

WE

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HOW A REVOLUTIONARY PEOPLE

ARE

HAVE SURVIVED IN A POST-SOVIET WORLD

CUBA



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INTRODUCTION

‘¡SOMOS CUBA! ¡SOMOS CONTINUIDAD!’

A crowd gathers in the bright sun in front of a multi-coloured colonnade on a main street in the city of Pinar del Rio, capital of Cuba’s westernmost province. There is an air of excitement, some chanting and dozens of arms extended with smart phones to capture the occasion for social media. It is not one of the many international celebrities who have recently visited the island that draws their attention. It is not Fidel or Raúl Castro, or any other veteran of the Cuban Revolution. They are meeting their new president, Miguel Díaz-Canel, who strides confidently down the middle of the road, shaking hands and kissing cheeks, lightly flanked by security guards in short-sleeved guayabera shirts. ‘He is following the steps of our Comandante,’ a woman tells the reporter from Latin American broadcaster Telesur. ‘Meeting with the people, to know what people think, to know how people live. A wonderful experience, I actually shook hands with him. I feel very happy and very lucky.’¹ Over her shoulder another woman nods emphatically with her lips puckered in agreement. The comparison is intended: ‘We are Cuba! We are continuity!’ is the slogan adopted by Díaz-Canel and others in contemporary Cuba to demonstrate their enduring commitment to the socialist revolution.²

It is mid-September 2018 and, since becoming president in the spring, Díaz-Canel has plunged in among the Cuban people, across the length and depth of the island, visiting workplaces, communities, schools and other centres. He has urged all Cuban leaders to get closer to the people, and to ensure that local development strategies relate to each community’s culture and history, to the aspirations, motivations and opinions of local people. Implementation, he has pointed out, will depend on their support and participation.³ In Pinar de Rio, a province famous for its tobacco production, the president visited a fruit canning factory, an agricultural polytechnic institute, a store for construction materials, and held meetings in the Provincial

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Assembly of Peoples' Power, where he was told about problems obstructing economic progress and social programmes. 'He is demonstrating that he is one of the people,' agrees another young man in the street, 'that he is someone who is addressing problems, the situation, the things that most concern Cuban society. I think that is most important.' The tall, grey-haired Díaz-Canel leans in close to address a circle of Cuban women: 'There are things that can be solved quickly; and there are other things that we will be proposing in our economic plan from next year,' he explains.

'Next year' is 2019: it marks 60 years of Cuba's revolutionary government. The Revolution is older than the new head of state. President Díaz-Canel is entirely a product of Cuban socialism. He is the son of a mechanic and a school teacher, born in April 1960 in Placetas, a small city in central Cuba founded by Spanish colonists in 1861 as a sugar town and known as 'the villa of the laurels' for its wild laurel trees. As a beneficiary of Cuba's free, universal education policy, in 1982 Díaz-Canel graduated in engineering at the Central University of Las Villas, where, in 1959, Che Guevara had declared that the university 'should paint itself the colour of workers and peasants . . . the colour of the people, because the university is the asset of no one but the people of Cuba'.⁴ After three years of mandatory military service in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) Díaz-Canel returned to his alma mater to teach. He went on an internationalist mission to Sandinista Nicaragua in 1987, and the same year joined the Union of Young Communists (UJC). Soon he was second secretary of the UJC's National Office in Havana and in 1993, the hardest year of Cuba's post-Soviet economic crisis, Díaz-Canel joined the Cuban Communist Party (CCP). One year later, he was leading the party in his home province of Villa Clara. He subsequently transferred to the same role in Holguin province, later being nominated as the government's Minister of Higher Education, then Vice President of the Council of Ministers, and then First Vice President in 2013 – the first person born after the Revolution elected to that position.

In April 2018, with a not-quite unanimous vote from the National Assembly of People's Power, he took over from Raúl Castro as President of the Council of State, a post which was redesignated as President of the Republic in the new Constitution, which was approved in February 2019.⁵ His ascendancy is one of history's conundrums solved: the end of the Castro reign did not signal the end of the Cuban Revolution.⁶

For years, students of Cuba were conditioned to believe that the Revolution's trajectory could only be understood by reference to Fidel Castro's biology or psychology. Then Fidel ailed, he resigned, he died, but the Revolution lived on.

