

“Cuba’s Revolution Will Remain Victorious”: Interview with Blas Roca (April 14, 1960)

Abstract

Though relations between Cuba and East Germany were not nearly as strong as relations between the Soviet Union and Cuba (mostly because of the USSR’s relatively much larger economic power, and Cuba’s economic dependence on the Soviet Union), a positive relationship still existed between the two countries. As Blas Roca, General Secretary of Cuba’s Popular Socialist Party, says in this interview, East Germany provided “moral support” to Cuba, and relations between the two were somewhat close simply by virtue of the fact that they were both in the Soviet orbit. During the 1960s, academic exchanges between East German and Cuban universities began, and many Cubans came to study in East Germany until the country’s dissolution. Fidel Castro also gifted a small Cuban island to the GDR in 1972; it was named Ernst Thälmann Island, after the German communist politician and activist. In 1975, Frank Schöbel, one of East Germany’s biggest pop stars, was sent to Cuba to shoot footage for music videos, including on the island; this footage was later integrated into a documentary as a symbol for the friendship between the GDR and Cuba.

Source

An ND exclusive interview with Comrade Blas Roca, General Secretary of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba

Comrade Blas Roca, the General Secretary of the Popular Socialist Party of Cuba, spent the past few days as a guest of the GDR. He granted Peter Lorf of our editorial staff an interview on the current situation in Cuba, which has experienced revolutionary social and economic developments since the overthrow of the Batista dictatorship.

Question: How would you describe Cuba’s foreign policy situation?

Answer: North American imperialism is the number one enemy of the Cuban Revolution. American monopolies want our revolution stopped, sabotaged and destroyed. They are conducting an unbridled smear campaign against us, promoting economic aggression, and supporting attacks by air pirates on our peaceful cities. Practically every day they intensify their attacks against our country and there is the very real danger of an armed intervention in one form or another on the part of the US.

The USA is arming its agents

Question: Is it possible that the US will engage in direct military intervention, as it did in Guatemala in 1954?

Answer: The US is preparing for intervention in two ways. The first is by encouraging, supporting and arming counterrevolutionaries and military adventurers to take action against the Cuban revolution. They promote Trujillo, the dictator of the Dominican Republic, the former Cuban dictator Batista, and other enemies of the people, giving them weapons, money and every possible assistance. Even former members of Hitler’s Wehrmacht have trained in the Dominican Republic for an attack on Cuba.

However, we can confidently state that all of these attempts are doomed to failure, because all Cubans stand together as one in defense of their revolution and the cause of the Cuban Revolution enjoys deep

support from the people of Latin America and throughout the world.

Provocation in Guantanamo Bay?

There is also the possibility of direct military intervention, for instance, with the help of the American Marines. This would be very difficult given the mood of the peoples of Latin America. Nonetheless, the US is not ignoring this possibility. They have doubled the number of their soldiers at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base – and certainly not just to play basketball. They are building trenches, shelters, etc. at Guantanamo Bay.

American Marine infantrymen have told our soldiers that they were prepared for an attack by the Cuban side at any moment. This is, of course, nonsense, as we wouldn't even dream of attacking the mighty US. But it shows that a provocation is entirely possible, which could then serve as a pretext for an armed invasion.

All of these are very real and genuine dangers. Despite this, we are convinced that we can make any intervention impossible with the assistance of those nations offering us their friendship. The Cuban Revolution will be victorious.

An example for Latin America

Question: Why is the USA so hostile to developments in Cuba?

Answer: Fundamentally, it is because the Cuban Revolution has produced a truly sovereign government that rules according to the will of the people instead of the will of Washington. The revolutionary government serves the interests of the people, and, of course, this endangers the interests of those American monopolies active in Cuba. This is why the US is interested in destroying the revolution.

In addition, they fear the spectacular example that Cuba presents to Latin America. If the Cuban Revolution triumphs, if a sovereign government independent of Washington can exist, develop the country's economy, and successfully pursue land reform, then this will be of enormous significance for social development in all Latin American countries.

Against this background, Fidel Castro, the leader of the Cuban revolutionary government, issued a bold slogan – the fatherland or death.

The defense and continuation of the revolution

Question: What are the views of the Cuban Popular Socialist Party both on the development of the revolution and on the attacks against the revolution orchestrated by North America?

Answer: The main pillars of the Cuban revolution are the working class, the peasants and the urban petty bourgeoisie. And together they have formed an alliance with the national bourgeoisie. The principal organization of the revolution is the 26th of July Movement. Other significant forces in the development of the revolution have been the Popular Socialist Party and revolutionary student organizations. The Cuban revolutionary government under the leadership of Fidel Castro is implementing policies in the interest of the workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. The government has the full support of the entire Cuban people.

The Popular Socialist Party is part of the revolutionary movement and offers every possible support to the government led by Fidel Castro. Its central motto is: The defense and continuation of the revolution.

Question: What would you characterize as the major achievements of the revolution?

Answer: First of all, the Cuban Revolution put an end to the bloody Batista dictatorship, which served as an arm of American imperialism. This provided the Cuban people with an opportunity to develop their civil liberties and democratic rights. In tandem with this, the murderers and executioners of the Batista regime have been brought to justice.

Second, the revolution has led to the emergence of a sovereign, revolutionary, popular government. It rules not according to the will of the United States, but rather in the interest of the Cuban people.

Third, over the course of the revolution, measures have been taken to reduce the prices of food, services, rents and other items. The standard of living of the Cuban people as a whole has been raised.

Fourth, the government has introduced radical agricultural reform. This is the most significant step in transforming the economy. It will end the domination of agriculture by large estates, will see the free distribution of land to poor peasants, encourage the establishment of cooperatives, and much, much more.

Fifth, the revolutionary government has already taken the first steps towards the industrialization of Cuba and establishing the country's economic independence.

Sixth and finally, as the revolution has developed, Cuba has freed itself from unilateral ties with the US. Cuba is ready to improve its relations with all countries of the world, including the countries of the Socialist camp, such as the Soviet Union, China, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, and the German Democratic Republic.

Breaking the shackles

Question: How do you assess relations between Cuba and Socialist countries?

Answer: The trade agreement recently concluded between Cuba and the Soviet Union is extremely significant for the development of the Cuban economy and for the consolidation of the revolution. Cuba can now move forward more quickly with its industrialization thanks to the \$100 million loan granted by the Soviet Union and the agreement to sell five million tons of sugar to the Soviet Union on favorable terms. Our country has taken the first steps towards liberating itself from its economic dependence on the United States. In a joint communiqué, which was signed after a visit by Soviet Deputy Prime Minister Mikoyan to Havana, both sides declared their intention to cooperate in the spirit of coexistence, to consolidate peace, and to deepen their friendship. This is an example of a truly independent foreign policy, which is ultimately in the interest of the whole of Latin America.

Relations between Cuba and the GDR are being intensified for the benefit of both nations. We hope that the GDR and the German people will continue to provide moral support to the Cuban Revolution. We also hope that our common efforts will contribute to strengthening relations between our two countries in the economic, cultural, scientific and other spheres. Cuba needs and supports such close relations, and we are convinced that they will also prove beneficial to the GDR.

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