

New Year's Message from Communists to the Cuban and World Working Class

The crisis experienced in Cuba during the recently concluded 2020 is only the prologue of a unique situation in our country. The economic turnaround calculated in detail by our leaders – but with not a few consequences that will escape any forecast – will provoke a scenario in which the Cuban working class will be the first and most affected.

The first months of 2021 will be decisive for Cuba's immediate and medium-term future. Society's reactions to a completely different reality is something that anyone who assumes to be a communist must be aware of.

Let us remember again: this year we will witness the implementation of an economic plan never seen in the period from 1959 to the present. This government program – which began on January 1, exactly when the 62nd anniversary of the triumph of the Revolution was being celebrated – is based on four fundamental factors:

- 1 – Drastic cuts in subsidies
- 2 – Price increase
- 3 – Currency devaluation
- 4 – Strengthening and expansion of the private sector of the economy, through the direct support of the State.

This last point makes the first three measures have a stronger impact on Cuban society. Unlike the shock the working class will suffer, the private sector is the first to benefit from the drastic cut in subsidies. As public policies are reduced, part of the resources that used to be allocated to them will be made available to the private sector.

An example of this is the gradual elimination of the food parcel that the state used to provide to the population at subsidized prices. With the disappearance of this aid, a considerable group of the products that made up this parcel could be destined for the state wholesale market, created to supply exclusively the companies of the bourgeoisie. In turn, the private sector could emerge and expand in the spaces from which the state economy is increasingly withdrawing.

Moreover, the state sector raises prices by stimulating bourgeoisie companies to do the same, or even establishing a price increase for the private sector, which in many cases not even the owner himself had thought of doing. This is called the accumulation of wealth, without which capitalism cannot exist. Therefore, if the state wants to stimulate the expansion of the private sector on a scale never seen before, it must also stimulate the accumulation of capital.

The government, by wanting the private sector to expand, creates favorable conditions for this; what the working class ends up paying for.

Those who believed that a major expansion of the private sector of the economy could be achieved without cuts in social policies were guilty of naivety, extreme optimism or idle talk.

But in this crisis there is a forgotten group: the working class hired in the private sector. About two million workers who did not receive the thousand peso credit offered by the government to face the month of January. In the face of rising prices, they are left at the expense of the free market and the goodness of their employers. In addition, they have experienced the harshest moment of quarantine. They had no salary to support them while society was paralyzed. They were joined by the sector of the self-employed: the real self-employed. They will live through the economic shock without more help than their own hands and without any compensation

for what they produce. If their fragile businesses fail, they will have broken their lives. With the growth of private enterprise, as happened in the early days of capitalism, the business of the self-employed will gradually disappear.

Finally, there are those who for one reason or another do not work – and are not thieves: families made up of housewives and children of students who have always survived in the informal economy or in limited family assistance. Elderly people who live alone. People who cannot find work. In the capital, although we have no statistics, begging and the elderly or the mentally ill sleeping on the street are increasing. What will they all do today, while they get a job, receive a late subsidy due to bureaucratic obstacles, hindered by their mental health or a retirement for which they will have to wait until February? What can a student from Havana do later, when his mother receives a minimum wage in the face of an increase in transportation from 40 cents to 2 pesos, that is, five times more?

The cuts are already being felt. The soup kitchens for poor families where each lunch costs 2 pesos (about 10 cents), now go to 26 pesos a day (about 1 dollar and 10 cents).

At the same time, high electricity prices – which have fallen after public pressure – show that decision makers want to implement the most rigorous of cuts.

Can these measures, which threaten the profits of the working class, be considered socialist? No: this economic package does not correspond to Socialism. Che said it very clearly in his speech in Algiers in 1965. Socialism is achieved when all kinds of exploitation of one person over another are eliminated. Socialism is being built when one works to suppress this exploitation, but it still exists. When you go backwards, you can't even talk about building socialism.

The subsidies and gratifications that should disappear are not

those of the great majorities, but the privileges of the bureaucracy and the high military command.

The solution is not to free the productive forces, but to socialize the productive forces.

One of the most useful slogans to give some protection of the Marxist political economy to the new economic measures is to repeat that the productive forces will be freed from all obstacles.

Let us remember that liberating the productive forces implies liberating the raw material, the means of production, and the labor force – the latter, which do not exist alone, but are the physical and intellectual capacities of a person. Because of this, it is very likely that the next step the government will take is to implement a policy of dismissals in the state sector. This will be done with the objective that companies in the bourgeoisie hire the unemployed. Cuba's small, medium, and large private enterprise cannot grow as planned, making use only of the working class sector that is already hired by the flourishing but still controlled bourgeoisie.

Mass dismissal is another of the most direct ways the government has of stimulating the growth of the bourgeoisie. The second variant would be to wait for voluntary migration from the state to the private sector. Something far from happening, since the wage increase has caused 29,000 people to apply for jobs in the state sector.

We warned the Cuban working class that if a redundancy plan were implemented, they would already find themselves organized in response to this decision and would fight for their rights.

In turn, as we have already seen, in none of these provisions did the working class have any decision. The bulk of the economic package was implemented while the country was paralyzed by Covid-19, so that the resolutions mentioned above could not be discussed in the workers' union assemblies, in

the university classrooms, in the grassroots committees of the Communist Youth League, or in the branches of the Communist Party.

