MANY countries have freed themselves since the end of the Second World War from the yoke of imperialism. Under the colonial powers their economic development had been suppressed or directed into channels favorable to the flow of profits for the imperial monopolies and unfavorable to the people of the colonised countries. Now that these countries have freed themselves politically, they realise the importance of building up a sound and healthy economy. This is a difficult task after the enormous damage done to them by the imperialists. It requires new thoughts and experiments and presents many problems.

Under these circumstances imperialist economists have developed a number of “growth theories” for them: that is, theories how best to develop their economy—again to the advantage of the imperialists. Now, it is one task for marxist-leninist thinkers to show up these growth theories for what they are: new tricks to bind the economies of the newly-freed states to those of the old imperialist powers. It is quite another task for them to show constructively new ways of development, leading to the growth of an economy which serves the interests of the people of the newly-liberated countries.

In thinking out new ways a thorough knowledge of older ways of the development of independent economies is needed, as well as a clear insight into the possibilities offered by recent trends in world economic affairs. The most important recent trend is the creation of a new industry—agriculture. The emergence of modern agriculture as an industry, highly mechanised and chemi­cised must be taken into account when socialists investigate the possibilities, the way and means, for the best and fastest economic development of the “new” countries in the interest of their people.
Let us first look at the way in which the large western capitalist-imperialist powers developed: how they built up their economy. England and the United States, Germany and France all went the same way—the textile-way. They began first to build up a mechanised textile industry which made enormous profits. Part of the profits was used to enlarge continuously the textile industry and part was used for the creation of a textile machinery industry. Later, more and more capital went into the heavy industries—coal, iron and steel, and still later an electricity system and electrical products, as well as a chemical industry were created. Thus a whole industrial system, organic in its growth and its working, was built up.

Undoubtedly, the textile-way was, historically, the best for these countries, but neither the textile nor any other way is the best one for all countries. For instance, during the second half of the nineteenth century, India also went the textile way. But she was stopped by the British colonial power and India did not even develop a textile machinery industry—to say nothing of a heavy industry or an electricity system. These could develop only after India freed herself from the colonial yoke.

But it would be wrong to say that no newly-freed country should go the textile-way. If such a country had a large cotton-growing agriculture, there is no reason why it should not develop an important textile industry and textile machinery industry. Bearing in mind that the main task in developing the economy of a country is to develop its economic resources and forces for the benefit of its people, and as these are not the same in every country, then the way of economic development cannot be the same in all countries.

The Soviet Union, the first, and for almost thirty years the only, Socialist country, did not go the textile-way. "Theoretically" the Soviet Union could also have gone the textile-way, for she was a country free from all capitalist-imperialist interference in her affairs. Had she gone the textile-way she would in the course of time have accumulated sufficient sources for investments in other industries, while at the same time raising steadily and considerably the material standard of living of her people.

But the Soviet Union did not live on a dream-island. She was surrounded by imperialist powers, ready to pounce on her at any moment to crush the only socialist state, the vanguard of the labor movement of the world and the hope of all oppressed people. She, therefore, had to build up a modern, all-round industry as quickly as possible and at the same time produce weapons for her defence, for the defence of the progress of mankind.
Under these circumstances the Soviet Union had to choose the iron and steel-way: a difficult way, a heroic way, sacrificing rapid progress in material well-being for the sake of rapid progress on her revolutionary path. The sequence of world events and the glorious victories of the world proletariat in the last half century, as well as marxist theory, have proved that the Soviet Union chose the only historically possible, the only historically correct, path towards success. But if that was the only correct and logical way for the first socialist country, this does not mean that under the present radically changed world conditions every new socialist country must take the iron and steel-way. Just as the textile-way is not a wrong way, because of the case of India, for all newly-liberated countries; so the iron and steel-way is not the only right path for all socialist countries just because it was the only possible one for the Soviet Union.

Under present-day conditions, with a large and powerful socialist camp in existence and ready to assist a small country politically and economically, the following considerations are necessary in planning development:* to fully develop the given material resources of the country; to use all available means of production; to use all specific natural advantages (climate, etc.); and to take all possible advantage of the existing state of the international, especially the socialist division of labor. For the development of a healthy economy the following material factors are necessary: labor power, food for the preservation of the labor power, raw materials, machines, industrial and agricultural buildings, and ways and means of transportation—to name only the most important ones. Some of these factors can be largely (e.g., food) imported in exchange for others richly available in the country concerned. But all of them must be available for the building up of an economy and all of them must be used in the most effective way: that is, guaranteeing the optimum use of the material resources of the country and at the same time a steady rise in the standard of living of the people.

Looked at from this point of view, there are many newly-liberated countries, among them Socialist Cuba, for which the agricultural way of industrialisation appears to be the best. There are, however, objections to this way in quite a number of these countries. Why? No doubt because agriculture was the main branch of economic activity under the colonial regime. The imperialist powers developed agriculture, often as monoculture (mainly coffee,

* Professor Kuczynski is here dealing only with countries whose task is not to create a large all-round economy, such as China or India must build up.
tea or cocoa plantations). Labor was either direct or indirect (e.g., through high poll taxes) forced labor, extremely poorly paid, and because labor was kept so cheap, the technical stage of agriculture was very low. The productivity of labor was low. The producers of food lacked food and lived in extreme poverty.

But modern agriculture is quite different from the old-fashioned and colonial agriculture. Under modern conditions the problem “agricultural or industrial way” does not exist any more. The modern agricultural way is one of many possible industrial ways. Modern agriculture has become a branch of industry. If we keep this in mind, then we can overcome the—historically easily understandable—prejudice against the development of agriculture as one way of industrialising and mechanising the economy of a country.

The first socialist country in the world which has purposely chosen this way, the agricultural-way to industrialisation, is Cuba. Cuba is concentrating on the production of agricultural goods, mainly sugar, but also tobacco, tropical fruits, live-stock and live-stock products. She will raise them in the modern agricultural way, achieving high productivity through mechanisation and chemicisation. The building up of a sugar chemical industry, the construction of sugar-agricultural machinery will be among the many important results in this new way of agricultural industrialisation. Of course, a considerable part of the building industry, with the most modern methods of prefabrication, will be directed towards agriculture, and the same holds true of road building.

In the universities and scientific research institutions this new trend in Cuba’s economy will have important consequences. Book and pamphlet production will shift their weight towards questions of agriculture and agricultural industrialisation. New chapters will be written in the science of political economy by Cuba; new chapters in sociology and history; new lessons will be given to us by Cuba on the tactics and strategy of the class struggle, of the struggle against imperialism. Cuba’s way is a pioneer way of the greatest importance, not only for the building up of socialism there, but also to show the way for many countries not yet socialist, but up to now only non-capitalist. She will be an example especially for many Latin American countries in the process of freeing themselves from American imperialism.

The eyes of hundreds of millions are on Cuba, for, in the making sure of the most modern developments of the productive forces of the world, she goes on a new way towards new goals leading her to the common goal of all mankind; the final stage of communism.