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Cuba

# New Cuban blog states editorial line

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**The Editorial Board of the new Cuban blog *Comunistas* published its statement of editorial line on 10 June 2020.**

Cuba is experiencing a crisis today only surpassed by the Special Period. At least, that is what is perceived, lived and understood by the Cuban working class, which does not care about statistics, but a daily scenario marked by long queues which last for hours and little merchandise to buy. As if that were not enough, when we return to “normality”, we will find a completely different landscape from the one we left; worse, because there was an acute crisis before, reflected in a shortage of basic necessities.

We will return to a “normality” that will then be marked by having closed borders for at least three months. Therefore, the tourism industry will have lost almost a million foreign clients; if we give a conservative figure. The Cuban economy has developed such a dependence on tourism that this blow will demonstrate - again! - how dangerous it is to be tied to a single economic sector.

At the time of the reopening of borders, the global economy will find itself in a general crisis, second only to that of 1929. An assertion found in such non-communist newspapers as the *Guardian*, the *New York Times* and the *Financial Times*. Also, two of our main sources of tourism, Spain and Italy, are nations badly hit by Covid-19. Therefore, if tourism began to return in October, normally high season, we will actually have a low season.

To this panorama we must include the measures against Cuba that Donald Trump has launched, who, although it seems incredible, will probably win the presidential elections. The fact that Venezuela needs Iranian fuel indicates that it is no longer the country on whose fuel we once depended. In other words, our future “normality” will be marked by another crisis in public transport.

The Cuban government's response to this crisis, according to the Minister of Finance and Prices, is to cut spending in the sector that first ceased to function, that is, the culture sector and all those sectors that “do not produce”. Furthermore, it calls for the “unfettered liberation of the productive forces”. Both announcements have gone almost unnoticed, a combination which is not very stimulating.

To a large extent, the majority do not understand the seriousness of what it means to “liberate the productive forces”, because for the majority, Marxism-Leninism and Political Economy, subjects that we learn at all levels of secondary education and in every university career, generally denote boredom and dogma. Marx only appears in the *Granma* newspaper during the anniversaries of his birth and death.

It was then forgotten that an important part of the productive forces is made up of the means of production. That is, the instruments of production, whether scissors, hammers or tractors, factories, bakeries or hotels, everything that serves to produce, in addition to raw materials.

It was also forgotten that for the means of production to fulfil their purpose, it is necessary that they be set in motion by the human labour force. That is, by our physical and intellectual capacities: the other part of the productive forces.

So there are only two ways of understanding the liberation of the productive forces. Either liberation in a socialist sense, or liberation for the benefit of the “small and medium enterprises”, another beautiful euphemism now very popular that, together with the misuse of entrepreneurs or self-employed, is the best way to avoid saying:

bourgeoisie.

Those terrible euphemisms have made Cuban society think that the old candy vendor is as self-employed as the owner of a coffee shop. The difference that lies in the fact that the worker is the one who lives off their labour power –either by selling it or using it for themselves – while the bourgeois lives on the surplus value resulting from what the worker sells to them - through wage labour - the labour power that sets in motion the means of production, owned by the bourgeois, surplus value which not only satisfies the physical and spiritual needs of the bourgeois but is used to generate more surplus value.

If for further clarification we say that work takes place when labour power is sold, we see that when the owner of a cafeteria buys from the university student his physical capacity to spend 12 hours behind a counter, and also, his intellectual capacity to be able to receive the convertible peso and give the change in national currency, the one who works is the student, seller of his labour power, and not the bourgeois. Meanwhile, the peanut seller works only for herself: that is, she is self-employed.

On the other hand, if we liberate the productive forces in a socialist sense, it would be necessary to liberate the means of production from state-centric management, at the same time that the working class is liberated from the bureaucrats who decide for it in the enterprises. That is to say: to bring about the much desired workers' management.

The other vision, the one that would benefit the private sector, is perfectly described by the economist Camila Piñeiro Harnecker when she says that the economic trend is calling "to liberate the productive forces with more space for private companies and the market". [1] But why would this be? Let's take a specific case of productive force as a whole: a hotel and its workers. What does it mean to release those productive forces? To have the workers, in full equality, manage the hotel, or, to free the hotel - that is, the tourism industry - from the "obstacles" to the Cuban private sector being part of its administration?

