

La etapa democrática, popular, agraria y antimperialista de la Revolución Cubana y la hostilidad imperialista¹

The democratic, popular, agrarian and anti-imperialist stage of the Cuban Revolution and imperialist hostility

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RESUMEN: El artículo aborda la etapa democrática popular, agraria y antimperialista de la Revolución Cubana y la política agresiva del imperialismo norteamericano para tratar de aplastarla, de extirparla del continente. Se demuestra, el cumplimiento de las aspiraciones de los cubanos acerca de la soberanía nacional y la justicia social. La socialización del artículo contribuirá al perfeccionamiento de la docencia de pregrado de la asignatura Historia de Cuba. Se recurrió a los métodos del nivel teórico y del nivel empírico. Tiene como objetivo: Explicar el desarrollo de la etapa democrática, popular, agraria y antimperialista de la Revolución Cubana ante la hostilidad imperialista.

Palabras clave: Revolución; Justicia social; Soberanía nacional; Hostilidad imperialista

ABSTRACT: The article addresses the popular democratic, agrarian and anti-imperialist stage of the Cuban Revolution and the aggressive policy of North American imperialism to try to crush it, to extirpate it from the continent. It demonstrates the fulfillment of the aspirations of Cubans regarding national sovereignty and social justice. The socialization of the article will contribute to the improvement of undergraduate teaching of the subject History of Cuba. The methods of the theoretical level and the empirical level were used. Its objective: Explain the development of the democratic, popular, agrarian and anti-imperialist stage of the Cuban Revolution in the face of imperialist hostility.

Keywords: Revolution; Social justice; National sovereignty; Imperialist hostility

Introduction

Sixty-five years after the Revolution came to power, it is necessary to remember the imperialist hostility towards the Cuban people since the early days of the revolutionary triumph. Hence, this article broadly addresses the democratic, popular, agrarian, and anti-imperialist stage of the Cuban Revolution and the subsequent aggression of US imperialism and the classes displaced from power.

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The Commander-in-Chief repeatedly referred to the “historic dispute” between that country and Cuba. National history clearly demonstrates the expressions alluding to Monroeism, manifest destiny, ripe fruit, geographical fatalism, among others; this is a conflict with historical roots dating back more than two centuries. This is evidenced by the statement made in 1809 by one of the founding fathers and then president of the United States, Franklin (1997): “I confess frankly that I have always looked upon Cuba as the most interesting addition that could be made to our system of states”. With the triumph of the revolution, this dispute deepened, and with it, the Yankees' anger in trying to crush the Cuban Revolution.

However, the ideals of sovereignty and social justice as basic aspirations of the Cuban revolutionaries throughout the struggles for Cuba's independence could not be frustrated. In his continuous public interventions, Fidel Castro established Cuba's right to govern itself without foreign tutelage and outlined the measures that would be adopted as part of the social justice program set forth in the Moncada Program.

Therefore, in the first stage of the Revolution (1959-1961), the dreams of economic independence, political sovereignty, real democracy, and social justice, characteristic of a true revolution, would become a reality, but those dreams would not be accepted by the circles of power in the United States. They would immediately try to pressure the nascent revolutionary government with political, economic, and military measures.

In order to write this article, which aims to deepen the content for teaching the subject of Cuban History at the undergraduate level, theoretical methods were used: historical-logical, inductive-deductive, analysis and synthesis, abstraction and generalization of the historical and historical-chronological, which are fundamental in research of this type. Likewise, empirical methods of document analysis and discourse analysis were used. Its objective is to explain the development of the democratic, popular, agrarian, and anti-imperialist stage of the Cuban Revolution in the face of imperialist hostility.

Development

The triumph of the Revolution was greeted with overwhelming popular enthusiasm, and the support of the people was undeniable. Fidel Castro Ruz distinguished himself from the outset as its supreme leader. However, the presence of conservative elements in the provisional government caused confusion on the part of the US government regarding the ideology of Fidel and the Rebel Army.

