

July 26 Marked the Sixty-Nine Year Anniversary of the Attack on the Moncada Barracks—the Beginning of the Cuban Revolution

Cuba has made incredible progress since that time; it remains a powerful symbol of anti-imperialism

By [Richard Dunn](#)

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July 26, 2022, marked the 69th anniversary of the 1953 attack on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba by a group of Cuban activists, patriots and revolutionaries.

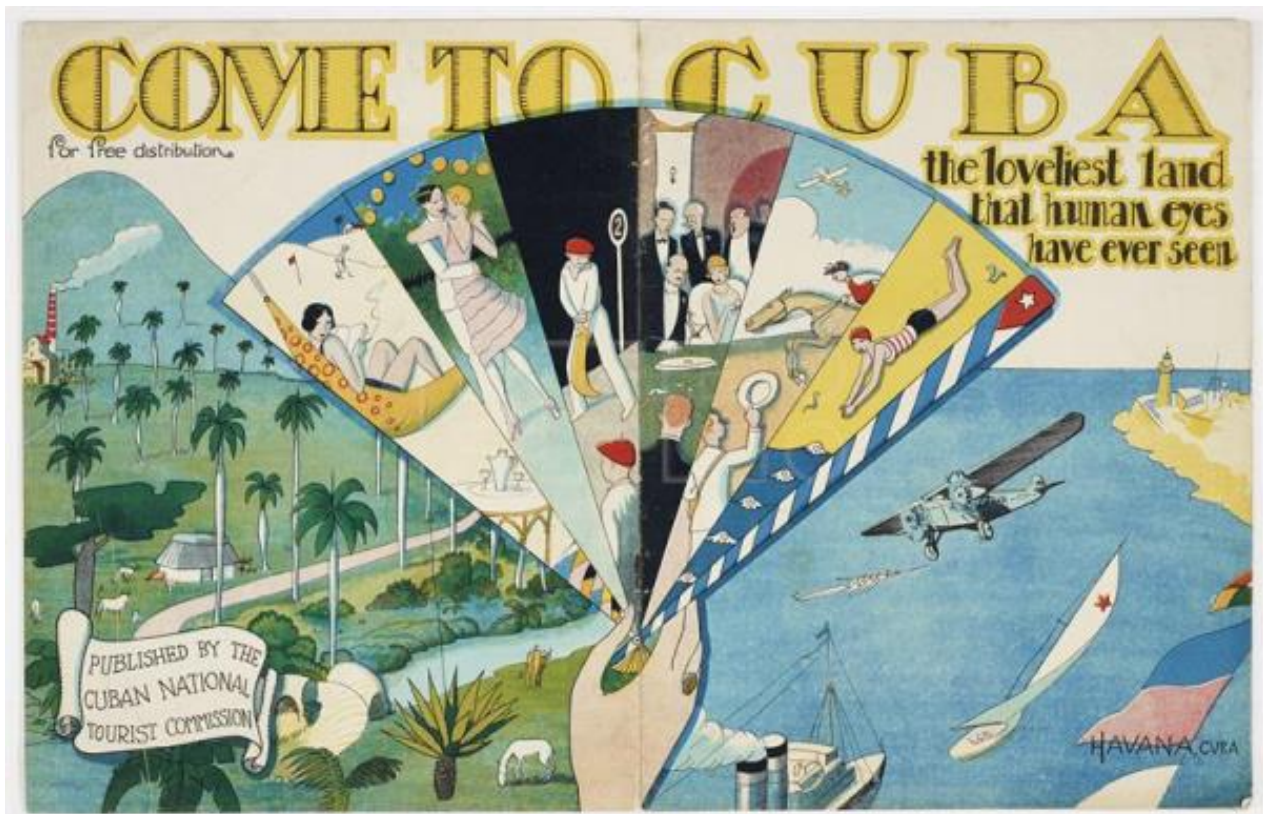
The attack signaled the beginning of the end for the U.S.-backed, repressive and reactionary regime of Fulgencio Batista.

The insurrection, led by 26-year-old lawyer Fidel Castro, set out to put an end to the corrupt, fascist, and murderous regime of Batista, who ruled Cuba with an iron fist in order to maintain the primacy of capital over the lives of the Cuban people.

