

ORIGINAL

Fidel, global problems and the 2030 Agenda in the integral education of university students

Fidel, los problemas globales y la Agenda 2030 en la formación integral del estudiante universitario

Keily Alicia Ramos-Moreno¹  , José Rolando Vázquez-Labrada¹  , Ana Gloria Rubié-Cabrera² 

¹Universidad de la Isla de la Juventud “Jesús Montané Oropesa”. Isla de la Juventud, Cuba.

²Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas “Enrique José Varona”. La Habana, Cuba.

Cite as: Ramos-Moreno KA, Vázquez-Labrada JR, Rubié-Cabrera AG. Fidel, global problems and the 2030 Agenda in the integral education of university students. Salud, Ciencia y Tecnología - Serie de Conferencias. 2025; 4:1770. <https://doi.org/10.56294/sctconf20251770>

Submitted: 20-06-2025

Revised: 02-09-2025

Accepted: 18-11-2025

Published: 19-11-2025

Editor: Dr. William Castillo-González 

Corresponding author: Keily Alicia Ramos-Moreno 

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Cuban educational policy emphasizes the importance of studying, researching, and disseminating the thoughts, life, and work of Fidel Castro and how he addresses the contradictions and problems of humanity in his texts, including the seventeen sustainable development goals contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Objective: to explain Fidel Castro's conception of the contradictions and problems of contemporary society, their causes and proposed solutions, as well as their role in the comprehensive education of university students.

Method: the research process was guided by the dialectical-materialist method. The following methods were also used: documentary, historical-logical, analytical-synthetic, and systemic-structural analysis. Twenty-one bibliographies were used.

Results: Fidel Castro's speeches addressing the contradictions and problems of the contemporary world and the sustainable development goals were analyzed, as well as the “E” study plan for the different university degrees. The analytical programs for each of the subjects in the Marxism-Leninism discipline have been enriched, and teaching support materials related to this topic have been developed.

Conclusions: Fidel Castro's work, inspired by Martí's thinking and based on the Marxist-Leninist dialectical method, offers immeasurable wealth for understanding the challenges of the contemporary world, identifying their causes, and proposing solutions. This makes it a valuable tool for the comprehensive training of future professionals.

Keywords: Fidel Castro's Thought; Comprehensive Training of University Students; Problems of the Contemporary World; Sustainable Development; 2030 Agenda.

RESUMEN

Introducción: la política educacional cubana enfatiza en la importancia del estudio, investigación y divulgación del pensamiento, la vida y la obra de Fidel Castro y cómo este aborda en sus textos el tema de las contradicciones y problemas de la humanidad, incluyendo los diecisiete objetivos de desarrollo sostenible, contenidos en la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible.

Objetivo: explicar la concepción de Fidel Castro sobre las contradicciones y problemas de la contemporaneidad, sus causas y propuestas de solución, así como su papel en el proceso de formación integral de los estudiantes universitarios.

Método: el proceso de investigación estuvo regido por el método dialéctico-materialista. Se emplearon

además los métodos: análisis documental, histórico-lógico, analítico-sintético y sistémico estructural. Se utilizaron 21 bibliografías.

Resultados: se analizaron los discursos de Fidel Castro en los que se abordan las contradicciones y problemas del mundo contemporáneo y los objetivos de desarrollo sostenible, así como el plan de estudio “E” para las distintas carreras universitarias. Se han enriquecido los programas analíticos de cada una de las asignaturas de la disciplina Marxismo-leninismo y se elaboraron materiales de apoyo a la docencia relacionados con este tema.

Conclusiones: la obra de Fidel Castro, inspirada en el pensamiento martiano y sustentada en el método dialéctico marxista-leninista, ofrece una riqueza inconmensurable para comprender los retos del mundo contemporáneo, identificar sus causas y proponer soluciones. Esto la convierte en una herramienta valiosa para la formación integral de los futuros profesionales.

Palabras clave: Pensamiento de Fidel Castro; Formación Integral del Estudiante Universitario; Problemas del Mundo Contemporáneo; Desarrollo Sostenible; Agenda 2030.

INTRODUCTION

Humanity is undergoing a profound global structural crisis. Climate change, the energy, food, educational, and health situations, wars, violence, inequalities and injustices, poverty, hunger, discrimination, mass migration, and the lack of effective collaboration aimed at halting the destruction of the planet's natural living conditions and creating those necessary for peace, justice, and a dignified life for all human beings are challenges that hang humanity by a fragile thread; elements that constitute valuable potentialities present in the work of Fidel Castro.