The first revolutionary measures enacted and the radicalization of the process cleared up any doubts. This was a true revolution and had to be stopped at any cost, as it would affect US interests in Cuba, but above all because of the example it set for the Latin American peoples. From then until the present, a confrontation developed in US-Cuba relations, characterized by extreme imperialist aggression.

The Revolutionary Government adopted a series of measures that responded to the general interests of all classes and strata of the people. Among the first measures taken were: the release of political prisoners; the dissolution of political parties and groups complicit in the tyranny; and the purging of the public administration. For this reason, revolutionary authorities were placed in the organs of state power, both national and provincial and local, headed by the Council of Ministers with full executive and legislative powers.

Likewise, the old army and police, instruments of the oligarchy and imperialism, were dismantled and dissolved, and in their place remained the Rebel Army. The so-called Emergency Tribunals, established to repress political, democratic, and revolutionary activities, were outlawed; Revolutionary Tribunals were created to try and punish henchmen, torturers, informers, and war criminals. Workers dismissed for political and social reasons were reinstated in their jobs. Evictions of peasants and tenants exposed to abuse by landowners and slumlords, respectively, ceased.

In the process of liquidating the Batista regime, concerns arose with increasing insistence as to whether the Revolution should be limited to establishing formal bourgeois democratic freedoms or whether it should go further. The revolutionary leadership always had in mind a radical solution to the socio-political and economic problems.

However, the bourgeois landowning forces raised demagogic slogans in an attempt to paralyze it and reduce it to lukewarm reforms. They tried to use the popular victory in favor of their greedy interests to gradually seize power. Their activity was naturally hampered by the real bankruptcy of all the bourgeois political parties, which supported or played into Batista's hands. In these circumstances, they relied on the right-wing group of the petty bourgeoisie that was part of the Revolutionary Government (Manuel Urrutia Lleó, José Miró Cardona, and Roberto Agramonte, among others).

In those circumstances, the path embarked upon by the Revolution in 1959 was truly difficult. The first measures taken were met with disagreement and opposition from the conservative tendency,

while the representatives of the Revolution spoke out in favor of streamlining government procedures to solve the country's most pressing problems. "We knew that an entirely new stage in the history of our homeland was beginning, that the road would be long and hard, but that, closely united with the people, we would march forward..." (Castro, 1990, p. 28).

The bourgeois-landowner bloc used the mass media, its financial resources, and the support of US power circles to try to oppose the implementation of the radical transformations demanded by the popular masses. All the oligarchy's propaganda was aimed at taming the process. The cattle ranchers offered ten thousand pregnant heifers in exchange for a timid agrarian reform, while the *Diario de la Marina* advised the distribution of land to swampy areas and areas invaded by marabou. Meanwhile, Fidel Castro publicly reiterated the main points of the revolutionary program: political sovereignty, economic development, and social justice.

In mid-February, the first ministerial crisis occurred with the resignation of Miró Cardona from his position as Prime Minister. On February 16, Fidel Castro took office and announced a program for the advancement of the Revolution.

From that moment on, measures were implemented aimed at rescuing national sovereignty and establishing social justice. Although these measures did not alter the capitalist relations of property and distribution of wealth, they clashed with the bourgeois-landowner bloc and the interests of US imperialism. The process of confiscating the assets embezzled by Batista and his accomplices from the public treasury was intensified; construction, land, sea, and air transport companies were recovered, as well as sugar mills and land.

On March 3, the Cuban Telephone Company, linked to shady deals with the tyranny, was intervened. On March 10, housing rents were reduced by 50%. On March 20, the price of medicines was reduced and projects were developed to guarantee free public health care, with new hospitals, polyclinics, and dispensaries, especially in rural areas. The budget for this sector was also increased and the training of doctors, dentists, and nurses was accelerated.

