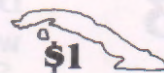


¡Baraguá!

publication of the National Network on Cuba



Spring 1995



P O R

ENCUENTRO MUNDIAL DE SOLIDARIDAD CON CUBA
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World Solidarity Conference in Havana

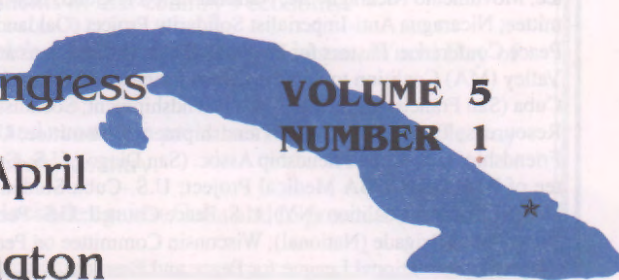
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¡Baraguá!

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National Network on Cuba: The National Network on Cuba (NNOC) is a broad-based federation of Cuba-specific coalitions and projects that exist in numerous parts of the U.S., as well as organizations with Cuba programs or committees. The fundamental goals of NNOC are to end the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba and to support that country's right to self-determination. NNOC also stands for full normalization of relations between the U.S. and Cuba.

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Declaration of the 1st World Solidarity with Cuba Conference

Meeting in the City of Havana, from 21-25 November 1994, we 3039 delegates representing 109 countries from 5 continents and 5 regional and international organizations, participants in the World Solidarity with Cuba Conference, declare that defending Cuba's sovereign right to work for a destiny in accordance with its needs and historic process, without interference, means defending the right to choose from a plurality of paths in the face of the political and economic dogmas that are being imposed worldwide.

In our work sessions and in direct contact with the people, we have once again confirmed that, at the same time that Cuba is denied the possibility to trade freely with the rest of the world and all its efforts to rebuild its economy are being hindered, the Cuban reality is systematically distorted and falsely represented in an unprecedented propaganda campaign. We have verified with our own eyes the cruel effects of the blockade on the lives of the Cuban people. That is why we insist that the United States government heed the demands of vast sectors of world public opinion and the General Assembly of the United Nations to put an end to that unjustifiable measure that has lasted for more than thirty years now. We have also been able to confirm the Cuban people's morale and will to resist as well as their determination to preserve their social achievements. We return to our countries even more convinced of the need to continue working for the Cuban cause.

In the coming days, Cuba, blockaded and slandered, will not be present in the Summit convoked in Miami by the United States government. The hosts fear Cuba's dignified voice that speaks out in favor of the forsaken, the dispossessed, the outcast, the helpless. But Cuba is not alone; proof of that is this meeting attended by only a fraction of that great mass of humanity in all parts of the world which supports this worthy country.

Our world solidarity event took place as Cuba and all of Latin America prepare to commemorate the centennial of José Martí's death in battle. Martí was always aware of the importance of Cuba's independence struggle, both for the fate of what he called "Our America" and for achieving a "world balance." These days, Martí's prophesy looms in all its significance and magnitude. "Whoever rises up today with Cuba rises up for all time."

The blockade against Cuba must cease!

Cuba's inalienable right to build its own future must be respected!

General Resolutions of the 1st World Solidarity with Cuba Conference

1. To declare 1995 International Year of José Martí and for the Fight Against the Blockade.
2. To celebrate a José Martí and Support for Cuba Day on May 19, 1995, the centennial of his death in combat. This day will be celebrated with different types of actions implemented by the solidarity movements in each country.
3. To continue and improve the national and regional meetings of solidarity with Cuba with the participation of all the forces and groups that work in favor of friendship.
4. To protest against the exclusion of Cuba from the hemispheric summit in Miami, organized by the U.S. government.
5. To continue and increase campaigns for donations and economic aid, as an expression of solidarity with Cuba.
6. To work for the growth of the solidarity movement, extending it to every possible sector of each society and promoting exchanges, visits to Cuba, tourism and investments in that country's economy.
7. To declare October 10, the day on which the Cuban people's revolutionary struggle began, World Day of Solidarity with Cuba.
8. To denounce the blockade and the financial, commercial and economic pressures as an unacceptable way of imposing models of political and social organization on any country.
9. To condemn the slander campaigns and the information blockade against Cuba and to promote the truth of its people through all possible channels of expression.

