



Statement by the IWU–FI

The announcement of the reestablishment of diplomatic relations, conducted jointly by Barack Obama and Raul Castro, after more than 50 years of rupture and US blockade has caused a logical impact on the world. This is an important fact about which all kinds of interpretations for the reasons for this change and its scope have opened.

Although it is a partial measure, since the historical blockade has not been raised yet, the mere fact that a USA president finally acknowledges, as Obama had to do, that after more than 50 years of rupture of relations and blockade to Cuba “have failed” means a political victory for the Cuban people and the peoples of the world who have fought for decades repudiating these reprisals of imperialism. Together with this, it is a welcome fact the release of Cuban prisoners part of the so-called “Five Heroes” (two had been released long ago), who had been for over 15 years in an US prison and were a claim of peoples and the left of the world. Therefore, as socialists, we reject Raul Castro thanking the Pope and congratulating Obama for this political setback. It was the struggle of more than 50 years of the peoples of Cuba and the world who achieved this political defeat of imperialism.

As we say this, we are also categorical in saying that nothing good can be expected for the Cuban people of this agreement between Obama-Castro and the Vatican. Any interpretation that the restoration of diplomatic relations may bring benefits for the Cuban workers and people is false. Raul Castro and the regime of the Communist Party of Cuba mistakenly open expectations in Obama and the role of the Vatican when it is known that they are only at the service of the exploiters.

Obama had to recognize the historical error of imperialism because they are part of a global crisis of capitalism, with its failure in the Middle East, with the rebellion of the people in North Africa, the struggles of workers and youth against cuts and adjustments and a severe global

economic crisis. He then seeks to overcome the crisis with new policies of agreements and investment for the multinationals. Obama wants to repeat what they did with China and Vietnam. In those countries they agreed with the communist dictatorships for US and world multinationals to invest, developing capitalism with starvation wages and super profits. Hence, it is no coincidence that among those who most welcomed Obama's measures for the lifting of the embargo there is a sector of big American entrepreneurs eager to do business in Cuba. Among them: "Ricky J. Arriola, president of the powerful consortium Inktel; sugar and real estate barons Andres Fanjul and Jorge Pérez; businessman Carlos Saladrigas, and oil tycoon Enrique Sosa, besides other billionaire entrepreneurs, are among the activists for binational approach.

Many are of Cuban origin, but they all have US citizenship, so they cannot do business with Cuba by imperative of the embargo" (El País, Spain, 18 December 2014). Obama changes policy precisely because they are behind with Cuba. Because, given the US blockade, the Cuban regime for many years has been agreeing investments with European and Canadian multinationals and with private investors from Brazil, China, Israel and Venezuela.

While many fighters find it hard to believe, the one-party regime of the Castros began years ago to restore capitalism with a plan similar to that of China and Vietnam. This is the sad reality. And with miserable wages that do not reach US\$20 per month and without the rights to strike and to form independent unions.

The advance of capitalism in Cuba and the strong private investment have done nothing but exacerbate social problems of the Cuban people. While, on the other hand, the rich and the wealthy in the areas of government and business grow. In the port of Mariel, in agreement with the multinational Odebrecht and other Brazilian entrepreneurs, a free zone for private companies has already been installed. These business opportunities are those that Obama and many American entrepreneurs see they are missing out on, amid their economic crisis.

This is the background to the change and the Obama-Castro agreement. This agreement does not come about overnight. It is fruit of long secret negotiations conducted behind the Cuban people. Neither Raul Castro nor the Communist Party of Cuba consulted the workers and the people. There has been secret negotiations and agreements between the US and Cuba for years, both of maritime security and of economic measures despite the existence of the blockade. In 2001, for example, the US eased the blockade on food items and since 2003 it has become the first provider of food products to the island, displacing France and Canada. If the US did not lift the blockade then was for political and electoral reasons: fear of losing votes of the Cuban-American community.

On the other hand, the Cuban bureaucracy has always politically used the argument of the blockade, although the effect was diminishing, to justify all of its economic policy disasters and hardships of the people.

Our revolutionary socialist current has always defended the socialist gains of the Cuban revolution of 1959, has repudiated all forms of imperialist aggression against Cuba, including the economic blockade and embargo. But we have always been critical of Cuba's political leadership who was abandoning the socialist banner of the glorious era of Che Guevara. From the 1960s–1970s this leadership became subordinated to the political pacts of the former USSR with imperialism to not promote new socialist revolutions in the world. So in Nicaragua in 1979, Fidel Castro himself recommended to the Sandinistas not to do of Nicaragua a “new Cuba”, i.e. not to advance towards socialism. Also following Moscow, Fidel and Raul Castro imposed an ironclad bureaucracy restricting democratic rights to their people. Then in the 1990s, when the Soviet Union disappeared, they joined with Chavez, and now Maduro, supporting their policy of the false slogan of “Socialism of the XXI Century” to continue holding in Venezuela a capitalist economic structure. Meanwhile, at the same time they agreed to Venezuela subsidizing the weak Cuban economy with oil at low prices, while they restored capitalism with Spanish, Brazilian and Canadian investors.

The crisis in Venezuela, exacerbated now with falling oil prices, did nothing but accelerate the realization of the pact with the US that was being secretly negotiated. Now the Obama-Castro agreement prepares an opening to future Yankee investments. What solution can US investments bring to the Cuban people? None.

Therefore from the IWU–FI we call to continue supporting the Cuban people and their historical demand for the blockade— which is an undemocratic measure, of trampling of sovereignty of the peoples and a remnant of the USA's colonial policy— to be finally lifted and for a return of Guantanamo to Cuban sovereignty. Within the context that we reject any interference and intervention by US imperialism. We also support the Cuban people's struggle to regain the lost gains made

by the socialist revolution of 1959, for that they must have full democratic rights to form unions and parties, end the one-party regime, and have the right to claim and mobilise to reverse the capitalist restoration and ensure decent wages, as well as the recovery of education and health achieved in the early stages of socialism of Che.

International Workes Unity - Fourth International

December 19th, 2014