On April 21, all beaches in the country were declared public. This measure and others addressed urgent problems that had accumulated in Cuban society during colonialism and capitalism in terms of social, racial, and gender exclusion and discrimination. Fidel Castro had already stated:

...we are going to put an end to discrimination in the workplace by campaigning to end this hateful and repugnant system with a new slogan: job opportunities for all Cubans, without

discrimination based on race or sex; an end to racial discrimination in the workplace. In this way, we will forge, step by step, the new homeland. (Castro, 1959, p. 1)

Four revolutionary measures were enacted that immediately brought the Cuban Revolution into conflict with US imperialism: the law on the intervention of the Telephone Company, the reduction of electricity rates, the Agrarian Reform Law, and the Mining Law.

Of these measures, without a doubt, the most important and radical, and the one that caused the most resentment among the imperialists, was the Agrarian Reform Law, as there were US companies that owned thousands of acres of land. Legally, the law represented Article 90 of the 1940 Constitution, which outlawed large estates. It was a severe blow to large estates and imperialist domination over Cuba. In addition, it was an act of social justice, as it gave land to more than 100,000 peasant families who worked it.

The law allowed the ownership of up to 30 acres of land, provided that there were no tenants, sharecroppers, or squatters working it. In this way, the large latifundia sector disappeared, but rich peasants and large landowners remained. As exceptional cases, the law authorized up to 100 caballerías of land for those owners who produced sugar, rice, and livestock, whose yields were considerably high.

It also prohibited the acquisition of land by foreigners and the sale to individuals of land given away free of charge by the Revolution. The law contributed to eliminating feudal remnants in the countryside; it changed the situation of land ownership and affected the enormous control over it exercised by large foreign companies and the latifundista oligarchy. Therefore, it had an anti-imperialist and revolutionary character.

The National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) was created to enforce the law. Land was given to the peasants who were working it at the time the law was enacted (two caballerías at no cost and up to five caballerías, paying for the remaining three caballerías in convenient installments agreed upon with the agency). At that time, the first agricultural cooperatives and village farms were formed with idle, unworked land, which was transferred to the state sector, where salaried agricultural workers who had previously worked occasionally would now work throughout the year.

The Agrarian Reform Law brought about a change in the lives of the peasantry, eliminating agricultural unemployment during the off-season, increasing the consumption capacity of peasants

and agricultural workers, and consolidating revolutionary power. In addition, it polarized Cuban society: it created an alliance between workers, peasants, and the rest of the popular classes, and a bourgeois landowning bloc allied with imperialism, in which sectors of the non-sugar industrial bourgeoisie participated. This law directly confronted imperialism against Cuba.

For these reasons, the contradictions between the conservative and revolutionary tendencies within the government were exacerbated; beginning on June 11, some cabinet ministers were replaced.

Nevertheless, President Urrutia continued to hinder the development of the revolutionary process by taking diversionary and counterrevolutionary positions.

On July 17, 1959, Fidel's resignation from his position as Prime Minister was made public due to disagreements with the president's attitude. The people took to the streets demanding the return of their supreme leader to his post and the resignation of Urrutia, who resigned in response to popular demand. Osvaldo Dorticós Torrado, who had until then served as Minister of Revolutionary Legislation, assumed the presidency. The changes in the Revolutionary Government were welcomed with deep satisfaction by the masses.

On July 26, 1959, a massive rally was held in Havana, attended not only by the people of Havana but also by hundreds of thousands of peasants from all over the country. The participants expressed the Cuban people's determination to continue on the path of revolution. There, Fidel announced his return to his duties as Prime Minister, a decision that was acclaimed by the people.

From that moment on, the revolutionary state apparatus was strengthened under Fidel's leadership, based on uniting all revolutionary forces. Moderate and hesitant elements were left behind in the revolutionary journey. For these reasons, honest men and women emerged from the ranks of the Rebel Army and other organizations representing the interests of the people to carry out a wide variety of missions in the leadership of the state.