Youth brigade visits Cuba

by Eugene A. Fischer

Displaying political solidarity with the people of Cuba, an international youth brigade of seventy-two people from many different countries, including the United States, Canada, Sweden, Iceland, Great Britain, New Zealand, Germany, and Mexico, spent two weeks in January working on a state farm and visiting various locations throughout the island. The brigade conducted research and spoke with Cubans both young and old, professionals and workers, about the revolution's conquests and defeats as well as the country's economic crisis and the government's measures to deal with it. During our stay we visited several government institutions and had firsthand contact at a psychiatric hospital, a children's day care center, an AIDS clinic, and a factory; all these experiences were enlightening and awe-inspiring. We shared with these people our experience as students and workers in our respective countries and asked them what they feel should be done, what they would change, and if they understood the government's policy and how it was in their interest to defend their country and its political process. What we learned from this experience was educational and very helpful in defending the Cuban revolution and its people from the calumnious and slanderous campaigns propagated by the U.S. government and other imperialist powers.

Upon our arrival we stayed at the Campamento Eduardo García Delgado, a banana farm in the province of Ciego de Ávila. We lived, ate, and worked with the workers. We worked in the fields from 7 to 11 a.m. chopping and hoeing around the banana trees to

Eugene A. Fischer



Brigadistas meet with workers at the camp where they lived and worked, in Ciego de Ávila province.

clear bad foliage which would impede growth. We would break for lunch, rest and resume work in the afternoon at 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. We visited several sites in Ciego de Ávila: a sugar refinery, a workers' recreational center, and two hotels on keys to the north of the island. We were the object of much attention in this province and were interviewed by the local and national media; this was a first for this type of brigade organized by U.S. citizens and others to solidarize and work with the Cubans. The second week was spent outside Havana at the hotel of the Union of Young Communists (UJC). We were able to draw some conclusions about the differences in Cuban society and the differences between

the city and countryside. The city and the countryside contrast on a number of points. For instance, the countryside has stronger support for the revolution, due to the lack of contact with the tourist industry and discrepancies created by the money it brings. People in the countryside have more access to food than do people in the city, who depend on farmers to bring in produce; thus, the countryside does not experience the same food shortages that the city dwellers face. For instance, to understand the hotels we visited in the keys you have to understand Cuba's dependence on hard currency. These hotels are part of the tourist industry which the government is developing to help bolster the economy. The hotels are joint ventures, where foreign capital is used to construct new hotels or other industrial facilities. The Cubans don't have the type of capital needed to invest and build the type of hotels tourists will consider worth visiting, and these joint ventures serve a dual purpose by making profits for the foreign company and bringing in valuable hard currency which Cuba uses to purchase badly needed commodities,

supplies, spare parts, oil, ad infinitum, on the world market.

At the Centro Química-Farmacéutica, a Chemical-Pharmaceutical center, which researches formulas and methods of producing new medicines such as Q-Ulcer and PPG, we were able to ask the doctors and scientists what type of research they were conducting and we learned about these two Cuban medicines. PPG is known in the international medical community as being the most effective drug to

fight high cholesterol. Q-Ulcer is a medication that is used to cure ulcers and destroy the harmful bacteria that is believed to cause the ulcers. Because of the U.S.-imposed embargo, these medicines are not available to those U.S. citizens who need them. The Cubans sell these medicines on the world market and use the profits to purchase imports which Cuba needs. The entire Cuban populace has access to every one of these medicines if they need them. The ends to which this center is put is a truly democratic one. Here, medicines are researched and produced that are for the good of the whole society instead of for a select few who have access because they have the money to buy it.

Among the political institutions we visited were an Assembly of Peoples Power and a local Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR). These institutions demonstrate how the government, or the power of the state, is in the hands of the people, because they are both grassroots organizations which function efficiently with the participation of the majority of the people, and which are free from constricting, bloated bureaucratic apparatuses.