This situation has led world leaders to raise awareness and make decisions. Among them is the need to take action aimed at achieving development in harmony with nature, that is, to approve an agenda containing seventeen sustainable development goals to be met between 2016 and 2030, the achievement of which is in jeopardy with only five years left before the deadline, thanks to the inability of capitalism, which is both the cause and the main obstacle to their realization.

The Cuban Party and State require encouraging children, adolescents, young people, and the general population to study and research the thought, life, and work of Fidel Castro. One of the topics that has become an obligatory source of study is that of “the contradictions and problems of the contemporary world,” which is a constituent part of the content of several higher education programs, especially Marxism-Leninism, while at the same time becoming the basis for fulfilling the goals linked to the United Nations 2030 Agenda.

The objective of this work was to explain Fidel Castro's conception of the contradictions and problems of the contemporary world, their causes and proposed solutions, and their role in the comprehensive training of university students.

METHOD

The authors conducted a study of the curricula of four degree programs at the University of Isla de la Juventud (one per faculty) to identify the guidelines and requirements regarding the study of Fidel Castro's thinking and the contradictions and problems of humanity.

The general research method was materialist dialectics because it provides researchers with the principles that allow them to place it in the historical and social context in which his vast work was developed; to discover and understand the contradictions and problems under study; and to establish relationships with sustainable development goals. The following methods were also essential: documentary analysis, historical-logical analysis, analytical-synthetic analysis, and systemic-structural analysis.

RESULTS

A search was conducted across speeches, interviews, reflections, and other materials from Fidel Castro's work to identify how the subject under study was addressed. Here, we worked in two fundamental directions: first, we investigated how he reflects on the contradictions and problems of humanity, their causes and possible solutions; and second, the coincidence between the United Nations 2030 Agenda and his approach to the sustainable development goals in his texts, that is, how the Architect of the Cuban Revolution addresses the problems of poverty, hunger, the state of health in the world, education, gender equality, the link between development and environmental protection, the development of agriculture and industry, issues related to employment, the destruction of forests, soil erosion and degradation, water pollution, seas, oceans, and rivers, and the necessary international collaboration to address the required solutions successfully.

A systematization of the regularity with which both elements are present in the curricula was carried out,

which enabled deeper methodological and scientific work in the Marxism-Leninism and History department and in the year groups. This led to the design and implementation of integrative assessment projects developed over two years, with encouraging results.

In addition, the analytical programs for each subject in the Marxism-Leninism discipline have been enriched: Philosophy, Political Economy, Political Theory, and Science, Technology, and Society Studies. Teaching support materials related to both topics were also developed.

Three pre-event courses were taught:

- “Fidel Castro on the contradictions and problems of the contemporary world” at the 5th Interdepartmental Scientific Methodological Workshop in Preparation for Defense at the universities of the western region “Pinos Nuevos.”
- Grassroots Pedagogy Congress at the University of Isla de la Juventud “Jesús Montané Oropesa.”
- First Islaciencia International Scientific Convention at the University of Isla de la Juventud “Jesús Montané Oropesa.”
- A conference on the same topic was given for the entire university community of Isla de la Juventud and at the opening of the grassroots event of the Pedagogy Congress.

DISCUSSION

The need to study the thinking of Fidel Castro. His role in the learning and comprehensive communist training of future professionals

The Third Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba approved the National Program for the study, research, and dissemination of the thought, life, and work of Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro^(1,2) to “integrate efforts and resources to fully assume” his legacy, which is fundamental for its contribution to the process of building an independent, sovereign, and just nation. Among the program’s goals is the aspiration that current and future generations come to know and embrace the example and “transformative ideas of the Commander in Chief and be able to apply and defend them creatively and practically.”

Fidel Castro “is a paradigm, a natural inspiration, and a permanent catalyst in the formation of the men and women our society needs.” Studying, researching, and disseminating his thoughts, life, and work becomes a necessity and a duty for all Cubans who love their homeland. The Program is an essential component of national security because it will strengthen the nation’s defense against imperial aggression aimed at destroying the Revolution from outside and within.⁽³⁾ Fidel Castro is part of the intellectual struggle to preserve the work of several generations who shed their blood and gave their lives for a better future for their people.

