



¡Baraguá!

publication of the National Network on Cuba

Extra!

A Call to:

Defend Cuba's Sovereignty!

1992 will be a watershed year for the Cuban Revolution. As Cubans struggle to reorient an economy buffeted by the sudden breakdown of three-decades-old trade and economic relations, the U.S. seeks to use its new-found global hegemony to finish off the Revolution it has for so long sought to destroy. Now is the time to rise to the defense of the Cuban people! Now is the time to work in solidarity with the nation that has given so much support to the struggles for freedom in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and in North America as well. In 1992, our paramount duty must be to defend Cuba's sovereignty.

The present "Special Period" in Cuba requires special efforts not only on the part of the Cuban people but on our part as well. This year, Cuba expects to acquire only 5 million metric tons of oil to fuel an economy that consumed 13 million metric tons just three years ago. This severe energy shortage affects every facet of the island's economy and has necessitated reductions in the workday, reduced production in many industrial sectors, the slashing of public transportation, reductions in television broadcasting, and drastic conservation of electricity in every home, to name but a few of the consequences. At the same time, imports of every essential item have been greatly reduced including food and medicine.

The Cuban people are making heroic efforts to overcome these tremendous difficulties. They are going to work in the countryside to increase domestic food production, developing home-grown products to substitute for imports, utilizing alternative energy sources to replace fossil fuels, building up their bio-technological and pharmaceutical production, and boosting tourism to bring in hard currency. The "Special Period" demands a no less heroic effort on our part.

It is our special duty as citizens of the United States to resist and reverse this country's campaign to destroy the gains Cuba has achieved in more than thirty years of Revolution. A new pattern of U.S. attacks on Cuba is emerging. In the U.S. Congress, efforts are underway to tighten the already stringent U.S. blockade in order to suffocate the Cuban people. In recent months, the U.S. has increased the size of its military forces illegally occupying the Guantánamo Bay Naval Base while provocations such as military "exercises" and over-

flights of Cuban territory by U.S. warplanes mount. In the United Nations, the U.S. threatens with retaliation any nation that dares to speak up for Cuba.

The U.S. and its intelligence agencies are also unleashing another wave of terrorism against the island. On January 9th, three Cubans guarding a children's camp were brutally shot to death in execution fashion by counter-revolutionaries and another was critically wounded. Just a week before, armed counter-revolutionaries hijacked a helicopter in an operation directed by the Miami-based Cuban American National Foundation. And on Dec. 29th, three heavily armed Miami terrorists were caught trying to infiltrate into the country. It is up to us to demand that the U.S. halt terrorism and contra violence, leave Guantánamo Bay and cease its military provocations, and end its cruel economic blockade against Cuba.

The urgency of the "Special Period" requires stepped up efforts on the part of Cuba solidarity and anti-intervention activists. We must increase the number of delegations travelling to Cuba and fight to win visas to bring more Cuban artists, performers, trade unionists, students, and academics to this country to speak. We must expand our legislative work to bring enough pressure to bear on the Congress to force it to respect Cuba's right to self-determination. We must increase our medical aid work to get more medicines through the U.S. blockade. We must march, rally, and demonstrate. We must broaden our movement to include new layers among youth and students, labor and religious sectors, the lesbian and gay movement, and people of color. We must build new organizations where none have existed and strengthen our National Network on Cuba. We must rise above past differences and divisions to achieve the unity of all who defend Cuba's sovereignty.

Together, we must join with the Cuban people in the defense of their country and their right to the social system of their choice. Together, we must fight to defend Cuba's sovereignty and the right of all peoples to self-determination, peace, and development. The people of Cuba must know that they do not fight alone. This great light in the Caribbean that has inspired so many of us will not be extinguished.

Cuba: on the eve of 1992

by Richard Levins

I am very worried for Cuba and for the Cubans I know and have worked with. It looks as if Cuba will need a miracle to survive. The good news is that Cubans are capable of miracles.

Cubans talk about the double blockade, U.S. and Soviet. The Soviets have not delivered anything to Cuba except a fraction of the promised oil, and there were no oil deliveries for December. At first this was attributed to the chaos of their economy, but now it is widely believed to be a deal with Bush in return for U.S. aid. As a result, everything is in short supply. Bus service has been reduced to 40%, the deep sea fishing fleet is in port, there is almost no fertilizer, feed for livestock and chickens, little wheat for bread, few spare parts and declining reserves of pharmaceuticals including contraceptives. There is no material for tin cans, a severe gasoline shortage prevented my going out to the farms, most daily newspapers cut back to weekly or with very reduced printings and home use of electricity is down 10%. The sea off the Havana Malecón is empty of ships, the air clean of the refinery fumes, the sunsets just a little less vivid. Crime has increased, stealing from the sparse public supplies is more common, there is some prostitution around the dollar stores.