We had interesting conversations with the members of the CDR; we spoke to the youth because we wanted to find out what their opinion of the state of the nation was, and what they viewed

as the future of other countries. The responses were as heterogeneous as the crowd, some youth were very supportive of the path taken by the government but were unsure why the U.S. continued its seemingly archaic policy of economic embargo. Others felt that the government should implement more capitalist incentives, citing China as a model nation. What most of the youth we spoke to did agree with were the gains of the revolution and what the country had done to maintain its dignity, sovereignty and independence since the first days of its revolution. Albeit critical of their country, the Cubans we met are extremely nationalistic and proud of their country. They are willing to defend the revolution at all costs, as were the majority of the workers and older people we met. This is the engine of support for the revolution and the major obstacle that capitalism will confront if the imperialists try to reestablish capitalist social relations on this island. For us, the youth were important to talk with because we wanted to find out what type of political perspective this sector of society has. We wanted to base our observations on those who would inherit the revolution and would be able to withstand its inevitable future confrontations with world imperialism.

We were convinced through our discussions of the importance of Cubans having more contact with students, young people, and workers of other countries in order to be grounded in international politics and struggle, to better be able to align themselves with the world political movements taking place now and those that are sure to take place in the future. What was interesting for us was how many young people knew so little about the U.S. and its political movements. We were interested in talking to the young people about our experiences as activists in our countries; we discussed issues such as Proposition 187 and abortion rights, and then we discussed the economic insecurities of our system, which they were interested in because they wanted to know if we had access to material goods which they didn't have access to in Cuba. This last point was very important to both us and them, and we wanted to discuss the



Brigade participants outside their Havana hotel.

cost of living of working people in Cuba as compared with working people in the U.S. We discussed medical bills, social (in)security, economic and employment uncertainty, and the high cost of living in the U.S. What was most surprising was that many people wanted to compare Cuba with the U.S. and wanted the same standard of living or supply of cheap commodities that U.S. citizens have. We felt the need to put this into a historical, economical perspective: the comparison between a first world imperialist power and a third world country is a lot like the apples and oranges comparison.

Cuba is in an economic crisis of incredible magnitude. But due to the popular support for, and the socialistic character of, the government, the country is nowhere near experiencing the socially explosive crises that exist in Mexico, Venezuela, and Haiti. It is important to note that this is a country with little to no natural resources, unlike either Mexico or Venezuela. Cuba has been isolated by both U.S. policy and the collapse of the Soviet Union, its historic trading partners. The U.S. has tried to starve the Cubans into submission. Despite these seemingly impossible obstacles, Cuba still manages to maintain superior education, a completely free medical system, public housing, social programs, and an economy which keeps almost all its workers employed. If we were to compare these policies to those of the U.S., we would objectively conclude which government is violating basic human rights, such as the right to a job, health, education, and housing, and which government operates in the interest of its people. The government is in power because it is what the people want, there is no denying this fact. Every day Cuba's existence is proof of humankind's capacity to become a world of workers, students, farmers, and professionals capable of fulfilling their destinies, and being a beacon to all humanity. Every day its existence is a headache for the U.S. government and imperialism worldwide. For two weeks in January, the Cuban revolution was a reality for our brigade, not just some abstract ideal, and every day those memories will compel me and my fellow *brigadistas* to fight for Cuba's sovereignty and right to exist.

Cuba action: News from the capital

Our work to end the Cold War against Cuba includes pressuring Congress & the Administration

Make sure your elected officials hear from you

organize a lobbying visit, write letters, make phone calls

- Cuba Information Project; 198 Broadway, #800; New York, NY 10038; (212) 227-3422

The 104th Congress, with Republican majorities in both houses, has begun. According to the Washington law firm of Shaw, Pittman, Potts, and Trowbridge, which advises U.S. corporate clients on Cuba, Republican control, "may result in the continuation of existing U.S. policies towards Cuba and a reduced likelihood that the Clinton Administration will move to modify or lift the trade embargo. In the Senate, the new chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Jesse Helms (R-NC), will likely use his power to instigate investigations into activities of the U.S. Department of State and other agencies involved in foreign affairs. The Administration's foreign policy decisions, including any relating to Cuba, will come under far closer and less sympathetic scrutiny from Sen. Helms than from his Democratic predecessor Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI)."