Liberating the productive forces may also mean that, as in China or Vietnam, large private companies are allowed to exist. It is not necessarily to privatize the state means of production, but to allow a bourgeois to build their own company without limits to its expansion.

Liberating the forces of production could also be what Fidel did in the mid-1990s: that this obese state freed itself from the burden of having to be a peanut seller, barber and taxi driver. But that is something that has already been done.

And what is wrong with the Cuban bourgeoisie being part of the hotel administration or building large firms by itself and even negotiating directly with foreign companies, as is the case in Chinese and Vietnamese socialism? That is, what is wrong with the growth and expansion of the bourgeoisie, if the socialist state is supposed to control it?

If we look around we see that in the public sphere, two well-defined positions generally prevail about how to build Cuban socialism. The first, and majority position - although not for this reason Bolshevik - is that of those who understand that Cuban socialism will be prosperous and sustainable, as long as a bourgeoisie controlled by the state grows. The bourgeoisie will generate employment and wealth that an effective state will put at the service of society. They believe that, with this, the bureaucracy will also lose political control and then there will be a significant weakening of censorship, while a scenario conducive to the expansion of civil society will be born. They forget that China is one of the best examples of widespread and effective censorship.

The other position on how to build socialism is characterized by being more than loyal to the Party. They never

question it directly, they only point out “certain errors”, always within what is allowed and oriented. They understand that, although for now the bourgeoisie in our country is a necessary evil, the Deng Xiaoping-Doi Moi path is not the one that Cuba should follow - and in this they are right. But they attack the press media that were born with the rise of the bourgeoisie, thinking that those web pages, that alternative journalism, those blogs, are the main enemies of the Revolution. And they forget that the class enemy is the bourgeoisie. That its means of expression are only a product of it, in this case, an indirect product of the socialist state that gave birth to the Cuban bourgeoisie. And as this conclusion is only reached by making a direct criticism of the state, they end up staying within the field of censorship: disqualifying these media -although sometimes they have no direct relationship with the bourgeoisie- maintaining total silence when another case of censorship comes to light -because they believe that, because they do not share the ideas of the censored, they have nothing to say and still less anyone to defend-, and that most of them are in the payroll of imperialism.

They also think, and they sincerely say, that they are part of the state – and indeed sometimes they are, and hence their behaviour-; and they think even if it seems incredible, that civil society is a weapon to divide the working class.

Of course: they are -setting aside some opportunists - honest defenders of Cuban socialism; something that unfortunately is scarce and is very necessary. But, not wanting to make any criticism of Cuban socialism, they do not, nor can they, criticize the main problems that the expansion of the bourgeoisie has generated: a deep inequality and, consequently, gentrification, at the same time that it has had a hard impact on the conscience of the working class, since the vision that the new Cuban bourgeoisie is a model of success to follow is increasingly widespread.

In essence, this impact has been due to the critical impoverishment of cultural policies, leaving the periphery of the capital, most of the cities of the interior of the country and much more to the countryside, at the expense of the bourgeois cultural model, which only exacerbates individualism, profit-making and the progressive deterioration of revolutionary consciousness.

It is an inequality where the - increasingly scarce - goods that the working class needs to have an honest life, end up almost disappearing, because they are consumed by private businesses, which, obviously, need a higher level of consumption; and inflation shoots up, and tails lengthen. Furthermore, when most of the private property of this country is concentrated in the service sector, that is, this bourgeois class monopolizes food and hygiene products to increase its capital. This problem is exacerbated by the lack of an efficient wholesale market that meets the needs of that class, because right now Cuba does not have the productive capacity to assume a wholesale market. Therefore, it will not be the expansion of private property that frees us from scarcity.

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [Comunistas](#).*

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[1] C. Piñeiro, “Repensando el socialismo cubano. Propuestas para una economía democrática y cooperativa”, Casa Ruth Editorial, Havana, 2013 p.11.