The Revolution continued its course throughout 1959, and other measures were enacted: reduction of telephone, electricity, and gas rates beginning on August 20. Sources of employment were increased to eradicate unemployment, and social security pensions were increased for the entire working population.

Attention to education was highlighted. The country had one million illiterate people, 600,000 children without classrooms, and 10,000 unemployed teachers. Ten thousand new classrooms were created, and the training of volunteer teachers began. In addition, 69 barracks were converted into

schools, the Comprehensive Education Reform Act was passed, and the price of books was reduced. Furthermore, conditions were prepared for the Literacy Campaign.

Efforts were made to eradicate inherited vices and corruption: gambling, drug trafficking and use, organized smuggling, and prostitution. The National Lottery was eliminated and replaced by the National Savings and Housing Institute (INAV), whose profits were used in a comprehensive public works and housing plan. The Ministry of Social Welfare was created to eradicate slums and begging.

In the first year of the Revolution, measures and laws were enacted to implement the Moncada Program. In 1959, the international situation was favorable for the consolidation of the Revolution's triumph and the work undertaken, despite the growing counterrevolutionary aggression of imperialism and internal reaction.

The hostile stance of US power circles and displaced classes toward the fulfillment of the revolutionary Project

From the very beginning, the Cuban Revolution has been subjected to all kinds of aggression by successive US administrations, as the following examples illustrate. The unfounded slander against the judicial process against the informers, torturers, and murderers of the revolutionaries who fought against tyranny. These individuals were legally prosecuted by revolutionary courts and punished according to the magnitude of their crimes, but imperialism sought to halt revolutionary justice by presenting these events to the world as acts of bloody revenge. In response, Operation Truth was launched.

The creation of counterrevolutionary organizations such as “La Rosa Blanca” (The White Rose), an organization founded on January 28, 1959, in the United States by Batista supporter Rafael Díaz-Balart, the CIA, and the FBI. They deployed propaganda, subversive plans, economic sabotage, and terrorist actions. In addition, they included attacks against the leaders of the Revolution.

A counterrevolutionary conspiracy was developed by the dictator Trujillo from Santo Domingo, who deployed an aggressive policy against Cuba, with the active participation of agents of imperialism and the Cuban counterrevolution. Attacks on Cuban embassies and diplomatic personnel in Haiti and Santo Domingo, violations of Cuban maritime and airspace to supply weapons to the counterrevolutionaries. Likewise, the project of a mercenary landing that would be

supported on the island by groups of former Batista supporters and traitors to the Revolution charged with provoking armed uprisings and assassinating revolutionary leaders.

However, until May 1959, US power circles believed they could curb the momentum of the Cuban Revolution with the aforementioned actions. But from that date onwards, precisely with the enactment of the Agrarian Reform Law, a relentless war against it was unleashed.

All links in the chain of aggression were brought into play in order to destroy it: smear campaigns by imperialist agencies, sabotage carried out by pirate planes over the sugar cane fields, incendiary bombs at the Niagara sugar mills in Pinar del Río and Punta Alegre in Camagüey. Months later, at the beginning of the sugar harvest, they attacked mills throughout the island, organized military plans, uprisings by rebel groups, espionage, among other things.

The internal counterrevolution, encouraged by imperialism, manifested itself in June 1959 with the cattle ranchers of Camagüey, who attempted to hinder the implementation of the Agrarian Reform and affect the supply of meat to the population by refusing to buy calves from the peasants for fattening. The Revolutionary Government responded by buying them directly from the peasants and intervening in the large cattle ranches that still existed.

On the economic front, the US government refused to grant a modest loan requested by Cuba. On July 8, they empowered the president to suspend aid to countries that confiscated their property without the compensation they sought. In addition, they threatened to reduce Cuba's sugar quota, which was vital to the country's economy.