A contrasting view on the impact of Republican control was offered by Dr. Wayne Smith, former Chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana. Speaking to Radio Havana Cuba, Smith said, "I worry about the implications [of Republican control] for social welfare, for a more egalitarian society, for addressing the problems of our inner cities, but I think in terms of U.S.-Cuban relations the Republican victory has very few implications. First of all, I don't think the Republican-dominated Congress could be any worse than the Clinton Administration has been on this issue. And after all, the Republican party is the party of business. There are many American businesses that want to trade with Cuba."

Bill to Repeal the Cuban Democracy Act (H.R. 367)

On January 4, 1995, the first day of the new Congress, Rep. Jose Serrano (D-NY) reintroduced his bill to repeal the

Torricelli Act passed in 1992. That infamous act, which has been strongly rejected by U.S. allies, prohibits foreign subsidiaries of U.S. corporations from trading with Cuba, among other measures tightening the U.S. blockade. Rep. Serrano's bill has been referred to the House Committee on International Relations, formerly known as the Foreign Relations Committee. The most important thing we can do right now to support this legislation is to help line up cosponsors for the bill. We cannot expect any action on H.R. 367 unless and until there are a significant number of other representatives signing on to it. Call your Representative at 202-225-3121.

Rangel Bill (H.R. 883)

On Feb. 9, Rep. Charles Rangel (D-NY) reintroduced the most comprehensive anti-blockade legislation ever, the Free Trade with Cuba bill, H.R. 883, which, if enacted, would end the economic blockade. The bill has been referred to the House International Relations, Ways and Means, and Government Reform and Oversight committees.

Rangel's bill had 41 cosponsors in the last Congress. Three of them, Thomas Andrews (D-ME), Don Edwards (D-CA), and Michael Kopetski (D-OR) retired, were not renominated, or did not seek reelection. Three others, Dan Hamburg (D-CA), George Hochbrueckner (D-NY), and Jolene Unsoeld (D-WA) were defeated. Cosponsors must again be recruited. Call your representative's office at 202-225-3121 and encourage him or her to cosponsor this legislation.

Measures to Further Tighten the Blockade

On January 4, 1995, Cuban American Rep. Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL), introduced two new bills: H.R. 83, a bill to

PHONE OR WRITE

Make your views on U.S. policy toward Cuba known

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provide for the withholding of U.S. contributions to certain United Nations and international organizations that assist specified countries, including Cuba, and H.R. 84, a bill to prohibit the importation into the U.S. of sugar from countries that import sugar from Cuba.

It is not clear what the real impact of the passage of either of these bills might be, but we must make every effort to defeat them. Passage of either of them would only strengthen the political clout of the Cuban American National Foundation (CANF), of which Rep. Diaz-Balart serves as a mouthpiece. Their defeat will send a message that there is at least growing concern about the nature of U.S. policy towards Cuba.

As we go to press, Rep. Diaz-Balart has also introduced legislation to prohibit entry into the United States by executives of any foreign company that invests in Cuban properties owned before the Revolution by U.S. interests.

On the Senate side, Jesse Helms introduced a bill in mid-February combining Rep. Diaz-Balart's blockade-tightening measures and adding a few additional sanctions. The Helms bill would (1) bar the entry into the United States of executives of foreign companies who have bought up property owned by U.S. citizens in Cuba before the revolution; (2) cut the U.S. contributions to such international financial institutions as the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, etc. by as much money as those institutions give to Cuba each year; (3) instruct the President to stop preferential trade relationships with foreign countries that buy sugar or molasses from Cuba and then sell those products in the United States; and (4) terminate U.S. foreign aid to former Soviet Bloc states that give trade preferences to Cuba. Helms must be stopped. Call your senators today! For up-to-the-minute information on pending legislation, call the Cuba Information Project in New York at 212-227-3422.

What's Next for Clinton on Cuba?

