



Cuba, Social Discontent and the Coronavirus

Abril 02, 2020 - 08:01

Posted in: Cuba

Economía

Política

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The Cuban Government cannot maintain power without changing, as social discontent, previously covered up, has erupted in some sectors of society, facilitated by modern media instruments.

In addition to unresolved problems such as fuel, housing, transport, food and medicines, there are others, such as 1 - the reduction in liquefied gas reported on 16 January. 2- On 30 January the President of the Republic warned that, due to the lack of fuel, the sugar harvest could be halted for a few days, and 48 hours later two sugar plants in Granma province were shut down. 3- On February 6 private taxi drivers operating between Havana, Artemis and Mayabeque went on strike, protesting against new restrictive measures.

This decline, coupled with the intensification of US measures against the Cuban Government, is exacerbated by the presence of Covid-19.

Desperate for foreign money, the Cuban Government squandered Cuba's geographical advantage as an island, and failed to learn from the experiences of Asia and Europe, with regards to isolation, regions the pandemic hit before Cuba. Faced with the threat of its arrival, instead of closing borders in time, it actually enticed tourists to come. As a result, the virus arrived the midst of a crisis characterized by declining production, shortages of food, medicines, toiletries, water, a lack of international credits and an ageing population.

The combination of the structural crisis, US measures, and the coronavirus pandemic will lead to a deterioration in living conditions much more acute than usual. There has been a notable increase in the activity of those who used to let themselves be plundered, but who now, as a result of the crisis, are beginning to take independent action.



A look at how fast things are unfolding, with previously inconceivable events taking place, speaks for itself:

In February: 1- an attempt to lynch a rapist in Santiago de Cuba ended in a confrontation between the residents and the police. 2- In the "Last Thursday" forum of the magazine Temas, dedicated to the press, two journalists from alternative bodies gave the event an unexpected twist when they leveled criticisms, and asked those present questions, breaching the wall that the government had managed to build between independent journalists and government officials. 3- The censorship of the documentary Sueños al paio, selected for the Cuban Art and Film Industry Institute's (ICAIC) Youth Section, spurred some 20 filmmakers to withdraw their works, in solidarity, forcing ICAIC to postpone the event. Subsequently, in response to the firing of the Exhibition's director, a group of filmmakers issued a statement of protest. 4- The Cuban Institute of Radio and Television (ICRT) edited out a scene in the film Love Simon, in which two young homosexuals kiss each other, sparking an outcry by the LGBTIQ community, which organized a public kiss-off, forcing the ICRT to apologize and broadcast it uncut

In March: 1- the incarceration of the artist Luis Manuel Otero Alcántara and the announcement that he would be subjected to a summary trial prompted the Movimiento San Isidro to pursue legal actions with international organizations; cries of protest by artists, publishers, activists, journalists, filmmakers, officials and dissidents, both Cuban and foreign; and the collection of some 3,000 signatures, which forced the trial to be suspended until further notice. 2- Dozens of self-employed workers from Santa Clara, chanted the slogan "We pay for patents, we're not criminals!" demonstrated before the province's Popular Power and Communist Party, against the new regulations on this sector

The events cited demonstrate that there is a fast-moving shift in awareness, along with a loss of fear, which has forced the Party-State-Government to postpone, suspend or alter a set of decisions that would have previously been inconceivable.

Totally out of time, without the political will to introduce a market economy, and negotiate with the US, the outcome could take an extremely dangerous turn.

A market economy regulating monetary life is a key achievement of human civilization. It was not created by capitalism, but rather always existed. The ruling Party-State, however, chained to its ideology, has decided that planning, rather than the free market, will remain the cornerstone of the economy.

Relations with the United States, following the re-establishment of diplomatic communications, President Barack Obama's visit to Cuba, and the six packages of measures issued by his Administration to ease the embargo, and as evidence of a change of policy towards Cuba, exposed the Cuban Government's refusal to change and its determination to prevent Cubans' empowerment.

For these reasons, the coronavirus, in this time of crisis, will have an incalculable effect on the deteriorating situation in the country, and could lead to a state of disorder, unless the Cuban authorities, out of time, finally muster the political will to save the nation, and their legacies, in the history books.

Palabras claves: [Coronavirus](#) [2]

[COVID-19](#) [3]

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