It was precisely in the regional context of Camagüey that the case of sedition by Huber Matos Benítez, conspiring with the Catholic Church and the large cattle ranchers, took place. Commander Camilo Cienfuegos received orders from the Commander-in-Chief to go there to deal with it. Supported by the revolutionaries in the territory, he arrested Matos and the rest of the counterrevolutionary conspirators on October 22, 1959. Shortly thereafter, Fidel arrived, unarmed, and together with Camilo and the people marched to the regiment headquarters, where there was no resistance.

In the remaining months of the second half of 1959 and throughout 1960, counterrevolutionary organizations and CIA spy networks spread to all provinces of the country with acts of vandalism. Notable examples include: the planning of attacks on revolutionary leaders, radio attacks and

violations of air and maritime space; sabotage, arson, uprisings by groups of bandits, and bombings of towns, refineries, sugar mills, cane fields, and other targets.

On March 4, 1960, the French ship *La Coubre*, which had come from Belgium with weapons for the Rebel Army, exploded in the port of Havana. This was an act of sabotage carried out by the CIA to prevent the strengthening of the Revolutionary Government's defenses. At the funeral service for the victims, Fidel Castro proclaimed the slogan “*Patria o Muerte!*” (Fatherland or Death!).

At the same time, the US government intensified its diplomatic aggression, using the OAS as a political tool. It tried to present US hostility toward the Cuban Revolution as a consequence and response to “communist penetration” in the hemisphere, in order to frame it as a regional problem.

At the same time, in Cuba, a great deal of anti-communist propaganda was unleashed by the press and other media. This included false news about parental authority, the end of the family, the elimination of property, the loss of individuality, and the prohibition of religion. They tried to provoke fear, confusion, and rejection of the Revolution among the population and encourage an exodus to the United States. Hence, Operation Peter Pan was orchestrated by the US government.

The aggressiveness of US power circles sought to stifle the country through the adoption of a series of measures. Among these, the suppression of oil imports and refining stands out. The following is a summary of its history:

Three foreign companies (Esso, Texaco, and Shell) took over the importation, refining, and supply of fuel in Cuba for decades. They transported oil in their ships from wells they owned and sold it to the Cuban state for almost three dollars a barrel. The state then paid them for refining and producing derivatives, which were subsequently sold by the transnational companies to the state and to Cuban individuals through their gas station networks.

Shortly after the revolutionary triumph, Cuba began to purchase oil from Venezuela, but the US companies refused to rent their supertankers to transport it. On orders from the US government, these foreign companies limited their oil imports and refining to cause an artificial shortage in the country.

Under these conditions, the Soviet state agreed to sell oil to Cuba at just over two dollars a barrel and to transport it. Then the US transnationals refused to refine it, thereby violating Article 44 of

the Minerals and Fuels Act (enacted on May 9, 1938), which stipulated the obligation to process crude oil supplied by the Cuban state.

From Washington, arrogant voices threatened to reduce or eliminate Cuba's quota in the US sugar market if the revolutionary government rigorously enforced the legislation. Fidel responded:

They will take away our quotas, but with the quotas they take away, they will have to finally remove their masks as exploiters and enemies of humanity! They will take away our quotas, but with the quotas, they will have to remove forever the sympathy of the Cuban people! They will take away our quotas, but with the quotas they will not be able to take away the shame and dignity with which we are willing to die on our land... They will take away the quota pound for pound, and we will take away the sugar mills one by one!. (Castro, 1960, p. 1)

On June 29, 1960, the US companies Texaco, Esso, and Shell (British) interrupted oil supplies to Cuba. In addition, they refused to process crude oil purchased from the then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) as a result of pressure from Washington.

The threat of complete economic paralysis loomed over the country. The escalation turned into direct economic aggression, and on July 6, 1960, the Cuban quota of sugar imported by the United States was reduced by 700,000 tons and then eliminated altogether.

