

# SEVEN INTERPRETIVE ESSAYS ON PERUVIAN REALITY

JOSÉ CARLOS MARIÁTEGUI



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**José Carlos Mariátegui**



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## Republisher's Note

Republished here is José Carlos Mariátegui's *Seven Interpretive Essays on Peruvian Reality*, a text that is not well-known to English readers. This republication is based on the version contained within Volume II 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*

## Author's Note

I bring together in this book, organized and annotated in seven essays, the articles that I published in *Mundial* and *Amanta* concerning some essential aspects of Peruvian reality. Like *The Contemporary Scene*, therefore, this was not conceived of as a book. Better this way. My work has developed as Nietzsche would have wished, for he did not love authors who strained after the intentional, deliberate production of a book, but rather those whose thoughts formed a book spontaneously and without premeditation. Many projects for books occur to me as I lie awake, but I know beforehand that I shall carry out only those to which I am summoned by an imperious force. My thought and my life are one process. And if I hope to have some merit recognized, it is that — following another of Nietzsche's precepts — I have written with my blood.

I intended to include in this collection an essay on the political and ideological evolution of Peru. But as I advance in it, I realize that I must develop it separately in another book. I find that the seven essays are already too long, so much so that they do not permit me to complete other work as I would like to and ought to; nevertheless, they should be published before my new study appears. In this way, my reading public will already be familiar with the materials and ideas of my political and ideological views.

I shall return to these topics as often as shall be indicated by the course of my research and arguments. Perhaps in each of these essays there is the outline, the plan, of an independent book. None is finished; they never will be as long as I live and think and have something to add to what I have written, lived, and thought.

All this work is but a contribution to Socialist criticism of the problems and history of Peru. There are many who think that I am tied to European culture and alien to the facts and issues of my country. Let my book defend me against this cheap and biased assumption. I have served my best apprenticeship in Europe and I believe the only salvation for Indo-America lies in European and Western science and thought. Sarmiento, who is still one of the creators of *argentinidad* (Argentine-ness), at one one time turned his eyes toward Europe. He found no better way to be an Argentine.

Once again I repeat that I am not an impartial, objective critic. My judgments are nourished by my ideals, my sentiments, my passions. I have an avowed and resolute ambition: to assist in the creation of Peruvian socialism. I am far removed from the academic techniques of the university. This is all that I feel honestly bound to tell the reader before he begins my book.

**Lima, 1928**

**José Carlos Mariátegui**



# Introduction