspondence and notes found in his archives, it appears that the author intended to include a second part, with the generic title “Theory and Practice of Reaction.” This second part has been compiled by us, with a set of five articles that analyze the ideology of reaction.

Since its appearance in *Amauta* (from September 1928 to June 1929), *In Defense of Marxism* was only published, in a fragmentary edition, which also brought together other writings, in Santiago, Chile, in 1934, by *Ediciones Nacionales y Extranjeras*, in its series *Contemporary Problems*. It was not until 1959, as part

of the first series of the Popular Edition of *Complete Works* presented that year by the Amauta Publishing Company, that the definitive version appeared, which includes, as already indicated, both the first part, the only one that the author managed to revise and assemble for later publication, and the second, made up of the collected articles.

## Republisher's Note

Republished here is José Carlos Mariátegui's *In Defense of Marxism*, a text that is not well-known to English readers. This republication is based on the version contained within Volume V of his *Complete Works*, with some small improvements made to the translation, grammar, citations, and general presentation. In the interest of our readers we have included the speech given by Chairman Gonzalo of the Communist Party of Peru at San Cristóbal of Huamanga University in Ayacucho, Peru in 1969. This speech will provide the reader with a sufficient background and grasp of Mariátegui's ideology, method, and practice so as to better understand and contextualize the subsequent work.

Mariátegui's works are still difficult to obtain in English, especially in their unabridged and unaltered forms, with many volumes being completely unavailable to English readers. Those works of Mariátegui's that are available to English readers, through various compilations and individual volumes, often present his thought in a distorted manner and incompletely. We are proud to offer our readers this complete and unaltered volume, hitherto unavailable in English, as a humble service to spreading the ideas and works of José Carlos Mariátegui, a titan of Latin American Marxist-Leninist thought and action.

— *Prairie Fire Publishing*



**I.**

# **Introduction**



# To Understand Mariátegui

*Central Committee of the Communist Party of Peru, 1969*

*Lecture given by Chairman Gonzalo at San Cristóbal of  
Huamanga University in Ayacucho, Peru<sup>1</sup>*

It has been a little more than three years since we had the occasion to talk from this place. At the time, we spoke about the problem of education and shared our thoughts on this important issue. It was a wonderful opportunity to talk with you. Today, once again, we have the opportunity to speak with you, but the circumstances are somewhat different.

We are going to speak about José Carlos Mariátegui, of the actuality of his thought, and this task which I have been assigned to address, is not in itself an easy task, at least not to me. First of all, we believe that Mariátegui must be approached with respect, and secondly, we must approach him from a clear and precise position, because otherwise it is not possible in any way to understand the actuality and richness of his thought. Of course, Mariátegui has been physically dead for many years, but his thought is still profoundly alive, just as it was in the 1930s. It is still vibrant, still current and still a perspective for Peru, while other thoughts of people who are still alive are truly dead.

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<sup>1</sup>This translation is taken from RedLibrary, with minimal corrections to grammar and style. — PFP