

Fidel Castro and His Tireless Struggle Against the Foreign Debt



Among the many battles led by Fidel Castro during his life, one of the major ones was that waged by the Third World against the foreign debt.

With his clear political vision, the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution proclaimed to the world that it was impossible to pay that huge sum, since its payment would be contrary to the sovereignty and the future of the peoples.

Therefore, under Fidel Castro's leadership, Cuba developed a strong international campaign to spread around the world the idea of the magnitude and evil nature of the problems afflicting the nations of the South.

Havana hosted a meeting in August 1985 to examine the extent and evils attached to the foreign debt afflicting the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean, which gathered in the Cuban capital trade unionists, women, students, journalists, politicians, entrepreneurs and intellectuals, young and old alike.

This historic meeting was led by the Cuban Revolutionary leader, who in 1979 had already alerted the world in a speech at the United Nations on the unbearable situation of the least developed countries, a sad fact about which he had been repeatedly alerting the world since the decade of the seventies.

Four years later, in March 1983, he would again speak about this tragic problem at the Seventh Summit Conference of the Non Aligned Movement, held in New Delhi, India.

On that occasion, he underlined the need to continue the struggle for the cancellation of the foreign debt of a large number of nations that had no real possibility of paying it, and that it should be significantly alleviated to those nations that, under new conditions, could fulfill their commitments.

In his closing speech of an international meeting in Havana, Fidel Castro said: "There is nothing more similar to a cancer than the foreign debt... Imperialism has developed that disease.... and it has to be surgically removed, completely. I see no other solution...".

Fidel listened attentively to all those who spoke during the six days of sessions, and with the peculiar but crystal-clear way in which he always analyzed issues in detail, he discussed with all those present the terrible meaning and consequences posed by the payment of the debt and its interests to the nations of the South.

The truth is that the payment of the debt has bled nations dry and has been the pretext to plunder their natural resources. Fidel understood, more than the debtors themselves, that the nations of the South were -- and still are -- the victims of an historic, financial, social and ecological debt accrued during centuries of exploitation and plunder of their natural resources and of the energy of their peoples.

Certainly enough, over thirty years ago in Havana, many nations debated the need to join efforts, wills and actions. Many countries and their leaders gained consciousness about the real nature of the problem caused by the foreign debt, supported by an unfair international economic order, repeatedly and energetically denounced by the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution.

The meeting in Havana, personally sponsored by Fidel Castro, was most certainly the beginning of a struggle that still continues, since the ideas presented and fully explained by Fidel are still in effect.

The "solutions" presented by the International Monetary Fund and accepted by neo-liberal governments have only increased and deepened the situation of poverty and hunger afflicting many peoples in the world.

The enormous, unbearable weight of the debt is resting on the shoulders of the humblest, a fact that was always denounced by Fidel Castro, a man who toiled without rest during his whole life for equal relations between poor and rich countries.

During his whole life, Fidel Castro defended the right of the Third World to manage its own destiny, free from interference and foreign exploitation.

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