Contrary to what many people believe, these meetings have an important effect on government decisions. In the face of a great turnaround in the direction of the country, the working class has always been consulted by these channels and their opinions have changed the decisions of the leadership.

To argue that the new economic measures have already been approved previously in the debates on the Guidelines of the Cuban Revolution (2011) and on the Constitution of the Republic (2018) is not true. The country's own leadership declared that these decisions – although they are the result of previous documents – have an “innovative method”. As if that were not enough, on this occasion most of the measures were only communicated to the National Assembly. The Executive Branch decided to implement this economic plan on its own.

Socialist Democracy vs. Censorship

In turn, the scenario described occurs under the expansion of censorship; which only leads to greater tension between important sectors of Cuban society and the government. Censorship, far from guaranteeing the power of the state, delegitimizes it while consolidating the counterrevolutionary discourse that has been skillfully presented in recent events as the standard-bearer of the claims of artists and intellectuals.

The state must end up assuming the existence of a civil society it had not counted on. It is growing, consolidating itself and becoming more pluralistic. An example of this is the Communists. We are part of this diverse civil society, but not by far the majority of Cuban civil society is formed by Marxist collectives.

Rightwing groups that claim to be defenders of freedom insist

on promoting the idea that the state is the great enemy of civil society. Only the dialogical construction of government with civil society will prevent the right to monopolize the demands of the LGTBIQ+ community, ecologists, animal defenders, artists, intellectuals, digital magazines, blogs and independent bloggers, along with other more diverse demands that are organized and arise in our daily lives. A state that ignores and develops hostile policies for important sectors of civil society makes them radicalize against it.

Moreover, the more the private sector of the economy grows, the more this new civil society will grow, since the bourgeoisie itself is a civil society.

In addition, there is an important sector with which the government wants, dangerously, to simplify its relations. The conservative Christian churches that oppose egalitarian marriage bring with them a strong right-wing discourse, with direct links to the right in the United States, which is retrograde and fanatical.

The message of these churches can divide and polarize Cuban society. Ignoring this problem, or supporting religious fanaticism with the state media, mistakenly to avoid inconvenience, is an expensive mistake. Holding the referendum on egalitarian marriage is giving these institutions – united on a conservative front that resembles a political party – the possibility of spreading their fanatical discourse throughout Cuba. If this conservative coalition wins the referendum, it will be the first major defeat for the state in the face of an organized and legalized opposition. It is unpredictable what could happen if the NO to egalitarian marriage triumphed, even more so in a country in crisis, with society subjected to strenuous measures affecting the great majorities.

If the state does not learn how to govern, coexist and dialogue with the new civil society constituted after the rebirth of the bourgeoisie in Cuba, the authorities will

experience a spiral of conflict that could get out of control. The country's leadership with its economic measures has promoted class conciliation: it is now up to it to assume the dialogue with the new emerging sectors.

The multiparty system is not and will not be the key to the expansion of socialist democracy in Cuba, nor even the constitution of new Marxist parties. The consolidation and expansion of socialist democracy requires the acceptance of the new civil society by the state. Inherent in this process of mutual recognition is the suppression of censorship.

The Impact on Cuba of the Global Crisis of Capitalism

Another factor that has the most negative impact on the current scenario is the global nature of the crisis. If in 1991 Cuba lost 85% of its trading partners, today the economies of 100% of its trading partners are going through a critical moment.

Joe Biden's presidential victory will ease sanctions against our country and it is very likely that he will resume even Barack Obama's foreign policy with Cuba; a moment in which the current president-elect has retained the vice presidency of the United States. However, these steps may not be immediate. In turn, the reactivation of diplomatic and trade relations – which cannot be postponed – with this imperialist power will bring with it a strong and negative political and cultural impact on Cuban society. The already difficult scenario will become even more complex.

As Marxists, we must make our analysis from reality and not from slogans. Only then can we understand that a world socialist revolution is far from happening and that socialism in a country is increasingly perishing. The fragmentation of revolutionary forces makes it extremely difficult for the working class to struggle to overthrow the global capitalist system. It will take time for us to experience a crisis of

capitalism as acute as the one we are witnessing today. Losing this opportunity will mean a strong political backlash in the battle for emancipation of the working class.

Although the Communists' Editorial Committee was established on January 10, 2020, the blog was consummated – after months of inertia – on June 10. What accelerated the pace of publication was the need for participation and expression that we felt in the face of the crisis experienced in the year that has just ended. We also understood that a Marxist discourse, free of conventions, was necessary, contrary to what remained committed to officialization and class conciliation.

The events have been bigger than expected. Not only – as we expected – did the economy collapse, but we experienced an unexpected political crisis last November and a much stronger economic turnaround by the government, and ahead of schedule.

Cuba is experiencing its most severe economic crisis in 30 years. In this scenario, our main objective is to transmit a Marxist analysis of the Cuban and world situation so that it can serve the working class as a political instrument.

We are convinced that the theoretical and ideological tools of revolutionary Marxism and the communist example of our commander-in-chief, Fidel Castro Ruz, are the best political instruments with which the Cuban working class can face the grave scenario of 2021.

Long live the Cuban working class!

Not to any kind of capitalist restoration!

Towards communism!

Signed somewhere in Cuba by the majority of the Communists' Editorial Committee on January 10, 2021, the first anniversary of its constitution.

Year of the 60th anniversary of the proclamation of the

socialist character of the Cuban Revolution and the defeat of US imperialism in the Bay of Pigs.