Enterprises have been asked to draw up plans for 50% and 25% of normal inputs and for the "*opción cero*" in which only input-free research will continue and the scientists will spend time in study, education of young scientists and food production.

The city is cleaner than last year. Everything is rationed and hardship is being shared equitably. The streets are full of bicycles. Innovators devise spare parts, alternative technologies, techniques for saving fuel. Alternative medicine is challenging the hi-tech services. A crash national program in food production combines large scale plantings with municipal gardens and *autoconsumo* plots at all enterprises. Each region is growing all its food needs as a hedge against environmental uncertainty, transportation shortages, and in case of a U.S. invasion. The first results are coming in now, supported by city people going to agriculture for two week stints or longer term commitments.

How do people feel? I asked wherever I went, how do they expect things to develop, what would they like to see happen, what changes are needed, how is the government doing? How do their neighbors feel, or the young people? And I got a very wide range of answers. Some were enthusiastic supporters of

the government, others very critical of agrarian policy or economic investment choices of the past, everyone anxious about the future.

One friend said that Cubans can cope with hardship, and that as long as there isn't heavy repression the country is solid. They wouldn't tolerate repression. Which is what the counterrevolution would like to provoke. In a few cases there were signs of a siege mentality leading to intolerance of dissent, and when I raised these cases everyone regretted them. Others pointed out that so far life is quantitatively more difficult but intact. You wait longer for a bus but it gets you there, you get less at the store but there is no hunger (although I think there is a shortage of protein and vitamins). One man said that the country is capable of solving only its medium sized problems now because more fundamental changes would be the opening wedge for intervention. Capitalism in Cuba would not be like Miami or Taiwan, but Santo Domingo. Almost everyone contrasted Cuba's way of dealing with hardship with other Third World countries, where inequality increases, thousands of children live on the streets, prices rise, services are cut, and the army enforces it all. So with one exception everyone was willing to defend the revolution while criticizing it. The one exception was an ex-communist turned counterrevolutionary who said that the main issue in the world was democracy ver-

sus tyranny and was cynical about all efforts to improve life. She also told me that it was dangerous for Cubans to have foreigners in their homes. I had already visited three apartments of other Cubans.

As for the young, they are very critical of deficiencies, energetic, and surprisingly calm. I saw the Congress of the FEEM (*Federación de Estudiantes de la Enseñanza Media*, roughly junior high). They were thoughtful, demanding, lively. After the voting for the new leadership, as the votes were announced the winners danced

up to the stage to Latin rhythms. One delegate from a school for the visually impaired asked for facilities for them to train as physical therapists to help other kids with special needs. They listened intently to Fidel's long discussion of the relative prices of oil and sugar. He also observed that the majority of the delegates were women, and described how before the revolution upper class women were trained for marriage, the rest for domestic labor or prostitution.

Most Cubans I spoke to do not feel their freedom is limited



photo courtesy Tony Ryan

Looking into a barber shop located in Santiago de Cuba.

Congress is acting on Cuba... You should be acting on Congress!

An Open Letter from the Legislative Working Group of the National Network on Cuba

Dear Friend of Cuban Sovereignty,

We are writing you with an urgent concern. The Cuban people are facing great danger from the U.S. government and the current international situation.

In the U.S. Congress, there are several moves pending regarding Cuba. We think you should know about them so that you can call on your representatives to act favorably in the interests of peace with Cuba and against the unjust U.S. blockade of the island. *Our representatives need to hear from us now — loud and clear.*

Torricelli's CDA

Rep. Robert Torricelli (D-NJ), Chair of the House Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs has been circulating a draft of a bill called the "Cuban Democracy Act" (CDA). We have learned that Torricelli will probably introduce the CDA on Jan. 28 — the birthday of Cuba's great national hero and revolutionary José Martí.

CDA, in summary, would:

- Ban trade with Cuba by foreign subsidiaries of U.S. companies.
- Confiscate any ship that docks at a U.S. port within 6 months after docking in Cuba.
- Reduce U.S. aid to any nation that imports Cuban sugar by the same dollar amount as the value of the sugar imported.
- Authorize the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to fund Cuban "dissident" groups.
- Direct the President to pressure countries that trade with Cuba (Great Britain, Canada, France, Mexico, Japan, etc.) to halt their trade with the island.

The original version of CDA was developed by the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), a right-wing organization promoting the downfall of the Cuban government. CANF has historically enjoyed an undue level of influence on Capitol Hill and has doled out, over the years, thousands of dollars to members of Congress, (Torricelli included), through its Free Cuba Political Action Committee (FCPAC).

The CDA expressly states that its purpose is to "end the Castro regime." While the CDA also contains several positive provisions, such as the lifting of the U.S. blockade on the shipment of medicines to Cuba, the overall effect is to strengthen the U.S. blockade and prepare the way for possible military aggression against the island.

