



On the death of Comrade Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz, the Socialist Labour Party of Great Britain sends its deepest condolences to the family of El Comandante on their loss and to the many Cubans uplifted and inspired by his leadership and example.

It is no surprise that apologists for the genocidal system that has tormented Cuba, and many nations, for more than a century have felt no shame in rushing to judge Fidel Castro. Their anger at the tributes flowing freely from across the world illustrates how detached they are from the moral universe inhabited by the rest of us.

Against a background of draconian sanctions imposed by the USA, Cuba transformed its economy returning land to the people, rebuilding communities, raising the standards of medical care, eliminating a range of diseases, levelling and increasing wages and bringing unemployment down to the lowest level in the hemisphere. In Cuba a home, free healthcare and education are guaranteed, human rights yet to be won by many living in the 'developed' world. At 99%, Cuba's literacy rate is better than its neighbour the US and unlike the US it has eliminated racial inequalities. A leader in the struggle for global justice, it was the first nation to sign the Convention on Discrimination Against Women.

In its foreign policy, instead of waging wars of plunder, Cuba cultivates the friendship of others as equals. Not seeking to mould the political destiny of sovereign states, its national interests are framed from its ongoing struggle for survival as an independent nation, a heritage shared with its many allies and admirers in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America. For more than sixty years, Fidel Castro spoke out for those engaged in anti colonial struggles defying the tired western narrative that they are 'terrorists'. While the US builds military bases, Cuba's proudest national export is its doctors.

Unlike the millionaire 'rebels' embraced in the West, Castro was real, an authentic revolutionary who knew that the interests of the oppressed, the great majority of humanity, will be served only when political power is wrested by the many from the global elite.

'History will absolve me' he told a Cuban court in October 1953. As power and wealth become yet more entrenched in the hands of an increasingly violent minority, history has already long vindicated Castro's conviction that without socialism there is only barbarism.

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