Similarly, the US government prohibited US companies and their subsidiaries from exporting spare parts essential for economic development. It should be noted that all equipment, machinery, and vehicles came from these companies. With this measure, they sought to paralyze the Cuban economy.

The anti-imperialist content of the Revolution became increasingly necessary. Faced with the threat of cutting off fuel and paralyzing the national economy, the Revolution had to advance or surrender. The revolutionary response did not stop.

Thus, on August 6, 1960, Law 851 was enacted, proclaimed by Fidel Castro at the rally in the Estadio Latinoamericano, which rescued 36 sugar mills, the electricity and telephone companies, and the oil refineries for Cuba. Investments worth more than \$700 million were transferred to the Cuban state. This was a blow to imperialist power.

Thus, by August 1960, nationalizations had given the Cuban state decisive importance in the economic sphere. It owned 50% of the land; 37.6% of the sugar industry; control of essential public

services (electricity and telephones); the railways, although these had been under state control since the pre-revolutionary period; and 50% of the 14 factories with more than 500 workers.

The United States used this legal and just act by the Revolutionary Government to impose an economic blockade and suppress exports of US goods. It also froze Cuba's foreign currency funds in US banks and called on its Latin American allies to break off trade ties with Cuba.

On September 17, 1960, Resolution No. 2 nationalized US banks based on the island, and their functions were assumed by the National Bank of Cuba. With the nationalizations of August-September 1960, virtually all imperialist property in Cuba was eliminated. These nationalizations were eminently anti-imperialist in nature.

The measures adopted up to August-September 1960 were characterized by the intention to choose a non-capitalist path for economic development. None of the expropriated properties (many of which were crucial to the country's productive process) were transferred to private owners, but remained under state control and were administered by representatives of the people. The incorporation of foreign banks into a state system, which drastically reduced private banking, pointed in the same direction.

Despite this, socialism was not yet announced as an objective. Moreover, in the face of continuous attacks by the US authorities and press, which labeled the Cuban revolution as communist, Fidel Castro and the main revolutionary figures responded with the government's democratic and patriotic policy.

However, the Cuban industrial bourgeoisie inevitably precipitated the new nationalization measures. During the republican period, the sugar plantation owners were not part of the nation, but rather the vanguard of the anti-nation. They were linked to the forms of domination and economic operation of US companies.

The profitability of their industries depended entirely on the exploitation of sugar cane farmers and the favors of the US government to secure their market. With both sources of enrichment eliminated, the landowners saw certain ruin ahead of them and acted as agents of imperialist policy. They opposed the Revolutionary Government and worked for its defeat.

They were inclined to this attitude by an additional interest: most of them were simultaneously owners of sugar mills and large estates. The Agrarian Reform deprived them of immediate control over large tracts of land and the profits from sugar cane exploitation, if not the exorbitant rents

extracted from the peasantry. For them, the deferred payment provided for in the Agrarian Reform Law was no compensation for the enormous and illegitimate profits that the previous system had provided them.

For its part, the non-sugar bourgeoisie, historically characterized by weakness and cowardice, had been unable for half a century to defend its interests with the necessary energy and had retreated every time the contradiction between national interests and imperialist domination reached a climax. It would not be surprising if, at the decisive moment of this battle, the non-sugar bourgeoisie deserted its position in the patriotic ranks.

Carlos Marx's assessment of the German bourgeoisie of the time is well suited to the Cuban non-sugar bourgeoisie: "The bourgeoisie had developed so languidly, so cowardly, and so slowly... without initiative, without faith in itself, without faith in the people..." (Marx, 1848, p. 3). For this reason, both bourgeoisies were alike, as they trampled on the weak but humbled themselves before the powerful.

Desde mayo de 1959 hasta octubre de 1960, esos perfiles de la burguesía no azucarera cubana se acentuaron hasta lo grotesco. El análisis de los resultados económicos que para ese grupo social significó la fase inicial del avance revolucionario, demuestra como nunca antes tuvo una posibilidad mayor de ganancias y una esperanza más sólida de crecimiento. Se calculó en casi 500 millones pesos anuales, el incremento de la capacidad de consumo las zonas de menores ingresos de la población.