Raúl Castro took over. He was referred to as the ‘brother’, as if that explained his governance; the ‘reformer’, as if a peaceful transition to capitalism was assured. Raúl came, he reformed, he resigned, and the socialist system prevailed. So, if it wasn’t the ‘Castro-brothers’ who explained the endurance of the system, then other factors must account for its survival into the post-Soviet world. Have we been too distracted by all the talk about what the Revolution was doing wrong to enquire about what it was getting right and how?

For 60 years, Cuba has defied expectations and flouted the rules. It is a country of contradictions: a poor country with world-leading human development indicators; a small island that mobilises the world’s largest international humanitarian assistance; a weak and dependent economy which has survived economic crises and the United States blockade; anachronistic but innovative; formally ostracised, but with millions of ardent defenders around the world. Despite meeting most of the Sustainable Development Goals set by the United Nations in 2015, Cuba’s development strategy is not upheld as an example.⁷ These contradictions require explanation. ‘Cuba is a mystery,’ Isabel Allende, Director of the Higher Institute for International Relations, told me in Havana, ‘it is true, but you have to try to understand that mystery.’⁸

Historians like anniversaries: they help to mark the passage of time and to provide perspective to its passing. 2019 marked 60 years since the Rebel Army seized power from the Cuban dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista; but at the halfway point was another useful marker. It was 30 years since Fidel Castro publicly declared that, were the Soviet Union to disintegrate, the Cuban Revolution would endure. He said that on 26 July 1989, 18 months before the USSR collapsed and four months prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall.⁹ For three decades, the survival of Cuban socialism was attributed to Soviet aid. Today, the Revolution has existed in the post-Soviet world for longer than it did under the Soviet sphere of influence. How on earth did Cuban socialism survive?

This book begins to tell that story: how Cuba’s revolutionary people survived into a post-Soviet world. It traces the historical roots of contemporary developments, extending the focus of my previous book, *Che Guevara: The Economics of Revolution*, about Guevara’s contribution to Cuba’s economic transformation and to socialist political economy debates in the early 1960s.¹⁰ Each area examined here shows how decisions made in a period of crisis and isolation since the late 1980s onwards have shaped Cuba into the twenty-first century in the realms of development strategy, medical science, energy, ecology and the environment, culture and education. Many of these developments have taken place ‘under the radar’, astonishing outsiders such as Dr Kelvin Lee,

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Chair of Immunology at a New York cancer centre, who described the achievements of Cuban biotechnology as ‘unexpected and very exciting’.¹¹

By emphasising political aspects, many scholars of Cuba have inevitably focused on Fidel and Raúl Castro, or on ‘dissidents’, ‘entrepreneurs’ or other sectoral interests. This book, however, frames the discussion of contemporary Cuba in relation to both its political economy and its economic history. It focuses not just on the policy, but on the restraints and conditions that shaped each course of action and the motivations, agendas and goals behind them. It brings out an essential element that has been understated in most commentary on Cuba: the level of engagement by the population in evaluating, critiquing and amending policy changes and proposed reforms, through representative channels, public forums, national consultations and referenda. Therein lies the voice of the revolutionary people. In socialist Cuba, the relationship between the ‘government’ and the ‘people’, through their organisations, is extremely permeable. Cuban socialism has survived with the backing of the revolutionary people and failure to recognise this leads to distortions and misconstructions about the legitimacy of the revolutionary government and the balance of power.

This is not to deny the indefatigable leadership and authority of Fidel Castro, and the subsequent dominance of Raúl Castro, which the following chapters elucidate. But as military historian Hal Klepak has pointed out, ‘neither the FAR [Revolutionary Armed Forces] nor even important police resources were ever needed in an internal security role’ to quell civil unrest.¹² The projects the Castros initiated were dependent on their ability to get the Cuban people behind them. Hence the need to constantly go to the people, to explain, urge, debate and win consent in order to mobilise people to action.

The label ‘revolutionary people’ in the title of this book does not just mean communist militants, government leaders and state administrators. It includes the communities and ‘ordinary’ Cubans who just got on with the art of living, pulling together through the Special Period of economic crisis: the city dwellers who became urban farmers to provide food for themselves and their neighbours; the ‘disconnected’ youth who became the Citizens’ Army in the Battle of Ideas; the environmentalists pursuing sustainable development and renewable energies; the medical personnel who left behind their homes and families to serve the world’s poorest and most neglected communities; the medical scientists who worked tirelessly to produce medicines the island could not import because of the United States blockade or the international market price; the social scientists who warned policy-makers that Cubans were being left behind in the drive for efficiency; and the millions of Cubans who turned

out time and time again to debate the proposed policies and reforms which would affect them. But the label ‘revolutionary people’ can also include the malcontents and critics of government policy, those who ‘pilfer’ state resources, work illegally or live off foreigners, the self-employed and private farmers, the marginalised youth without work or study. In the cycle of revolutionary regeneration any of these groups can and have been reincorporated into the socialist project, as this book shows.