The legal framework of the Program is made up of the Constitution of the Republic, the guiding documents approved at the 7th and 8th Congresses of the PCC, Law No. 123 on the use of the name and image of Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, and Presidential Decree 161, which approved the creation of the Fidel Castro Ruz Center, whose mission is to study, research, and disseminate the thought, life, and work of the Architect of the Revolution and, in addition, to promote the indestructible identification of the Cuban people with his values, by stimulating their knowledge as a means of guaranteeing his influence on present and future generations.

The overall objective of the program is to direct the efforts of agencies, organizations, researchers, academics, intellectuals, and professionals as part of a comprehensive system that promotes knowledge about Fidel Castro, his thoughts, life, and work as a tool for shaping the consciousness, values, work styles, and culture of Cubans.

In other words, children, adolescents, young people, and the general population must study his thinking, life, and work because in them they will find a system of knowledge, values, ways of life and work, and examples that are fundamental to their comprehensive communist education.

The revolutionary process advances based on the key moments of the strategic thinking of the Cuban Revolution, whose essence is Martí, Marxist, and Leninist. Fidelism is its most complete contemporary political-ideological expression.” Fidelism, understood as a specific political-ideological position within the international left that emerged and developed in the last decades of the 20th century and continues to spread in the early years of the 21st century, has as its references the work and thought generated by the Cuban Revolution and its vanguard, especially Fidel Castro, Ernesto Guevara, and others.^(4,5,6)

“Its most immediate epistemological sources are found in the Cuban and Latin American revolutionary traditions, from Bolívar to Martí, the latter representing the articulating synthesis of the former tradition, the work of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, and their most renowned followers.^(4,5,6)

“The essential axiological and practical content that characterizes it is linked to the revolutionary struggle for the liberation and development of colonial and neocolonial peoples, the social emancipation of workers and the humble, the dignification of the human person, and the conquest of a new global economic, political, and social order conducive to a harmonious, balanced, and sustainable relationship with the environment.”^(4,5,6)

The limitation that the authors of this work see in this definition lies in restricting Fidel Castro’s thinking to

an ideological-political current, as it increasingly transcends those boundaries.

The international event organized by the Sao Paulo Forum in 2021, “Fidel, a man of science with a vision for the future,” provides a more complete picture of the thesis defended by the authors of this work: Fidel Castro was not only a politician, he was, above all, a scientist; a politician whose conception, strategy, and decision-making were always based on science; the use of the scientific method was one of the most distinctive features of his political actions.

Fidel Castro’s thinking is a system of ideas, concepts, and principles born of an analysis of the national and global reality, which provides logical continuity to the thinking of José Martí and Marxist-Leninist theory in the historical and social context in which the Cuban people, and their most revolutionary and determined forces, are fighting for the construction of socialism and communism.^(7,8,9)

It is a product of the conditions of the era in which he developed his prolific work, reflecting the profound contradictions and problems that humanity has had to face since the 1950s, and encompasses all spheres of social life: the relationship of humanity with itself and with nature; the role of economics, politics, law, art, morality, philosophy, religion, and science, as well as education, in solving these problems, including “the conquest of a new global economic, political, and social order conducive to a harmonious, balanced, and sustainable relationship with the environment.”^(7,8,9)

But in his thinking, the ideas of his predecessors are linked, mixed, and fused, which he enriches with his theoretical and practical work. The method adopted was contributed by the founding fathers: José Agustín, Varela, Luz, Martí, who Mella and Fidel himself rightly continued. That method or principle is eclecticism, the foundation from which Cuba’s own thinking emerges, develops, and consolidates. His theoretical and practical work was also based on the materialist dialectic developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who adopted an elective stance toward the doctrines that preceded them.

The criteria presented here, Vázquez^(7,8,9) points out, are only intended to open a space for debate on the issue. Collective intelligence will undoubtedly enable us to arrive at a more complete definition of the concepts under analysis. Its importance is undeniable, not only for Cuba but for all of humanity.

Therefore, as Pineda⁽¹⁰⁾ points out, the work of Fidel Castro is essential reading for anyone who wants to understand the world in its process of continuous transformation, as well as the evolution of his thinking, which, like that of all great personalities, obeys the dialectical-materialist logic that requires a concrete analysis of concrete reality.

Accordingly, current curricula require the study of the thought and work of Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro Ruz. Below are some examples:

- Agronomy degree: the strategy for political and ideological work requires the promotion of debate on the thinking of Martí and Fidel. The discipline of Marxism-Leninism, as part of its content, requires addressing Fidel’s views on science, technology, and environmental issues and is oriented toward the study of Martí’s bibliography, the classics of Marxism-Leninism, and Fidel, in such a way that they contribute to reflection and critical revolutionary debate, an idea that is frequently repeated in almost all programs of all majors.