This is due to several factors: the Agrarian Reform freed peasants from paying rent, increased the price of their products, and created year-round work opportunities for agricultural workers in rural areas, which led to the expansion of the domestic market for national consumer industries. Likewise, the reduction in urban rents and the lowering of electricity and telephone rates increased the purchasing power of the urban population.

Thus, Cuban industries such as cigarette manufacturing, tobacco, textiles, and perfumery worked 24 hours a day without being able to meet demand. As a result, the profits of the Cuban industrial bourgeoisie outside the sugar industry increased considerably in the first 18 months of the Revolution.

However, the more the Revolution was forced to respond to the aggressions of US power circles with measures that curtailed foreign power, the more the bourgeois groups distanced themselves

from the revolutionary people. The bosses of the industries took positions that amounted to outright sabotage of the Cuban government's measures.

Two additional factors contributed to this: first, the intertwining of the interests of this industrial sector of the bourgeoisie with landownership, since many of them were also large landowners and were affected by the Agrarian Reform Law. Second, the blind belief in the thesis of geographical fatalism. The fearful bourgeoisie of Cuba found it inconceivable that this small country would challenge the power of the northern imperialist giant, considered invincible.

Therefore, the overthrow of Fidel Castro and his government seemed imminent to them, to the same extent that the revolutionary decisions confronted the United States. More than one important industrialist in Cuba left the country in August and September without warning their main collaborators or informing their partners in the same company. They left for Miami with the conviction, expressed upon arrival there, that a few weeks after the defeat of the Revolution; their factories would be returned to them in full working order.

Despite the strategy of the Cuban Revolution, the non-sugar industrial bourgeoisie in Cuba made it more difficult to isolate itself from the revolutionary and patriotic camp at the height of the anti-imperialist struggle. It was this treacherous resistance, complicit with imperialism, which forced the Revolutionary Government to push for complete nationalization. Its position was characterized as follows:

Pseudo-revolutionary elements used the slogan of indiscriminately increasing wages to further aggravate the economic situation and pit the labor movement against the Revolutionary Government. In response to this attitude, wages were frozen and wage increases without fully justified reasons were considered grounds for intervention.

In addition, the national bourgeoisie caused artificial shortages and speculated on basic necessities; it hid raw materials and parts to paralyze production and transportation; it increased exports of certain products without considering increases in domestic consumption. It tried to confuse and intimidate small and medium-sized producers. These attitudes of the bourgeoisie, unacceptable to the Cuban government and people, accelerated its destruction as a social class and contributed to the radicalization of the Revolution.

In October 1960, anti-imperialist nationalizations were completed with the inclusion of the US banking sector under Law 891, which declared banking to be a public function, to be exercised

only by the state. At the same time, Law 890 was enacted, which constituted a qualitative change in the nationalization process, as the state proceeded to take over all national industries with more than 25 employees.

Thus, on October 13, 1960, more than 380 large commercial and industrial properties belonging to the Cuban bourgeoisie were nationalized: sugar mills, banks, distilleries, factories, workshops, warehouses, department stores, railway companies, and construction companies. These became state property, with the aim of defending the country's economy.

Also, through Resolution No. 3 of Law 851, on October 24 of that year, the 164 US companies still remaining in the country were transferred to the Cuban state, in response to the increase in the blockade imposed on the 19th of that month by the United States. In this way, the nation's large private capital passed into the hands of the state.

As can be seen, the nationalizations of October 1960 already hit the big Cuban capitalists. The revolutionary reality established in Cuba was declared incompatible with the existence of capitalism in its most developed forms, leaving only room for medium and small companies. The pace of nationalizations shook the foundations of the old economic structure and signaled the socialist orientation of the revolutionary process.

