

Global capitalism – dead end for humanity

We live in a world of unprecedented wealth and technological progress and a world of unprecedented poverty and oppression. Twenty million people every year die of malnutrition amid mountains of surplus food. A third of the world's population doesn't have access to safe water. A trillion dollars a year is spent on arms when just a quarter of that would ensure food, shelter, health and education for everyone in the world. The consumerism that suffocates us is portrayed as a triumph of civilisation by the capitalist media, while the very survival of humanity is threatened by the environmental destruction it generates.

These contradictions are not the result of poor decision making, corruption, bad luck or divine intervention. They are consequences of the economic system that dominates the world – imperialism – the super-exploitation of the mass of the world by a handful of rich capitalist countries. If the world is to change for the better, imperialism must be defeated and replaced by the only alternative – socialism.

Socialist Cuba – a beacon of hope

For over 40 years Cuba has defied imperialism. The Cuban people have withstood invasion, sabotage, terrorism, biological warfare and a sustained economic blockade at the hands of the world's most powerful economic and military power, the United States. They have given unyielding support to other poor countries. They have built socialist Cuba, a beacon of hope for poor and oppressed people throughout the world.

From the poverty and destitution that characterised pre-revolutionary Cuba, the socialist revolution can boast today:

- Infant mortality rate of 6.4 per thousand and life expectancy 75 years – better than in many parts of Britain
- A health service second to none with a doctor:patient ratio of 1:195, the best in the world! In Britain it is 1:518
- Free education available to all – within ten years the average educational standard for Cubans will be graduate level
- Institutionalised racism and other forms of discrimination have been eradicated
- Women are supported by a national system of day centres for children – divorce, abortion and contraception are available as rights

- Every Cuban can be sure of support from their community – despite the hardships of the 'Special Period', not a single school, hospital, old people's home has been closed since 1990

Throughout Latin America and Africa, thousands of Cuban doctors and nurses are helping to save lives and provide medical services. A school of medicine has been opened in Havana to provide free training to students from these countries, including poor students from the United States. Cuba has offered the personnel and expertise to control the AIDS epidemic in Africa.

Revolutionary Cuba shows us that it is possible to solve the problems created by capitalism; that it is possible to provide everyone in the world with the essentials for a dignified life even with limited material resources.

Britain needs socialism

In Britain one third of our children live in poverty. Workers are forced into low-paid, insecure jobs. Thousands of pensioners without heating die every winter. The working class gets third rate health care and education, or none at all. Immigrants escaping economic and political persecution are criminalised. Racists and police attack black and Asian people every day.

In the last 40 years Cuba has revolutionised the lives and prospects of the Cuban people. Imagine the sort of society we could build in Britain with the technical advantages available now, if only we organised society on a socialist basis like the Cubans.

Defend Cuba! Build socialism! – Join Rock around the Blockade

Rock around the Blockade (RATB) is open to anyone who supports Cuba's socialist revolution and opposes the US blockade.

RATB sees the struggle to defend the Cuban revolution as part of our struggle to build socialism in Britain. We take the example of the Cuban revolution onto the streets. We hold demonstrations, run street stalls, petition, organise meetings, gigs and club nights to raise funds for Cuba. We provide a voice for Cuba through the pages of the newspaper *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* and our own Viva Cuba! bulletin and we keep Cuban youth informed about life in Britain through the pages of *Juventud Rebelde*, the newspaper of the Cuban Union of Young Communists (UJC).

Young people need music

In 1995 the UJC asked us to donate sound systems and disco equipment to provide entertainment for Cuban youth. At that time the British government had introduced the Criminal Justice Act which penalised young people and criminalised rave music. The contradiction was clear. Our capitalist government was threatened by youth culture and street parties. In Cuba they believed that young people needed 'soul food' to improve their quality of life.

So far RATB has taken four sound systems to Cuba. During the trip, people on the 'brigade' lived and worked among Cuban people, learning about how Cuban society is organised in the interests of people and not profit.

Boycott Bacardi!

In August 1999, RATB launched the Boycott Bacardi Campaign by closing down the corporation's British headquarters for a day. Bacardi backs the US blockade of Cuba and funds the right-wing Miami mafia which has committed repeated acts of terrorism against Cuba. The Boycott Bacardi Campaign is being picked up and duplicated throughout the world.

Read 'Revolutionary Cuba'

For a great overview of the Cuban revolution past and present, get a copy of RATB's *The streets are ours: Revolutionary Cuba*. The pamphlet covers all aspects of Cuban society, the history of the Revolution and Cuba's international role and includes a young Cuban communist's intriguing view of life under capitalism.

Cuban speaking tour

RATB's next major project is a speaking tour of Britain in Spring 2002 by two young Cuban communists. We need your help to help set-up meetings in colleges, workplaces, youth centres or wherever you can, and to help with publicity and with fundraising.

Join Rock around the Blockade

To get involved in this and other projects, to defend socialist Cuba and build a new socialist movement in Britain, join Rock around the Blockade.