Likewise, the discipline of Marxism-Leninism must be approached with a cultural conception that articulates the best of Cuban revolutionary thought with Marxism-Leninism, which finds its masterful synthesis in the thinking of Fidel Castro, who developed an updated theoretical proposal on imperialism, the dangers and challenges facing humanity, and the paths for the construction of revolutionary, anti-imperialist, and social justice subjectivity, which is why it must be a continuous and systematic reference point. And, successively, its study is required or included in subject areas, program foundations, methodological guidelines, curriculum strategies, bibliographies, etc. This requirement is repeated in the subject area of Marxism-Leninism across all degree programs, and its presence in the courses varies in depth according to the professional profile.

- In Accounting, it is emphasized that Fidel’s thinking offers a very advanced perspective on the complexities involved in building socialism, particularly in the conditions of Cuba and the world today.
- In the Bachelor’s Degree in Education. Computer Science, it is pointed out that the formation of an ideopolitical culture in students requires, among other actions, the study of the thought and work of José Martí, Fidel Castro, and Ernesto Che Guevara.
- Physical Education requires highlighting Fidel Castro’s contribution to the national and social liberation of the Cuban people.

On the other hand, students must be introduced to and master the United Nations 2030 Agenda, its content, its causes, and the fundamental obstacles to its achievement. The Sustainable Development Goals are directly related to the contradictions and problems facing the contemporary world. The discipline programs in the current curriculum, which date back to 2016, do not include these goals, as they were designed and approved simultaneously with the UN strategy, to be implemented between 2016 and 2030.

However, the curricula of the different degree programs do include the topic “global contradictions and problems affecting humanity”,^(11,12) which is the root of the need for the agenda as mentioned above and opens the door for its incorporation into the analytical programs. Fidel Castro’s thinking is vibrant, allowing for the strengthening of the work of disciplines and their subjects in this area. Through study and research, the contribution they make to students’ learning and training processes and to the improvement of their quality is deepened.

The contradictions and global problems that arise from them are related to the phenomena and processes of society and its relationship with nature, which affect the vital interests of all humanity and require the international community’s collaboration to resolve.⁽⁷⁾

These profound contradictions and problems revolve around man’s relationship with his natural environment, which has generated issues such as climate change, environmental pollution, soil erosion, deforestation, pollution of water, rivers, seas, and oceans, and destruction of the ozone layer, among others. Man’s relationship with his fellow human beings, particularly in dependence on the economic, social, and political nature of the financial and social formation in which he is embedded, has given rise to poverty, hunger, mass migration, violence, drugs, drug trafficking, the impossibility of the right of all to health, education, inclusion, gender equality, guaranteed employment, the right to clean and renewable energy, technologies for agricultural and industrial development, and the promotion of clean and resilient cities, among other elements.

Finally, the nature of relations between nations in today’s world, given the international economic order imposed by imperialist nations, has led to wars, areas of tension and conflict, the imposition of a global financial system that enslaves Third World countries, sanctions with all their consequences, underdevelopment and its exacerbation, and prevents the real possibility of an international alliance to solve contemporary problems. Hence, the need for a new global economic order is now possible thanks to changes in international relations.

As in the previous section, this is illustrated here with specific examples in four degree programs:⁽¹¹⁾

Agronomy: It is noted that the discipline of Marxism-Leninism provides students with the dialectical-materialist method and the philosophical, theoretical-methodological, and political-ideological assumptions that give it scientific validity for the interpretation and practical-revolutionary transformation of the complex problems of the contemporary world and of Cuba, from a humanist, partisan, and classist perspective, in accordance with Fidel’s conviction that Homeland, Revolution, and Socialism are inextricably linked, including the problems of Cuba and professional practice.

Among the objectives of the discipline are: to develop and consolidate a scientific and theoretical-methodological conception for the analysis of contemporary global reality and problems in their link with the socio-philosophical, economic, political, sociocultural, and ideological context that characterizes them, in accordance with the content of the Cuban Social Project; to contribute to the development of a dialectical-materialist style of thinking and revolutionary action in the identification, analysis, and search for solutions to the problems and contradictions of the contemporary world, Cuba, and the practice of the future professional agronomist; to demonstrate the exploitative nature of capitalism and its inability to solve the serious problems of humanity, to contribute to the understanding of the need for its transformation or revolutionary overcoming. In line with this, the course’s knowledge system covers the contradictions and problems of society. Such ideas are present in Marxism-Leninism and in other programs across all degree courses.