This proposed legislation violates the sovereignty of Cuba and of all nations that desire normal trade and diplomatic ties with Cuba. The CDA is a major component in the escalating U.S. assault on Cuba. Because it covers so many issues and therefore will need to go through several congressional committees, we have some time to mount a major effort to defeat it — but we must begin now. *It is critical that we increase our voices in opposition to this legislation!*

The Mack Amendment

The Mack Amendment was introduced by Sen. Connie Mack (R-FL) to amend the Foreign Aid Appropriations Bill. It is designed to end all trade by U.S. companies with Cuba through third country subsidiaries. Between 1980 and 1989, such trade totaled \$2.6 billion, 70% of which was food and medicines. The amendment would penalize subsidiaries for trading with Cuba. Great Britain, France, Canada and other states have opposed Mack as a violation of their territorial rights.

Sen. Mack re-introduced the amendment in the last session of Congress, but in a revised form. The current version passed the Senate and House as part of the Foreign Aid Bill. It is now structured to penalize parent corporations in the United States.

The final version of the entire Foreign Aid Appropriations Bill was defeated in the House on Oct. 30 for reasons other than the Mack Amendment. Mack Amendment language, however, will be introduced in other legislation, such as CDA. *Your continued opposition to it — in whatever form — is needed.*



Guarini Bill

Rep. Frank Guarini (D-NJ) is also planning to introduce a bill which will increase economic pressure on Cuba. In its draft form, this bill says that the President may not extend Most-Favored-Nation trading status to the former USSR in 1992 unless it has terminated, or says it will within one year, all military and economic aid to Cuba. Guarini has conceded that a full cutoff of such aid would "cause pain and suffering to the people inside Cuba." *Rep. Guarini needs to hear our voices of opposition on this proposed legislation.*

TV Martí

The U.S. government has already wasted \$40 million on the illegal TV Martí, which violates international communications agreements. Funding for TV Martí again passed in the House and Senate last year. The exact amount of the funding will be determined in a conference committee. *We need to make sure this is the last time TV Martí will get such funds.*

Weiss Bill

This bill (HR 434) was introduced by Rep. Ted Weiss (D-NY) on January 8, 1991. It would exempt from the U.S. blockade the sale and export of medicines, medical supplies, instruments, or equipment to Cuba. *We need to urge our representatives to sign on as cosponsors and urge Rep. Weiss to move the bill forward in the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs.*

Berman Free Travel Bill

In the previous Congress, Rep. Howard Berman (D-CA) introduced HR 1767, which would allow U.S. citizens to travel to Cuba, Vietnam, North Korea, Libya and Cambodia. The legislation is being redrafted and will be introduced very soon. *Your support is also needed on this bill in that it guarantees the right to travel.*

ACTION

Why not form a delegation to meet with your representatives on these issues?

Letters should also be sent to our Congresspersons urging them to:

- **Oppose** the "Cuban Democracy Act" initiated by Rep. Torricelli with the backing of the CANF. Letters should also be sent directly to Rep. Torricelli on this matter.
- **Support** the Weiss Bill (HR 434) by signing on to it. Medicine should not be a political weapon!
- **Oppose** the Mack Amendment!
- **Support** the introduction of Rep. Howard Berman's Free Travel Act. It is our right to travel!
- **Oppose** further funding of TV and Radio Martí!
- **Oppose** Rep. Frank Guarini's possible introduction of another anti-Cuba bill. Our relations with the former USSR should not be based on its relations with Cuba!
- **Draft** legislation that respects Cuba's right to self-determination and will normalize economic and diplomatic relations between our two countries. End the criminal U.S. blockade!

Please send copies of your letters to us — it will help to know what has been done and what needs to be done here in terms of any follow up.

You may reach Congress at:

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 224-3121

U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510
(202) 224-3121

Rep. Robert G. Torricelli
Chair - Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs
Committee on Foreign Affairs
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
(202) 226-7812
Fax: (202) 225-2029

Issued by the **Legislative Working Group — National Network on Cuba (LWG - NNC)**; Box 21744; Washington, DC 20009. The LWG is a task force of the NNC and exists to provide accurate and timely information to groups and individuals on Cuba and the Congress. We publish on a periodic basis the **Legislative Letter on Cuba** and have draft copies of the CDA available, as well as other information. Donations are urgently needed to continue our work and to pay for the costs of this leaflet.