This pace of nationalizations was the result of objective conditions: the need to put the main economic levers at the service of the working class and to radically counteract the attacks of imperialism and its allies, who adopted a counterrevolutionary attitude by resorting to active economic sabotage. Therefore, although Cuba was not formally declared a socialist country until April 16, 1961, the socialist characteristics of the revolutionary process appeared on October 13, 1960.

On October 14, the Urban Reform Law was enacted, granting the right to home ownership to tenants who occupied them. On October 15, 1960, Fidel Castro declared that the Moncada Program had been fundamentally fulfilled; the conditions for the construction of a new society had been created. The transition from the democratic-popular, agrarian, and anti-imperialist stage to the socialist stage had been achieved without interruption, in a short period of time and under the same revolutionary leadership.

However, imperialist aggression increased. The United States government tried to provoke a total economic crisis in Cuba to destroy the Revolutionary Government, but this was not achieved, as

the people maintained their support for the Revolution. As a result, counterrevolutionary sabotage and terrorism increased, aimed at destroying the country's industrial, commercial, agricultural, and educational potential, as well as its means of transportation, communication, and other resources. These acts of vandalism caused regrettable material and human losses.

Likewise, there was an increase in plans to assassinate revolutionary leaders, especially Fidel Castro. Armed counterrevolutionary groups landed on the island with various missions. Support for counterrevolutionary organizations continued, as did the military training of thousands of stateless persons in different parts of Florida and Central America and the promotion of rebel bands. On January 3, 1961, the United States government broke off diplomatic relations with Cuba to facilitate its invasion plan.

At dawn on April 15, the airports of Ciudad Libertad, San Antonio de los Baños, and Santiago de Cuba were attacked. The objective of this military aggression was to destroy the few old aircraft on the ground in order to limit the air response to the planned invasion. This cruel act caused material and human damage.

On April 16, at the funeral of the victims of that attack, on the eve of the mercenary invasion, the Commander-in-Chief proclaimed the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution and declared the country on alert. Hours later, the mercenary invasion began at Playa Girón and Playa Larga. As soon as they arrived on Cuban soil, the invaders encountered the tenacious resistance of the uniformed people commanded by their supreme leader, which culminated in victory on the 19th.

The hostility of US imperialism continues today, in the form of a relentless struggle of political, economic, and media aggression, which is opposed by the firm resistance of the Cuban people. Fidel Castro foresaw this early on, as he pointed out in a letter written to Celia Sánchez during the struggle in the Sierra Maestra: “When this war is over, a much longer and greater war will begin for me: the war I am going to wage against them [the Americans]. I realize that this will be my true destiny” (Blanco *et al.*, 2018, p. 237).

Conclusions

In January 1959, the popular, agrarian, and anti-imperialist democratic stage of the Cuban Revolution began. The measures taken responded to the common interests of all classes and popular sectors. The revolutionary power, with the overwhelming support of the masses, established full national sovereignty and social justice and eliminated the foundations of the bourgeois state.

Starting in May 1959, a relentless war was waged by US power circles and the classes displaced from political power by the triumphant Revolution. The means of subsistence were attacked with the aim of destroying the Revolution.

In August 1960, the process of anti-imperialist nationalizations took place. Starting in the second half of the year, socialist nationalizations were carried out, and profound transformations began with the creation of new relations of production. At the same time, there was greater ideological preparation of the popular masses to begin the path of building socialism.

On October 15, 1960, Fidel Castro announced the completion of the first stage of the Cuban Revolution and the beginning of a new one, whose methods would necessarily be different from those used in the stage that had just ended.

In just two years, the Revolution had broken the bonds of political and economic domination established by imperialism over Cuba and fulfilled the Moncada program. It was a unique, ascending, uninterrupted, and victorious revolutionary process, unfolding amid fierce class struggle and imperialist aggression. The transition took place in a short period of time and under the same revolutionary leadership.

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