One of the most serious problems that poses a challenge to the very existence of the human species is the destruction of natural living conditions. Consequently, it is one of the most critical topics in the Agronomy degree program. In this context, environmental education is considered a priority at all levels of education. In the Agronomy degree program, it is vital because it involves transforming the natural environment by integrating natural resources into the production process, some of which, such as soil and water, are among the country’s main environmental problems. That is why the National Environmental Strategy and the Tarea Vida (Life Task) reflect strategies, tasks, and concrete actions that involve agricultural activity.⁽¹²⁾

These reasons justify the presence of water and soil care and protection issues in practically all disciplines and their subjects.

Key moments when Fidel reflects on the contradictions and problems of the contemporary world, their causes, and possible solutions

For a Martian, a Marxist, a Leninist, and a Fidelist, there is no doubt that the deepest cause of the dangerous contradictions and problems of the contemporary world, whose clearest expression today is found in the need to achieve seventeen sustainable development goals, contained in the United Nations 2030 agenda, lies in the capitalist system. However, when analyzing the economic, social, and political situation of the contemporary world and proposing possible solutions, Fidel Castro does not go directly to the root of the problem.

In this regard, it is worth reflecting on whether it is fair to say that the current situation is fundamentally the responsibility of capitalist society. Why? If so, why does Fidel, when proposing possible solutions, not directly attack the nature of the system?

When, on multiple occasions, Fidel Castro refers to the critical economic, social, and political situation into which the world has gradually been entering since the second half of the 20th century, he blames the current international economic order, given its fundamental characteristics: injustice, inequality, irrationality, and, therefore, unsustainability.

As far as the authors of this paper have been able to ascertain, Fidel first referred to the unsustainability of the current international economic order imposed by developed capitalist nations for their exclusive benefit in 1974.⁽¹³⁾

That year, after insisting once again that the origin of European and North American bourgeois societies and their industrial development was based on the colonial exploitation of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, he denounced the fact that, with their misery and vast natural resources, based on which the development of these peoples would be possible, the absurd and irrational luxury of the imperialist nations is maintained. He points out that, although these methods had remained unchanged for centuries, by the 1970s they were becoming unsustainable.

He makes these statements in a context characterized by the crisis that shook capitalism in the early 1970s, especially in the energy sector. Fidel Castro blames this on “the imperialist policy of exploitation and irrational waste of the world’s energy resources, at the expense of underdeveloped producing countries and for the benefit of the astronomical profits of the large international monopolies.”⁽¹³⁾

It is also a time when some 100 nations have emerged into independent political life as a result of the powerful national liberation movements of the 1960s and the beginning of their tenacious struggle to establish a new international economic order that would create favorable conditions for their development. In that struggle, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) has played an important role.

The United Nations approved this order at a Special Assembly in May 1973. In its place, a speculative order has been established, as Fidel said, that no one understands. The 6th NAM Summit was part of this process. Fidel called on the heads of state gathered there to closely unite the progressive forces of the Movement in the United Nations and in every international forum aimed at demanding economic justice, an end to the domination and exploitation of the natural resources of the peoples that comprise it, and the defense of the right to development. He also called for an end to the exploitation on which the luxury of a few and the misery of the majority are based, for which he called on the summit to produce “a firm will to fight and concrete plans for action. Deeds, not just speeches!”⁽¹⁴⁾

As President of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Commander-in-Chief appeared before the UN and presented a comprehensive, systemic, and integrated analysis of the issue. He also offered a definition of development that is of great value not only in political terms but also in scientific terms. “Development is not just agriculture and industrialization (...) it is, above all, attention to human beings, who must be the protagonists and the goal of any development effort”.⁽¹⁵⁾ He gave the example of Cuba, a small, underdeveloped country with few natural resources. He blockaded, which, with an equitable distribution of its wealth, has enabled it to develop its economic policy in line with social development.

In the 1980s, he devoted most of his energies to raising awareness of the disastrous role of foreign debt. This shackle grips underdeveloped peoples and prevents them from funding development programs. The second half of those years demanded his attention to the internal situation in Cuba, which led to the Rectification of Errors and Negative Tendencies, the need for which became an imperative of *Patria o Muerte* (Fatherland or Death).

