

FIDEL CASTRO DIES

DEFEND GAINS OF CUBAN REVOLUTION AND FIGHT FOR WORKERS' DEMOCRACY

RESIST CAPITALIST RESTORATION



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The death of Fidel Castro, aged 90, will be mourned by millions of workers in Cuba and globally. Castro, along with Che Guevara, led the 1959 Cuban revolution, with overthrew the US-backed dictator Batista.

At the same time, the forces of capitalist reaction and imperialism will see Fidel Castro's death as an opportunity to drive for full capitalist restoration on the island. These reactionary forces aim to destroy all the remaining gains of the revolution and planned economy, including the historic achievements in public health and education.

GAINS OF THE REVOLUTION

Impressive social gains were achieved as a result of the revolution in medicine, health and education. Life expectancy increased; infant mortality fell. Free education is open to all who are not employed and over 90,000 students are currently studying medicine, nursing or other aspects of health studies.

The right-wing pro-capitalist exiles celebrating in Miami are living in a country with a private health care system and 2.3 doctors per 1000 population. In Cuba the health service is free to all, with 5.9 doctors per 1000, and sends doctors to the rest of Latin America – and even to New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina.

All this, despite an economic embargo imposed by US imperialism since 1960 and a severe economic decline which followed the collapse of the former Soviet Union, in 1992, and consequential loss of economic subsidies.

US imperialism has undertaken various attempts - including armed intervention in 1961 - to overthrow the Cuban regime and restore capitalism. This policy has failed, mainly due to the deep social roots of the revolution and support for it which has lasted for decades.

Cuba won widespread sympathy as the only regime on the left that was prepared to stand up to the colossus of US imperialism.

However, in the Cuban revolution unfortunately the working class only played a secondary role, and the regime was never based on workers' democracy. The Socialist Party and the Committee for a Workers International has always argued that the best way to defend the gains of the revolution and defeat attempts to restore capitalism permanently, would be to fight for working class democracy and extend the movement across Latin America.

Castro handed the presidency over to his brother Raul in 2007. In December 2014 US President Obama and Raul Castro announced a series of historic agreements to normalise bilateral relations. These restored diplomatic relations between the two countries, a relaxation on travel restrictions and the first tentative steps signalling the easing of the trade embargo. Since then the US has re-opened its embassy in Havana.

These developments represent a decisive shift in the policy of US imperialism towards Cuba. It also signified a further step by the Cuban regime towards capitalist restoration – a process which has been unfolding for a number of years.

However, it is far from completed. Steps towards the “free market” are allowed under continued state supervision, agreement and control. The state still maintains a powerful control and could choke off these steps at any time. Foreign investors still need to negotiate directly with the government or state controlled companies. The decisive sectors of the economy have still not been privatised or sold to foreign capitalists.

IN THE BOOK 'CUBA – SOCIALISM AND DEMOCRACY' PETER TAAFFE WROTE:

“Under the conditions of new international capitalist crisis, moves towards capitalist restoration can be checked. A mixed or hybrid situation could continue for some time. Initially such gains from the revolution such as the health care and the education system may be maintained although even these have suffered greatly from lack of investment in the recent period. Many obstacles remain to be overcome and some resistance is likely as the reality of capitalist restoration becomes apparent. Sections of the population are already fearful of losing the gains of the revolution and of Cuba being turned

into another Puerto Rico.

“The need to build resistance to the developing pace of capitalist restoration and struggle for a genuine workers' democracy and nationalised planned economy in Cuba is more urgent than ever. Such a movement could link together with the working class and youth throughout Latin America which is increasingly moving into struggle to defend its interests and begin to offer a real socialist alternative to capitalism which has fully learnt the lessons of the Cuban revolution.

“These are the urgent steps needed to prevent the tendency towards capitalist restoration, defend the gains of the revolution and begin to build a genuine democratic socialist society based on workers' democracy and democratic control.”

The impressive achievements of the Cuban revolution give a glimpse of what would be possible with a socialist planned economy that was democratically controlled and managed by the working class.

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The Socialist Party stands 100% in defence of Jeremy Corbyn against the attacks of the right and the capitalist class. We put forward a programme to consolidate his victory and for Labour to be transformed into a party for the 99% with a clear anti-austerity programme.

That means we campaign for socialism – for the taking of the major corporations and banks that dominate the economy into democratic public ownership – in order to begin to build a society that meets the needs of all instead of providing profits for a few.

IF YOU AGREE JOIN US!

From the CWI website: A review of 'My Life - Fidel Castro' by Tony Saunois from 2008.

From the CWI website: 'Cuba at a crossroads' by Tony Saunois September 2015, written in response to the opening up of bilateral agreements and relations between the Cuban regime and the United States.

For more in depth analysis read Peter Taaffe's book: Cuba - Socialism and Democracy. Available free with a direct debit to the Socialist - see socialistparty.org.uk/subscribe for more info