The *Washington Post* reported on Dec. 24 that the Clinton Administration is planning to authorize the establishment of one or more Cuban news bureaus in the U.S. in exchange for the opening of similar U.S. bureaus in Cuba. Presently, reporters from both countries must apply for visas on a case-by-case basis. The *Post* also said that the Administration is considering expanding "slightly" the number of U.S. citizens allowed to travel to Cuba for research and educational reasons, but that no decision has been made. A State Department official told the *Post* that the Administration is worried that such a move would come under hostile scrutiny from the Republican Congress.

Rep. Diaz-Balart denounced the rumored changes saying, "It would be a grave mistake on the part of the President now to send a gesture of friendship to the [Cuban] dictatorship

[sic], which is engaged in more repression than ever." On Dec. 19, Diaz-Balart and Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), sent Clinton a letter warning him that a top National Security Council aide, Morton Halpern, was advocating changes in the blockade that would "benefit the Cuban communist dictatorship." Halpern has long been a favorite demon of right-wing Cuban Americans. In January, Diaz-Balart and Ros-Lehtinen raised objections to Clinton's economic bailout proposal for Mexico because of Mexican investment in Cuba.



Repeal Cuban Adjustment Act?

Sen. Alan Simpson (R-WY) has told the press that he plans to introduce legislation to repeal the Cuban Adjustment Act of 1966. The Act essentially gives permanent residency to any Cuban who arrives in the U.S., even by hijacking or other illegal means. Simpson, long an opponent of immigration in general, asked a *New York Times* reporter in December, "Why can one group of people come to Disney World, spend the year shopping with a sister and then get a green card, no questions asked, after one year? Is there something sensible about that?"

Last August, President Clinton changed the previous interpretation of the Act in such a way as to essentially suspend it. Instead of accepting Cubans picked up at sea for residency in the U.S., Clinton ordered them held at the illegally-occupied U.S. base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba and other sites.

Prospects

"...Cuba is throwing out the welcome mat to foreign investment. And dozens of U.S. companies are grabbing places in line," reported *USA Today* on Dec. 27. The article recites a long list of Fortune 500 U.S. companies that would like to do business with Cuba.

While Republican control of the Congress opens the way for Sen. Helms and CANF hatchetman Rep. Diaz-Balart to promote their ever more extreme and vindictive amendments to the U.S. blockade, Congress may come under greater pressure from profit-hungry U.S. business, tired of seeing lucrative Cuban investments going to Canadian, Latin American, and European firms. This increasing pressure can open up new opportunities for the Cuba movement to make our anti-blockade message heard on Capitol Hill.

We must also continue to pressure Democratic congresspersons who have opposed the blockade in the past to renew their opposition. There is a danger that Democratic members may now be more reluctant than ever to criticize the Clinton Administration on any foreign policy issue in the face of Republican attacks on Clinton. Now is the time to get in contact with your representative and senators.

5th travel challenge set for April

by Pam Montanaro & Sissy Wood,
Freedom to Travel Campaign

Join the fifth historic Freedom to Travel Challenge to Pinar del Rio and Havana, April 7-14. We have every reason to believe that this challenge trip, in conjunction with our lawsuit, which reaches the Court of Appeals this spring, and new legislation on the right to travel being introduced by Sen. Paul Simon, will be the challenge that causes the government to lift the travel restrictions once and for all!

And if that weren't enough incentive, we have an incredible itinerary for you which incorporates Cuba's exciting new projects in sustainable development as well as an overview of Cuban society today! In recent years, Cuba has become an internationally-recognized leader in the field of sustainable development, achieving remarkable results in organic agriculture, alternative energy generation, alternative medicine, and alternative food production. We will explore these areas while helping to promote the fledgling ecotourism vacation/education programs Cuba is developing.

In the meantime, our October 1994 challenge trip returned uneventfully from Cuba, and three days later the Treasury Department released our bank account, frozen since just before the June challenge. The Bay Area participants in the December challenge trip, which included eight members of the Cuban American Fernandez family spanning four generations, were harassed by Customs officials in Phoenix, and received terrific coverage on ABC News.

