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Hands Off Cuba!

Cuba is far from perfect, but far more perfect for the majority of islanders than Haiti , El Salvador, Nicaragua, Grenada and other countries that the US has 'helped democratize'.

Here are some interesting stats for the open minded:

- In 1980 an estimated 41% of the population of Latin America lived in poverty, with nearly 19% of the total living in extreme poverty.
- Pre 1959 Cuba was considered to have one of the higher per capita incomes of Latin America. However, the poorest 40% of the population received only 0.066% of income. By the mid 70s this had improved to 25%. In 1996, the income of those with highest earnings was around 4 times that of those with the lowest earnings.
- 1996 - Infant mortality 8 per 1000 vs 70 per 1000 in late 50's during Batista's reign.
- By 1963, old age and disability pensions applied to all in a non-contributory scheme, and the 1979 law tied pensions to up to 90 % of salary. Health care and unemployment provision became universal, with unemployment benefit up to 70% of salary. Illiteracy was reduced to 5%.
- In 1991 there were 300,000 teachers in the country - the highest per capita rate of teachers in the world.
- Post revolution, Cuba confiscated vast estates, owned mainly by US companies, five of which owned more than 2 million acres. The nationalisation of foreign property was in line with the 1940 constitution, reinstated on 6 Feb 1959 after it had been suspended by Batista's coup in 1952. Compensation was offered to US interests, but not accepted, thus being a rationale for US hostility.
- According to Cuban statistics, the trade embargo cost the island at least \$15 billion between 1961 - 1991. By 1994 over 35,000 Cubans had attempted to cross to Florida, predominantly to escape economic hardship. The US began returning would be immigrants in May 1995.
- By 1990 Cuba came to have more doctors working on missions abroad than the World Health Organisation. Between 1982-85, for every 625 Cubans was one civilian aid worker overseas; in the US the ratio was one worker per 34,704 inhabitants.

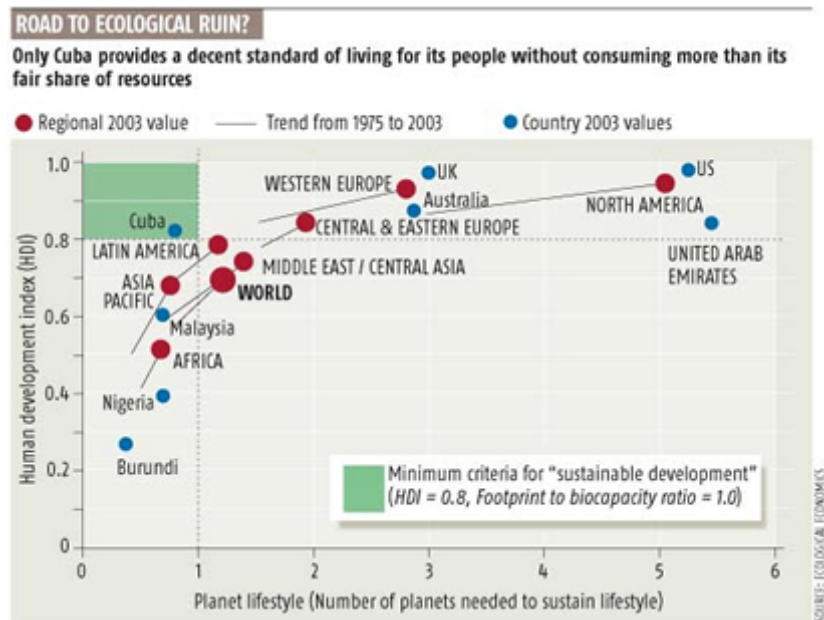


Source: Cuba from Revolution to Development, Ken Cole

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