The 1990s marked the beginning of the most challenging period the Cuban Revolution has ever faced: the Special Period, but it was also a crucial time for humanity. The collapse of the world socialist system, with all its economic, political, social, and ideological consequences, was felt with exceptional force not only in the largest of the Antilles but throughout the world, fundamentally in the underdeveloped nations, which lost a valuable model for development. This event opened the door for large transnational corporations to impose their neoliberal policies and subject the natural resources of the vast majority of humanity to ruthless exploitation.

Fidel and his concern for nature, the FTAA, and neoliberal globalization

With this, concern for the fate of nature, which had long been subjected to rapacious and uncontrollable plundering that caused such damage to the environment and climate that, if the necessary measures were not taken to reverse the situation, it could become irreversible, came to the forefront of international politics. It almost is. These problems prompted Fidel’s analysis. At the Earth Summit, he warned of the threat of human extinction due to the gradual, ongoing destruction of its natural living conditions, and he blamed consumer society for this.⁽¹⁶⁾

Population growth and poverty, he said, “lead to desperate efforts to survive even at the expense of nature. It is not possible to blame this on the countries of the Third World, yesterday’s colonies, today’s exploited and plundered nations, due to an unjust world economic order”.⁽¹⁶⁾

How can this situation be counteracted? The solution, he believes, does not lie in preventing the development

of Third World countries. The truth is that everything that contributes to underdevelopment and poverty is a clear violation of ecology: unequal trade, foreign debt, and protectionism, among other factors, are harmful to the environment because they destroy it. Therefore, Fidel continues, if we want to save humanity, we must implement a more just international economic order, distribute wealth more equitably, change consumption habits and lifestyles that ruin the environment, and put science and technology at the service of sustainable development.⁽¹⁶⁾

The Commander-in-Chief also drew attention in recent years to the US policy aimed at absorbing Latin American peoples with the FTAA. This task continued in the following years until, together with Hugo Chávez, he developed and implemented a strategy that counteracted US attempts and has become the current Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas, as a means of integration in the Latin American region.

In the 1990s, the leader of the Cuban Revolution also subjected the process of globalization, its objectivity, and its paths to in-depth analysis. Neoliberalism, as a path imposed on humanity, deepened the negative political, economic, and social consequences of consumer society. Instead of implementing policies that would eradicate bad consumption habits and the wasteful lifestyle that destroys the natural conditions of life on the planet, the destructive factors are being strengthened.

After his illness in 2006 and his subsequent recovery, he turned his sharp weapons—his words, his profound intelligence, and his reflective capacity—to deepen awareness of the serious challenges facing humanity. These issues occupy an essential place in his reflections. He became, like José Martí in his time, a soldier of ideas.

Underdevelopment: a consequence and cause of the intensification of contemporary contradictions and problems

Among the contradictions and problems of the contemporary world, he points out, among others, the ever-widening gap between the developed and underdeveloped worlds; the luxury and wastefulness of consumer society and the misery and mortgaging of the Third World's natural resources that are essential for development; the need for material, financial, human, and technological resources to achieve this, while irrational and unproductive spending on armaments grows; the wastefulness of consumer society and the global structural crisis: economic, energy, financial, inflationary, and increasing unemployment. Its weight falls on the underdeveloped world. It also refers to the euphemism for developing countries that are truly underdeveloped, among whose indicators the following stand out:⁽¹⁶⁾

- a) Per capita income: an ever-widening gap between the developed and underdeveloped worlds. The latter was then 14 times lower than the former. Today it is higher.
- b) Relatively low participation of Third World countries in the distribution of world production, accounting for only 8 % of industrial production.
- c) The external debt of non-oil-producing countries is growing, preventing them from accessing the energy sources necessary for development.
- d) Illiteracy, poor health, disease, hunger, unemployment, and lack of access to drinking water and clean energy sources are on the rise.
- e) The imbalance between the exports of the underdeveloped world and its imports (trade deficit).
- f) The structural distortion and dependence of underdeveloped countries is deepening.

Contradictions and problems: their causes and possible solutions

Under these conditions, what country can develop? What, in Fidel's view, are the causes of these contradictions and problems? Referring to infant mortality as a serious social problem in Latin America, the Commander-in-Chief⁽¹⁷⁾ asks himself and answers: What kills them? Poverty. And what is poverty if not the consequence of exploitation?