The multinationals dominating Cuba’s economy, such as Coca Cola, the United Fruit Company and others, had the support of the United States government; even the Mafia had a pivotal role in the corruption and political life of Cuba, which was marked at the time by sweeping inequality.

From a Banana Republic to an Independent Nation

On the eve of the storming of the Moncada Barracks by Castro and his associates, U.S. corporations and the local oligarchy owned and controlled the vast majority of Cuba’s sugar plantations, cattle ranches, mines and utilities.



Tourist brochure from the early 1950s. [Source: efe.com]

The consequence was described by the late Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Dr. Eric Williams, in his book *From Columbus to Castro—The History of the Caribbean*.

Dr. Williams wrote: “75 percent of rural dwellings were huts made from the palm tree...The peasantry was isolated on account of the state of the roads. There was one doctor for more than 2,000 persons in the rural areas...Only 4 percent of the Cuban peasantry ate meat as a regular part of their diet; while 1 percent ate fish, less than 2 percent eggs, 3 percent bread, 11 percent milk; none ate green vegetables.”

According to Dr. Williams: “Cuba’s backwardness was largely due to the fact that it was at the mercy of external forces on the world market.”

The failure of the attack on the Moncada Barracks was just a brief setback for the revolutionary forces. After their release from prison, they regrouped and returned to Cuba from Mexico in December 1956 and waged a valiant and successful war against Batista’s forces, culminating in a victorious march by the revolutionaries into Havana on January 8, 1959.

A French journalist reported after the Revolution tellingly that “Fidel Castro’s victory was no real military victory. It was primarily a moral victory of the people...Castro did not destroy the enemy. The latter collapsed because it was rotten to the core.”



Fidel (center) and Raul (left) surrounded by supporters and raising fists after the overthrow of the U.S.-backed bloody dictator Fulgencio Batista. [Source: en.vietnamplus.vn]

The Empire Tries to Strike Back

The empire predictably struck back by trying to destroy the Cuban people's revolution, with the goal of setting the socio-economic clock back to pre-revolutionary Cuba.

After the Eisenhower administration severed diplomatic relations with Cuba on January 3, 1961, the Kennedy administration and its successors became obsessed with trying to overthrow and assassinate Castro, starting with the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961.

This latter invasion was organized by the CIA with a group of exiled Cubans (1,400) trained by the U.S.; the group was roundly defeated within 72 hours by the Cuban military forces.

By the end of 1961, Kennedy had approved an espionage and sabotage campaign against Cuba called Operation Mongoose. Efforts to assassinate Castro and spark regime change continued under Lyndon B. Johnson and Richard Nixon.

On October 6, 1976, right-wing CIA-backed terrorists bombed a Cuban airliner after it left Barbados, killing all 76 persons on board.

Earlier that year, there was an explosion from a suitcase bomb in Jamaica shortly before it was loaded onto an aircraft. This incident was two-fold: to sabotage and pressure Cuba and to embarrass and coerce the government of Michael Manley into severing ties with Cuba.

The bombing was part of the destabilization campaign by the CIA to topple the progressive Manley government.

The mastermind of the Cuban airline bombing, Luis Posada Carriles, who had a long relationship with the CIA, was noticeably sheltered by the United States despite being considered a terrorist by the FBI, and was never brought to justice or extradited.

Peoples Dispatch reported that there were at least 638 attempts against Castro's life.

By contrast, the U.S. forged good relations with an assortment of tyrants whose crimes dwarfed those Castro was alleged to have committed.

Image: Michael Manley, left, with Fidel Castro in 1977. [Source: [npr.org](https://www.npr.org)]



The rogues list includes: Augusto Pinochet of Chile; Anastasio Somoza Debayle of Nicaragua; Carlos Castillo Armas of Guatemala; the Shah of Iran; and, more recently, Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Yoweri Museveni of Uganda.

For years, the United States supported or propped up these despots and never once instituted any sanctions or listed them as terrorists or the tyrants that they were or are.

Media Distort Purpose of 2021 Protests

Demonstrations in Cuba last summer had nothing to do with governmental mismanagement or “failure”—as claimed in the U.S. media.

Rather, the demonstrations resulted from the illegal, immoral, and unilateral embargo by the United States, which places unreasonable and additional hardships on a society that is still trying to live up to the ideals of the July 26th Movement by building an egalitarian society.

