NP on Cuba: Consistent Opposition to US Imperialism and Support of Democratic Rights

written by Lois Weiner, Dan Fischer | September 9, 2021

We welcome the opportunity to clarify misrepresentations of *New Politics'* editorial stance about Cuba and US imperialism. We write on behalf of the *New Politics* editorial board.

Since its founding 60 years ago, *New Politics* has consistently opposed US. intervention in Cuba, defending the right of the Cuban people to determine their government. We have defended freedom of political expression everywhere, the right to organize politically, including the right to form unions, rights denied in this country and many countries that self-identify as opponents of US imperialism. Just as we call on the U.S. government to release political prisoners and allow freedom of expression, we call on the Cuban government and all other governments to do the same. We oppose the U.S. embargo, which harms ordinary Cubans, especially when imposed during the devastating COVID-19 pandemic.

Most recently we have responded to popular demonstrations in Cuba with re-publication of material by activists in Cuba as well as analyses unique to our journal, including "An assessment of the July 11 Protests in Cuba," (August 11, 2021) and "Social Explosion in Cuba: The Ignored Signals" (July 21, 2021), by Alina Barbara López Hernández; "Cuban Protests and the American Reaction," by Dan La Botz (July 21, 2021); and "From Cuba: A Description of the Protests," by Comunistas Editorial Board (July 19, 2021).

Here we present only a partial list of the many articles we have published, online and in print, expressing our simultaneous opposition to US interference in Cuba and support for Cubans' democratic rights.*

In Fall 1961, *New Politics* carried a symposium "The Cuban Revolution: Four Views," which rejected US intervention and offered differing analyses of the Cuban revolution. Sam Bottone's contribution

expressed the Third Camp socialist tradition of NP's editors and its founders, Julius and Phyllis Jacobson, which posited a symbiosis between two rival social systems and imperialist blocs, one headed by the US, and the other led by the USSR. Bottone noted the tragedy of the left's failure to oppose both:

> "For the New Left evolved as a response to the revelations of the Twentieth Party Congress, to the horrors of the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution, to the conservatism of the official labor movement and, most broadly, to the insanity of a world threatened by two imperialist power blocs. The New Left spoke in the name of democracy, humanism, socialism—and still does. But Cuba is a test of how deeply rooted these convictions are. And thus far the most authoritative spokesmen for the New Left have not measured up to their promise." (p. 32)

In the "Cuba-Blockade-Crisis: A Symposium" in Fall 1962, *New Politics* hosted a debate about the Cuban missile crisis among writers who differed on how to understand the Castro regime. Hal Draper, condemned "Kennedy's Disastrous Cuban Policy," (pp. 27-40) warning that the triumphalist rhetoric of the Kennedy administration "is the most dangerous thing that has happened in American public opinion since the beginning of the Cold War. Not only is it basically false … but it means that, the next time, there will be so much the less resistance in the United States to an aggressive, adventuristic military-based foreign policy in reaction to Cold-War crises." (p. 27).

Zane Boyd, in "The Debate Over the Recent Arrests and Sentences in Cuba," *New Politics*, Summer 2003, examined debate in the international left around the arrests and harsh sentences meted out to more than 70 opponents of the Cuban government and its execution of three hijackers. In defending a statement critical of the Cuban government's actions, Boyd noted the anti-imperialist credentials of its signatories, including Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, and Susan Sontag, and the statement's clear focus "on the past *and* the present crimes of the U.S. government. It is a demagogic smear to claim that these intellectuals make a moral equation between the recent actions of the Cuban government with the manifold crimes of U.S. imperialism."

In "Cuba Today: An Interview with Samuel Farber," conducted by Joanne Landy, Thomas Harrison and Stephen R. Shalom, in the same issue of NP, Sam Farber concludes "The best thing that the people in the U.S. can do is to see that the blockade and all other forms of hostility against the Republic of Cuba cease and desist, and that normal diplomatic and economic relations are reestablished, thereby allowing maximum room for the Cuban people to make their own choices." We have proudly published Farber's erudite, incisive analyses of Cuban politics, all of which defend democracy in Cuba and oppose US intervention, including these three articles in 2020: "U.S. Politics and the Financing of Political Groups in Cuba," "Cuba's New Economic Turn," and "Cuban Doctors Abroad – Appearances and Realities."

In the past decade NP has encouraged analysis of Cuba from a critical, anti-imperialist perspective. In "Is Cuba Different?" (New Politics, Summer 2012), Charles Post reviewed Farber's book, *Cuba Since the Revolution of 1959: A Critical Assessment*, (Haymarket Books, 2011), while Armando Chaquaceda and Lennier Lopez examined spaces for dissent in their piece on "Cuban Civil Society," (*New Politics*, Winter 2018). Ariel Dacal Diaz provided an overview of Cuba's internal politics in "Cuba: Note for a Balance Sheet of Ten Years of Reforms," (July 21, 2018).

We challenge any and all who aver that the editorial position of *New Politics* has been to support US intervention in Cuba in any fashion, economic, political, or military, to examine what we have published for evidence, currently or historically. We are confident they will find nothing to support

their claim.

*Currently the archives of New Politics are found in three locations online, and not all of the print issues have been digitalized. The editorial board is shortly launching a special fund appeal to raise at least $10,000 to gather the entire archive on a new website, allowing readers easy access to this rich trove of material as well as new articles that continue the proud tradition of this journal. You can donate here to support this exciting project.