He emphasizes that the only real solution to economic crises and their aftermath is the disappearance of capitalism. But what concerns him are the serious problems of the underdeveloped world, which needs resources it does not have, which has to face the voracity of imperialism "which, although in crisis, still possesses powerful economic, technical, political, and military resources" to "impose its solutions and place the burden of the crisis on the shoulders of its own workers and economically backward countries."⁽¹⁸⁾

That is why the solutions he proposes do not directly address this cause. Underdevelopment, the result of colonial and neocolonial exploitation, he says, is not the sole cause of the misery of the masses. Added to this is the "exploitation of the people by reactionary oligarchies and national bourgeoisies. But the solution requires not only the suppression of all forms of exploitation of man by man,"⁽¹³⁾ but also the end of unequal exchange. Think about it: what do several revolutions in two, three, or ten countries of the Third World mean on their own? He considered the solution to the debt problem and the establishment of a new international economic order to be more critical because they would allow the creation of real conditions for development, "because social changes alone will not solve the immense financial and social problems that have accumulated. Revolution would allow for better distribution, but not the resources needed to address the abysmal accumulation of

needs created by underdevelopment.⁽¹³⁾

To demonstrate this, he cites the example of the largest of the Antilles (the current situation in Cuba is the most reliable proof of this concept). In Cuba, he reflects, it was not only social change that made the work of the Revolution possible (which today has allowed almost all of the sustainable development goals to become a reality or be on track to be achieved), but also the establishment of a kind of new international economic order in its relations with the socialist countries of the time. Cuba has solved its problem not only with the will for social justice and social change; it has achieved this precisely because it has “economic relations that are different from the historical relations we are talking about between Latin American countries and Third World countries and the developed capitalist world,” which allowed it to have the resources necessary to build factories, highways, roads, dams, schools, hospitals, housing, etc.⁽¹⁹⁾

The struggle is being waged for the right to independence, to achieve the new order immediately as a condition for carrying out the necessary social changes. He is happy, he says, when he learns “that a revolution has triumphed in any corner of the Earth, even if it is on a small island”,⁽¹⁹⁾ but, based on his experience, he reasons about the realities of the world.

Therefore, he believes that the struggle must develop gradually and that the measures to be implemented must be adapted to the historical moment that society is going through. He demands that the immediate causes be addressed. This will raise awareness of the deeper causes of the tragedy humanity is experiencing, awaken the masses, and create conditions conducive to more profound changes.

What are the immediate factors that have led to the current situation? He highlights a set of phenomena that characterize underdevelopment as the immediate cause of the serious problems affecting the Third World, which, in his view, has both historical (colonialism and neocolonialism) and current causes: the existence of an unjust and unequal international economic order that threatens peace and life on the planet, contrary to the interests, needs, and aspirations of the vast majority of humanity, which does not contribute to solving problems but instead reinforces and deepens them. Among these, he points to unequal exchange, inflation, protectionism, lack of financing, the diversion of resources to the arms race, the international financial system, and foreign debt, among others.⁽²⁰⁾

In response, what solutions does Fidel propose? Consolidate political independence through economic emancipation; abolish the current international economic order, as it does not correspond to humanity's interests, and rush to establish a new one; rally the efforts of all humanity. However, the most important thing is the decision, the spirit, the capacity, and the will to achieve this through our own efforts, for which the integration of the peoples of the underdeveloped world and South-South cooperation are fundamental. He also points out that Cuba not only defends its right to development but also that of the entire underdeveloped world to emerge from it and, to this end, contributes its human resources.⁽²⁰⁾

However, how do the developed capitalist nations react to these proposed solutions? The imperialists, he says, are not resigned to the reality that the system imposed on the world is in crisis, and they seek to escape it by any means, including war, forcing their workers and the underdeveloped peoples to make the most significant sacrifices. The strategy of Yankee imperialism, he says, is “to bring the industrialized capitalist countries under its leadership, divide the peoples of the Third World, and isolate the oil-producing countries to impose its conditions on them”.^(13,21)

CONCLUSIONS

Fidel Castro's thinking offers a critical perspective on the contradictions and problems of the contemporary world, highlighting the need to address the immediate causes and work towards the abolition of the capitalist system. The United Nations 2030 Agenda reflects global awareness of these problems, which aligns with the Commander-in-Chief's vision. Incorporating his thinking into the learning and training of university students is not only possible due to its potential but also an urgent necessity to address the challenges facing humanity.