Castro was prophetic in a speech he delivered on January 8, 1989, marking the 30th anniversary of the Revolution, when he said: “If historical circumstances have prevented imperialism from liquidating socialism by war, imperialism has not renounced the idea of liquidating socialism by means of subversion, corrosion, and, if possible, destruction of the socialist system from within.”

The U.S.’s unilateral economic blockade has been unsuccessful for 61 years and has become globally unpopular. Just last year 184 countries of the UN voted in favor of lifting the blockade.

Image: Source: leftreviewonline.com



To further bolster its “regime-change” obsession with Cuba, the United States has again put Cuba on the list of “state sponsors of terrorism,” using the State Department’s rationale that Cuba has provided support of international terrorism. To this day, not one agency of the government has ever been able to provide any empirical evidence that Cuba has ever been involved in any such activity.

The Legacy of the July 26th Movement

A significant achievement of the Cuban Revolution is its ability to provide the basic fundamental social needs of the people in health care, education, affordable housing and vaccine development.

Further, Cuba has made unselfish sacrifices internationally in the ideological and material support for the National Liberation Movements and progressive socio-economic developments in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Illiteracy has been reduced essentially to zero and education is still free from primary school through university.

The Revolution has considerably reduced infant mortality rates and has almost eradicated Hepatitis B through vaccines developed locally at its Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology.

By the end of 2018, the infant mortality rate was reported at 4 deaths per 1,000 live births. *Cuba Si* reports that the “child vaccination schedule includes 11 vaccines against 13 diseases.” During the Pandemic, Cuba was able to develop three Covid-19 vaccines within a year, despite the difficulty of buying raw materials from outside sources because of the embargo.

At last count, Cuba has vaccinated upwards of 90% of its population with at least one dose; many developed countries have yet to meet this milestone. The country was also able to manufacture 250 ventilators that were distributed to hospitals all over the country; and they were working on a second batch.

The most indelible legacy of the July 26th Movement—and its child the Cuban Revolution—is Cuba’s consistent and principled practice of international solidarity with the oppressed peoples of the world.

Despite its own difficulties and challenges Cuba has sent medical personnel, teachers, technical experts, and military assistance to whoever has requested its help. Cuba has also opened its doors to the training of thousands of doctors and nurses without cost to the

recipient countries or individuals, in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America.

These internationalist gestures Cuba has done at great national and personal cost, including the loss of lives on battlefields alongside compatriots fighting apartheid and colonialism in Southern Africa. Cuba's technical experts contributed to the upgrading of the Maurice Bishop International Airport (formerly Point Salines Airport) in Grenada; they facilitated the design and building of micro-dams for irrigation during the drought season and, the construction of the José Martí Technical High School in Jamaica.



Cuban doctors working with their South African counterparts to combat the coronavirus. [Source: [vaticannews.va](https://www.vaticannews.va)]

From the beginning of the revolution, Cuba's global impact and achievements did not go unnoticed; Dr. Eric Williams wrote: "In 1959 Cuba, as the first Caribbean country to challenge successfully the power of the U.S.A. in the hemisphere, sought to establish a regime based on national independence and social justice, including racial equality. She is the first Caribbean country to have mobilized the entire population in the task of national reconstruction."

Cuba Must Live!

The Cuban Revolution has shown the inherent immorality of capitalism. Despite limited resources, Cuba under socialism has been able to provide basic social needs for its people in healthcare, education, affordable housing, and a society based on economic and social justice.

The Revolution has exposed the irony and antagonistic relationship of social production and private accumulation, which intensifies capitalism's voracious greed above the needs of the people.

The 26th of July Movement holds tremendous lessons in the subject of struggle and the role of the working class and democratic forces in the liberation struggle. Cuba continues to be a bulwark among developing countries struggling to rid their respective countries from the

choke-hold of global capitalism and U.S. imperialism in particular.

Cuba must be allowed to develop and prosper; Cuba must not be coerced into becoming a lackey of the United States.

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Richard Dunn is a retired construction professional, trained in Architecture and Energy Management. He's been a social justice activist since 1968 and was particularly active with the Walter Rodney defense demonstrations. Richard is an author, a contributing columnist to newspapers, an editor for a music industry magazine and operates a social justice website. Richard can be reached at: richarddunn75@gmail.com.

Featured image: Portrait of Fidel Castro in front of the Moncada Barracks. [Source: idcommunism.com]

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