Cuban political scientist Rafael Hernández complained: ‘Cuba is not the transfiguration of a doctrine, nor the reification of a totalitarian philosophy. It is a country. Little is written and even less is published about this real country.’¹³ My endeavour is to write about Cuba as a ‘real country’, without the cynicism or condescension that characterises so much of what is written about the island by outsiders, and to highlight episodes and developments about which little is known outside Cuba, except perhaps by well-informed solidarity activists and specialists in those areas.¹⁴ These episodes include the Battle of Ideas from 2000, the Energy Revolution from 2005, the acceleration of Cuban medical internationalism and the development of Cuba’s biotechnology sector. I am also concerned with the political economy of development in different stages: during the period of ‘Rectification’ in the late 1980s; the economic crisis of the 1990s known as the ‘Special Period’; reforms from 2008 under Raúl Castro’s mandate; and more contemporary debates over economic efficiency and social justice. Today, the socialist development path is in the balance and, whilst being wary of attempts to predict the future, history can help us assess the internal and external factors which *will* determine the outcome.

The information is drawn from speeches and articles, documents, scientific, technical and financial reports, data sets, and books and articles about Cuba read over many years, in English and Spanish.¹⁵

As it is written for a broader audience, this book avoids some academic conventions. There is little examination of the existing literature or analysis of debates within that. Specific references are given to texts from which I have drawn directly, but without expansive lists of previous publications by the scholars cited. Clearly a far broader body of work has been consulted over the years in which I have studied Cuba, including classic texts in the field which have contributed to my knowledge and shaped my analysis, even if they are not cited.

In addition, for each chapter I sought interviews with Cuban leaders, thinkers and activists: insiders who could give a Cuban perspective to each story. For example, I had the inside view of the Battle of Ideas from Cubans who were youth leaders closely identified with the era: Hassan Pérez, President of

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the Federation of University Students (FEU); Kenia Serrano, another national FEU leader; and Enrique Gómez, First Secretary of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) in Havana. Regarding the Energy Revolution, I talked to scientists who are leading advocates of renewable energies and sustainable development: Luis Bérriz, President of Cubasolar, and Alfredo Curbelo Alonso from Cubaenergía. For Cuban medical internationalism, I spoke to Jorge Pérez Ávila, former director of Cuba's hospital for tropical diseases, the IPK, which has been central to Cuba's overseas medical interventions: he prepared Cuban doctors for their mission to combat Ebola in West Africa in 2014–15. Concerning Cuban biotechnology, I consulted Agustín Lage Dávila, then director of the Centre for Molecular Immunology (CIM), a key character in Cuba's biotechnology story, and Dr Kelvin Lee, the US medical scientist cited above.

Regarding relations between Cuba and the United States, in Havana I interviewed two top Cuban negotiators who had led official and secret talks with the US: Ricardo Alarcón, who headed Cuba's US policy from 1962, holding top posts in both the Cuban government and the United Nations, including as President of Cuba's National Assembly for 20 years from 1993; and Josefina Vidal, who led the island's US policy from 2013, handling the secret negotiations with the Obama administration which led to the brief rapprochement announced by the Cuban and US presidents on 17 December 2014. Vidal is now Cuba's Ambassador to Canada. In New York, I met with Cuba's Ambassador to the United Nations, Anayansi Rodríguez Camejo, who returned to Havana in January 2019 to serve as Vice Minister of Foreign Relations. With regard to Cuba's broader international relations, I spoke with Isabel Allende, cited above, and Alberto Navarro, the European Union's High Representative (Ambassador) in Havana.