"Tears of joy mingled with tears of frustration Tuesday as the Fernandez family emerged from the depths of Sky Harbor International Airport after a weeklong trip to Cuba," reported the *Arizona Republic*. "With misty eyes, Delvis Fernandez, 54, told how he had brought gifts of car brakes and stove burners to his relatives. ...His Cuban relatives had gifts for the

family as well. Among them were a set of coffee cups Sara Fernandez's daughter gave her as a keepsake to mark their precious reunion, which could be their last. The cups are now the property of the U.S. Customs Service. ...Articles from... embargoed countries are confiscated."

These Freedom to Travel Challenge trips demonstrate to U.S. policymakers, media, and the public at large that there is a growing movement to take back our constitutional rights which have been trampled on during the long, dark Cold War years in the name of a dubious, archaic, and cruel "national security" policy.

We are tremendously excited by the response to our campaign thus far. We have received coverage in all the major U.S. print and broadcast media, including the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, CBS, ABC, CNN, and others. Major international human rights organizations have spoken out on our behalf. The U.S. Congress passed a resolution last spring saying the President should not restrict travel for educational, cultural, and humanitarian purposes and will now consider a bill to completely rescind all restrictions on travel by U.S. citizens.

By combining our challenge delegation with grassroots education, legislative pressure, and national and local media work, we believe we can force the Clinton Administration to face up to and change this undemocratic policy and unconstitutional violation of our rights as citizens of a democracy, to travel the world and get to know other people and cultures for ourselves.

Have the adventure of a lifetime while taking a stand for the **Freedom to Travel!** Join the fifth historic Freedom to Travel Challenge! Space is limited. Apply immediately.

Join the fifth historic
FREEDOM TO TRAVEL CHALLENGE
to Pinar del Rio and Havana
April 7-14

Have the adventure of a lifetime while taking a stand for the freedom to travel!

Very limited space — Apply immediately

Trip cost: \$1000 from Cancún

Partial scholarships and special family rates available

Freedom to Travel Campaign; PO Box 401116; San Francisco, CA 94140; Phone: (415) 558-9490; Fax: (415) 255-7498

Sunday morning Havana

by Samuel Thomas, Jr.

For some, Sunday morning in Havana means bicycling to the beach for the day. Others line up for ice cream at Coppelia. For some others though, Sunday mornings mean attending services at the Catedral de la Santísima Trinidad, one of Havana's three Anglican Episcopal churches. The Trinidad Cathedral is part of a large complex that includes residences for the Episcopal Bishop and the Dean of the Cathedral, as well as dormitory facilities used to house visiting delegations. The present Cathedral was opened in 1946, replacing another church located in Old Havana.

The earliest roots of the Episcopal church in Cuba go back to the arrival of a U.S. missionary in 1871. The church expanded after the end of Spanish colonial rule and with the U.S. occupation of the island from 1898-1902. It was not until after the Revolution, however, in 1966, that Cuba became an autonomous diocese and the first Cuban was appointed Bishop. Previously, all Bishops were North Americans.

Since the Revolution, other changes have taken place. Once, there were different services each Sunday for the different communities represented in the church. There was an Anglican-American service in English, a second English service for West Indians, and a Cuban service in Spanish.

Today, there is one service in Spanish for everyone. The hymns and music have a Latin beat using bongos and maracas. A more traditional organ awaits repair. In keeping with the more progressive members of the worldwide Anglican communion, the diocese of Cuba began ordaining women to the priesthood several years ago. According to members of the congregation, the female priests have met with general acceptance.

Today in Cuba, being a Christian is no longer viewed as contradictory to being a revolutionary. One congregant said that her supervisor at work knew she was a Christian and didn't care. In fact, when a religious delegation came to Havana recently, she was allowed to take off ten days with pay to work with the group. Another worshiper added that for a long time parents were reluctant to christen their babies, but that now they are beginning to bring their children for baptism.

At the close of the service, the congregants left their pews and made a human ring around the perimeter of the Cathedral's nave. The worshipers held each others' hands and swayed back and forth while singing their songs of love. It's Sunday morning in Havana.