REFERENCES

1. Aprueban programa nacional para estudio de vida y obra de Fidel. Prensa Latina. 2021. <https://archivo.prensa-latina.cu>
2. Presentan programa para estudio del pensamiento de Fidel Castro. Trabajadores. 2024. <https://www.trabajadores.cu>
3. Perera A, Tamayo R, Puig Y. Fidel no es pasado, es presente y es futuro. 2021. <https://www.presidencia.gob.cu>
4. Limia-David M. Retos del marxismo en la Cuba de hoy. La Habana: Editorial Ciencia y Educación; 2012.
5. Solar-Cabrales FJ. De Martí a Marx, Fidel Castro y el socialismo cubano. La Habana: Centro Fidel Castro

Ruz; 2025. <https://www.centrofidel.cu>

6. Solar-Cabrales FJ. Fidel y el marxismo de la Revolución cubana: rebelión contra los dogmas. REDH-Cuba. 2022. <https://redh-cuba.org>

7. Vázquez-Labrada J. Compilador. Fidel Castro en torno a la insostenibilidad del capitalismo. Material digitalizado de apoyo a la docencia. 2017.

8. Vázquez-Labrada J. Compilador. Fidel Castro sobre la pobreza y su erradicación en Cuba. Material digitalizado de apoyo a la docencia. 2017.

9. Vázquez-Labrada J, Moreno M, Ramos K. Fidel Castro en torno a las contradicciones y problemas del mundo contemporáneo. Material digitalizado de apoyo a la docencia. 2018.

10. Pineda M. Presentación del libro “Fidel ante los problemas del mundo contemporáneo”. 2024. <https://www.centrofidel.cu>

11. Ministerio de Educación Superior. Documento base para el diseño de los planes de estudio “E”. La Habana; 2016. Material digitalizado.

12. Ministerio de Educación Superior. Modelo del profesional para la carrera de Agronomía. En: Plan de Estudio “E”. Carrera Agronomía. La Habana; 2017. p. 47, 64, 67. Material digitalizado.

13. Castro-Ruz F. En el saludo que dirigiera a los participantes en la XXV reunión del Consejo General de la Federación Sindical Mundial, La Habana; 1974. En: Discursos. Material digitalizado. <https://www.centrofidel.cu>

14. Castro-Ruz F. En la clausura de la sexta conferencia cumbre de los Países No Alineados, La Habana; 1979. En: Discursos. Material digitalizado. <https://www.centrofidel.cu>

15. Castro-Ruz F. En el XXXIV periodo de sesiones de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas, Nueva York; 1979. En: Discursos. Material digitalizado. <https://www.centrofidel.cu>

16. Castro-Ruz F. En la Conferencia de Naciones Unidas sobre Medio Ambiente y Desarrollo, Río de Janeiro, Brasil; 1992. En: Discursos. Material digitalizado. <https://www.centrofidel.cu>

17. Castro-Ruz F. En el acto de clausura del XI Congreso Médico y VII Estomatológico Nacional, La Habana; 1966. En: Discursos. Material digitalizado. <https://www.centrofidel.cu>

18. Castro-Ruz F. En la clausura de la Tercera Reunión Ministerial del Buró de Coordinación de los Países No Alineados, La Habana; 1975. En: Discursos. Material digitalizado. <https://www.centrofidel.cu>

19. Castro-Ruz F. En la clausura del encuentro sobre la situación de la mujer en América Latina y el Caribe hoy, Palacio de Convenciones; 1985. Material digitalizado. <https://www.centrofidel.cu>

20. Castro-Ruz F. En el IV Congreso de la FELAP, La Habana; 1985. En: Discursos. Material digitalizado. <https://www.centrofidel.cu>

21. Pineda M. Fidel ante los problemas del mundo contemporáneo. La Habana: Atrapasueños; 2024.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

FUNDING

The authors received funding to obtain the results of this article from the research project “For a healthy smile” with code PT241IJ400-024, which contributes to the “Quality of Life” Territorial Program of the Special Municipality of Isla de la Juventud.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Conceptualization: Keily Alicia Ramos-Moreno, José Rolando Vázquez-Labrada, Ana Gloria Rubié-Cabrera.

Research: Keily Alicia Ramos-Moreno, José Rolando Vázquez-Labrada, Ana Gloria Rubié-Cabrera.

Data curation: Keily Alicia Ramos-Moreno.

Formal analysis: Keily Alicia Ramos-Moreno, José Rolando Vázquez-Labrada, Ana Gloria Rubié-Cabrera.

Methodology: Keily Alicia Ramos-Moreno, José Rolando Vázquez-Labrada.

Writing - original draft: Keily Alicia Ramos-Moreno.

Writing - review and editing: Yoneisy Abraham-Millán, Rosa María Montano-Silva.