For the economic history and political economy chapters on the challenge of development and Rectification, the Special Period, Raúl's reforms and the contemporary Cuban tightrope, I consulted Cuban economists, sociologists, political scientists and other specialists, including José Luis Rodríguez, Minister of the Economy from 1998 to 2009, and a former Vice President of the Council of Ministers and member of the Council of State.¹⁶

To object that because the interviewees have links to the government of Cuba they are somehow distinct from 'ordinary people' is to impose a false dichotomy.¹⁷ The political representatives, heads of scientific institutions, youth leaders and others whose voices are represented here do not hail from an elite or aristocracy any more than Díaz-Canel does. Over the years in Cuba I have visited the homes of former ministers, of diplomats, political leaders, intellectuals

and other professionals who live in ‘ordinary’ homes lacking luxury, and who share the daily deprivations of their neighbours. As state sector employees, many of my interviewees receive low salaries, even by Cuban standards, notwithstanding their qualifications and the responsibilities of their post. In summer 2019, employees in the political organisations of People’s Power and a group in public administration received their first pay rise since 2005.¹⁸

Before the Revolution, Allende told me, her family’s ‘big dream’ was for her to work as a secretary in the US-owned Cuban Electric Company. Instead she attended university, became an ambassador and is today director of an important institute which trains diplomats and academics. ‘I am not a millionaire, I do not have any of that, but from the point of view of what I did in my life . . . Could that have happened before the Revolution? No. That is due exclusively to the Revolution.’¹⁹ Likewise, Pérez, the son of a bus driver, became the head of a world-renowned medical institution. These are ‘ordinary’ people given the opportunity to do extraordinary things by the Cuban system. Given that the state controls most institutions and organisations in Cuba, it would be difficult indeed to find people in significant roles, contributing to Cuban development, who have no links to the government.

I have also drawn on previous interviews carried out with leading veterans of the Cuban revolution, *compañeros* of Che Guevara in the field of industry, and with the former president of Ecuador, Rafael Correa. In addition, I consulted non-Cubans from foreign interests dealing with Cuba.²⁰ I also benefited from the insights of non-Cuban specialists on the country, particularly for the final chapter concerning the Trump administration’s Cuba policy.²¹

The analysis also draws on my own experiences of visiting and living in Cuba frequently since the mid-1990s when I first stayed on the island as a teenager with my sister, who is two years my senior. This was an austere time during the Special Period; we saw how Cubans dug deep to survive, as individuals and as a socialist society. It was a transformative experience. I have returned to the island regularly: for world festivals, solidarity brigades, research trips and field work, personal visits, academic seminars and more research trips.

Our first trip to Cuba from Britain turned everything we knew on its head, introducing us to new precepts and concepts, values and priorities, social relations and hierarchies, aspirations and cultural norms, means and ends. The experience taught me the value of an ‘immanent critique’: instead of judging socialist Cuba based on the internal logic of the capitalist system, greater insight and appreciation are possible by evaluating the island on the basis of its own strategic objectives, while acknowledging the challenges the island has faced. Scholars of Cuba,

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particularly from the Cubanologist school of interpretation, have so often struggled to explain or account for developments in Cuba precisely because they fail to engage with the Cuban Revolution on its own terms. The issue is ideological, an aspect of the political confrontation between capitalism and socialism.

The key tenets of Cubanology are that the revolution of 1959 represented a rupture; and Fidel and Raúl Castro have personally dominated domestic and foreign policy since, denying Cuban democracy and repressing civil society. Thanks to their mismanagement of the economy, growth since 1959 has been negligible. They simply replaced pre-revolutionary dependency on the United States with dependence on the Soviet Union until its collapse in 1991, and subsequently on Venezuela.²² These ideas have shaped international political and media discourse on Cuba.

The caricature is problematic. First, because it obstructs our ability to see clearly what goes on in Cuba and, by depicting the Cuban people as an amorphous and pacified mass, fails to account for the Revolution's endurance and achievements. Second, because it is premised on neoclassical economic assumptions, which entail abstraction, a negation of history and 'path-dependence'.²³ By stressing economic policy over economic restraints, critics have shifted responsibility for Cuba's poverty on to 'the Castros' without implicating successive US administrations that have imposed the suffocating US blockade. The crippling effect of the blockade on every sector in Cuba has been ignored or dismissed by many commentators who blame shortages and inefficiencies on 'mismanagement' or even cynically credit it with keeping the Castros in power.²⁴ In the developing world there is greater appreciation for Cuba's revolutionary resilience. In 2009, then president of Ecuador Rafael Correa told me: 'It is impossible to judge the success or failure of the Cuban model without considering the [US] blockade, a blockade that has lasted for 50 years. Ecuador would not survive for five months with that blockade.'²⁵