except by economic necessity. They speak up about issues, criticize policy, complain a lot. One man told me that in their home they quarrel about TV. He wants to watch the sport events while his wife and daughter want to watch the *novela*. His teenage daughter settled it: "This is a democracy and it's two against one so we watch the soap opera!" This internalized sense of democracy is reinforced by meetings of all sorts in which members evaluate their organizations and elect their leaders and discuss issues. But it is also true that leaders do not always listen carefully to the base. You have the right to express opinions, but no guarantee you will be listened to seriously. And if not, Cubans do not usually resort to protest. (There have been exceptions, a party branch that challenged the Central Committee on what they considered to be a decision that violated the constitution, and won; others who described challenging Fidel or other top leaders and winning. But Fidel is an enthusiastic, skillful and well informed debator, and if you will challenge him you better know your arguments). This reflects a mixture of a sense of discipline and an awareness of the intolerance of those who regard dissent as irresponsible or even suspect. Criticism outside the range of "the revolution" or anti-Fidel is not kosher: Cuban nationalism seems to have made socialism an issue of patriotism.

So the disaffected people feel stifled, while most politically concerned people seem to consider themselves part of a very imperfect but improveable socialist democracy. (They can be quite eloquent on the improvements required).



photo courtesy Tony Ryan

The Revolution has given Cuban children access to high quality, free health care and education unsurpassed in the developing world.

And in contrast to life in the U.S., I find an environment of humane concern for each other, cooperation, strong social commitment, and an absence of careerism. I don't want to deny their opposites. You can also find greed, corruption, apathy, all the bourgeois virtues that some of our journalists seek out so avidly. But what is new and exciting about Cuba is the humanness, rough equity, and assumption of common interests.

Richard Levins is Professor in the Department of Population Sciences at the Harvard School of Public Health.

MediCuba — \$10,000 in medical aid to Cuba

MediCuba, a project to send medical aid to Cuba launched by the Task Force on Medical Aid of the National Network on Cuba, has begun to send medical aid to the island. The project was announced in the Nov/Dec, 1991, issue of *Baraguá*. Thus far, MediCuba has received approximately \$10,000 worth of medicines and medical supplies, half of which have already been sent to Cuba in the form of gift parcels sent by individuals.

The U.S. blockade of Cuba combined with the disruption of Cuba's traditional trading patterns has begun to affect Cuba's internationally acclaimed health care system. During the current "Special Period," there is an urgent need for donations of medical supplies in order to prevent the erosion of Cuba's achievements in the health field. Organizations throughout Europe and Latin America are launching efforts to send medical and other

material aid to Cuba. In this country, the U.S.-Cuba Medical Project based in New York has initiated an effort to win a "humanitarian aid" exemption to the U.S. blockade from the U.S. government which would allow it to send large quantities of medical aid. In the meantime, there is an urgent need for medical aid now.

MediCuba needs your help in two ways. First, you can donate funds with which MediCuba can purchase medical supplies, medicines, and medical books. Secondly, you can gather medical supplies and send them to MediCuba. You may already know doctors or other medical workers who have supplies to donate. (For reasons of safety, everything must be sealed and unopened.) With your help, the blockade doesn't have to make Cubans sick!

Here's my contribution of: ☐ \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$15 ☐ \$___ other
Make check payable to MediCuba.

☐ Send me more information on MediCuba.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ St _____ Zip _____

MediCuba; 1870 Wyoming Ave., NW; Washington, DC 20009; (202) 667-3730.

Concerned about U.S.-Cuba Relations?
Want to learn more about the Cuban Revolution?

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¡Baragua!

Publication of the
National Network on Cuba

This is an abbreviated, extra issue of *¡Baragua!*, (which is usually published in a 12-page format), for the Peace for Cuba rallies in NY, San Francisco, and other events in Winter/Spring, 1992.

¡Baragua!, newsletter of the National Network on Cuba (NNC), is named for Cuban revolutionary leader Antonio Maceo's immortal *Protest of Baragua*, issued in 1878. At Baragua, Maceo refused to halt the struggle against Spain until Cuba was free and independent and slavery had been abolished. Today, on billboards and walls across the island, the slogan, "The future of our country will be an eternal Baragua!" is proclaimed.



Antonio Maceo

¡Baragua! is published every other month by the DC "Hands Off Cuba!" Coalition for NNC. Initial copies are free. We suggest a donation of \$10 or more for a one year subscription. All labor is donated. Please feel free to photocopy *¡Baragua!* and to reprint articles with proper credit. We welcome news items and information on the Cuba solidarity and non-intervention movement around the U.S.. Manuscripts will be returned if you include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We reserve the right to edit any material submitted. Signed articles are the opinions of the authors.

Editors: Bill Cathey, Brian Adams, Tony Ryan.

For \$10 or more you will receive *¡Baragua!* every two months. *¡Baragua!* features articles from and about Cuba and the Revolution, updates on legislation in the U.S. Congress concerning Cuba, and reports and analysis from the growing movement in solidarity with the Cuban people in the U.S. and internationally. Don't get left behind — subscribe today!

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