Third, poverty and material deprivation were not introduced to Cuba with the socialist Revolution: they have been structurally inherent since the island was 'discovered' by Christopher Columbus. Fourth, the accepted discourse hides political bias behind a veil of objectivity. Cuban-American sociologist Nelson Valdés complained that: 'The literature on Cuba has been permeated by so much political polemic that scholars have preferred to remain silent about the method they have utilized or the paradigm guiding their investigation and analytical logic.'²⁶

This is clearly seen on the issues of democracy and human rights, both of which are contested terms. Put simply, observers who accept parliamentary

liberalism – the form of political organisation preferred in the advanced capitalist countries – as synonymous with ‘democracy’ will find it missing in Cuba and conclude that there is no democracy on the island. There is no need here for either a gratuitous censure of socialist Cuba for the absence of multiparty elections, nor for a defensive foray into explaining how the Cuban system of participative democracy actually functions. Many scholars of Cuba have addressed this question quite adequately.²⁷ Likewise, addressing the issue of human rights involves philosophical questions about the nature of freedom: from what, to do what, for whom? The United Nation’s Declaration of Human Rights recognises two distinct sets of rights: ‘economic, social and cultural rights’ and ‘civil rights and political liberties’, without prioritising either set morally or legally.²⁸ The extent to which these rights are entirely congruent is another debate. Liberal capitalist countries, most vociferously the United States, highlight civil rights and political liberties, while socialist Cuba prioritises economic, social and cultural rights. The choice is determined by which rights are compatible with the economic system.

For the Cuban Revolution, the commitments to social justice and independence are integral, not supplementary, components of the revolutionary project.²⁹ Failure to understand or accept this facilitates a narrative about economic ‘mismanagement’ and ‘inefficiency’. ‘The social objective of the economy is not growth for the sake of growth, but for the social implication of that growth,’ insists Geidys Fundora Nevot, a young Cuban doctoral student I interviewed.³⁰ ‘Growth is a condition for development, but it is not development,’ adds former Cuban Economy Minister José Luis Rodríguez.³¹ Indeed, the government avoids certain measures of improving efficiency or gross domestic product (GDP) that would be harmful to the well-being of the majority of the population. As US academic Al Campbell points out: ‘This different goal clearly has the potential to cause Cuban policy-makers to act differently than their capitalist counterparts would.’³² So it is problematic to apply the yardsticks of capitalist economics, focusing on GDP growth or money-wages per day, to measure ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of the Cuban economy, while paying little attention to the social and political priorities of the island’s development.³³

SPECULATION ABOUT CUBAN SOCIALISM

Following the restoration of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States in summer 2015, Havana became the place to be for veteran rock bands, pop stars, politicians, film-makers and the fashion industry. President Obama

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visited Cuba in March 2016, followed swiftly by the British Foreign Secretary, the French president and other European ministers. They were trailing behind Russian, Chinese and Latin American heads of state. The sharp edges of the US blockade were chipped away through licences for trade and investment issued to US companies by the Obama administration.

Meanwhile, since 2008, major internal developments have been underway in Cuba: the distribution of 2 million hectares of state land to private farmers; the *Guidelines for Updating the Economic and Social Model*, approved in 2011 and updated in 2016, reduced state control of the economy and cut government spending; the Mariel Special Development Zone and a new Foreign Investment Law of 2014 sought to channel foreign capital into Cuba; hundreds of thousands of workers were transferred from state jobs to cooperatives and self-employment, prompting a rise in remittances and the emergence of private enterprises; and Cubans were permitted to sell their homes and cars on an open domestic market for the first time in thirty years.

While the Cuban government insists that these measures are necessary to preserve the socialist Revolution, the process has led many commentators to conclude that, intentionally or not, Cuba is reintroducing capitalism. Where does the truth lie? The market openings gave US policy-makers a pretext to initiate a change in US–Cuba policy under the Obama administration, while the anticipation of western policy-makers, analysts and academics was evidenced in the plethora of conferences and publications on ‘Raúl Castro’s reforms’. There was speculation about whether we were witnessing an Eastern European style transition to capitalism, or a gradual economic liberalisation under existing centralised state structures, the ‘Chinese model’.

Like a castle made of sand, rapprochement was washed away with the Trump administration’s default to hostility. But the Cuban reforms continued, hesitantly, in fits and starts, leaving many to wonder if Raúl Castro had pulled the reins in before dismounting the horse. Now Díaz-Canel is responsible for overseeing the extremely complex process of ‘updating’ the Cuban system. The reforms are an economic imperative but also constitute a political risk. They create expectations and interest groups which will exert increasing pressure on the socialist system for further concessions to market forces. These challenges will be explored in the following chapters from the perspective of the revolutionary people of Cuba who, ultimately, will have to meet them.

Chapter 1 locates Cuban economic history and post-1959 political economy in relation to the ‘challenge of development’ faced by all underdeveloped or developing countries: how do they receive the capital they need to be able to

invest in domestic developments and social welfare for their people without jeopardising their sovereignty? The lack of consensus among Cuban revolutionaries about how to overcome the structural components of the island's underdevelopment, whilst in transition to socialism and facing hostility from US imperialism, explains why the economic management system has been changed so frequently, even prior to the Soviet collapse. Decisive measures were taken during the period known as the Rectification from the mid-1980s, which pulled Cuba back from the Soviet model and arguably contributed to the survival of Cuban socialism. The Cuba which emerged in the post-Soviet world was determined by the policies and constraints faced in these earlier periods and the lessons drawn from them.

Chapter 2, on the Special Period, shows how the economy was restructured for reinsertion into global capitalist markets without relinquishing socialism, while the planning system was restored and adapted to the new conditions. The disintegration of the USSR could not eliminate the island's structural dependence on foreign trade but forced it to find new partners.³⁴ The chapter discusses the grave socioeconomic impacts of the crisis, the measures taken to alleviate them and the enduring impact of those measures on the island's social fabric. It explains how state farms were handed over to cooperatives and families to work, while agricultural production shifted to organic farming, revitalising traditional techniques, and an urban gardening movement emerged.

Chapter 3 explains how the struggle to return the little shipwrecked Cuban boy Elián González to his father grew into the Battle of Ideas, catalysing ambitious socioeconomic and educational programmes with youth as the principle protagonists and beneficiaries. In the face of escalating US hostility, the Battle of Ideas sought to strengthen socialist consciousness whilst tackling material deprivation on the island. **Chapter 4**, on the Energy Revolution, explains how efficient new power generators were installed in a 'distributed' system, replacing worn-out Soviet power stations, while old durable goods were replaced with energy-saving equipment. It discusses the programmes underway to promote greater energy efficiency and renewable energies, and shows how research into these technologies began far earlier than assumed. **Chapter 5**, on medical science, describes how science and technology were prioritised, even when the budget was tight, to find endogenous solutions to domestic problems and to the scarcity manufactured by the US blockade. Cuban advances in biotechnology have placed it at the forefront of an emerging global field for the first time in the island's economic history.

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Chapter 6, on medical internationalism, shows how the nature of Cuban internationalism shifted from military to medical missions, as hundreds of thousands of Cuban health care professionals travelled to impoverished communities throughout the world and tens of thousands of foreigners were trained or treated on the island. It describes how a new export strategy was forged to reap the benefits of the Revolution's investments in health care and education. **Chapter 7**, on Cuba–US relations, shows how the island withstood renewed hostility from the United States and its allies, determined to see the demise of Cuban socialism in the post-Soviet era, and how the island broke out of its political and economic isolation following the collapse of the socialist bloc, building new alliances which in turn generated pressure for a change in US policy on Cuba, at least until Trump entered the Oval Office.

Chapter 8 provides an account of the reforms introduced under Raúl Castro's mandate from 2007, framing the measures in terms of the problems they were intended to address and the results attained. It shows how the reforms sought to improve efficiency and productivity, opening a space for market mechanisms within the socialist framework. It highlights the national and sectoral debates that accompanied the process, encompassing the entire population, seeking consensus to legitimise the new measures. **Chapter 9** discusses the contradictions being introduced into Cuban socialism with the reform process, and the debates and critiques they have fuelled. It highlights the role of investigators and policy-makers who kept checking who had been left behind, devising targeted programmes of assistance, and reigning in economic 'progress' when it sacrificed social justice. **Chapter 10** was added as the book was being edited to incorporate the return to hostility under the Trump administration, particularly from early 2019. As Cuba enters a renewed period of difficulties, the developments outlined over the following chapters will be decisive if the socialist Revolution is to survive into the post-rapprochement period.