Spanish proposal to restore Malecón

by Julio Madrigal

Granma International, November 23, 1994

The legislative assembly of the autonomous region of Andalusia, in southern Spain, has proposed that each of the country's 17 regions finance the restoration of one block of Havana's seafront drive [the Malecón]. According to Andalusian planners, this project would provide needed repairs to some 1600 housing units. The Seafront Drive Area Restoration Plan will be carried out by Cuban workers beginning in 1996. So far this year, a total of 60 million pesetas (\$480,000 U.S.) has been contributed by the Andalusian government, and several tons of materials to be used for the project have been shipped to Cuba. Representatives of the Spanish Ministry of Public Works and the autonomous regional governments of Andalusia, Madrid, Asturias, Castillo-La Mancha, Valencia, and the Canary Islands—primarily members of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party—met recently in Seville to study the project's progress and to call on the rest of Spain's autonomous regions to join in. The public works minister of the Andalusian legislative assembly, Francisco Vallejo, explained that out of the 1600 living units along the seafront drive, some 700 are in need of major repairs, as they are currently in extremely poor conditions. Another 400 will require moderate renovations, while the rest need only slight repairs. According to Vallejo, this restoration work will constitute the largest international cooperation project ever undertaken by Spain in the architectural and housing sectors. This cooperation program was initiated five years ago, he explained, when Cuba requested help in painting the buildings on the seafront drive before the Pan American Games in Havana. The Spanish Ministry of Public Works has joined in on the restoration by contributing the services of engineering specialists, who will work on the seawall itself to prevent seawater from flooding into the city, as has happened on numerous occasions. For the moment, the Andalusian legislative assembly, which has also published an architectural guide to Old Havana cataloging its major historical buildings, has opened an office along the seafront drive, where its engineers are working in close consultation with architects to plan the restoration work.

5,000 March In Washington Against Blockade 4th Friendshipment Delivers Aid to Cuba

by Joe Courter

Chanting "Cuba Sí, Bloqueo No," 5,000 people from across the U.S. marched in Washington, DC on November 12 to oppose the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba. It was the first national march to address the issue. Led by the vehicles of the 4th U.S.-Cuba Friendshipment caravan carrying 150 tons of aid bound for Cuba, the demonstrators marched from Malcolm X Park, through Washington's heavily Latino Adams-Morgan neighborhood, to Lafayette Park across from the White House.

Lucius Walker, director of Pastors for Peace, the group that organizes the Friendshipments, told the demonstration, "When the United States public understands the issues, they invariably join with us in the majority, in saying 'lift the blockade.' They invariably join with us in saying 'respect the dignity of Cuba.' They join with us in saying 'the world needs Cuba.' That's why we're here."

Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, speaking at the Lafayette Park rally, said, "We've got to find some will in America to end the wrongful conduct of our government. ...Everyone knows what this blockade is. It's a physical assault on an entire people. It intends to make them weak and sick and die early.... The cruelest injustice of this blockade against Cuba is this: The Cuban government and people for the last 35 years have conducted the greatest revolution in health care in the history of civilization.... They have brought infant mortality down in a very poor and totally exploited country from 140 per thousand live births in 1960 to nine. All those babies lived healthy, strong. Today, carrying on, they've brought the infant mortality rate down below the... rate of the rich and greedy United States. And now we have the audacity and the inhumanity to want to fight them for it."

Clark continued, "But they did more than bring the best health care in the world to their people..., they exported it. The Cuban health care system internationally has saved more lives than there are people in Cuba, literally. I've seen Cuban health care workers and doctors in east Africa, west Africa, southern Africa, Central America, the Caribbean, South America, Asia, all over the world. They don't ask for money, they ask for the opportunity to keep children alive, keep the elderly in happiness and health in their last years. ...And for that we have to show that their Revolution failed, because the pharmaceutical companies can't stand the competition. It's our duty, your's and mine,... we have to get our government off the backs of the Cuban people so we can live with them...."

Former CIA agent Philip Agee, author of the explosive 1975 book **Inside the Company**, which first exposed CIA crimes worldwide, also addressed the rally. "For seventeen long years in exile I... wondered if I would ever come back to this country," Agee said. "But I never dreamed that I would be standing right here, in the shadow of the White House, saying a good word for Cuba."

"It doesn't make any difference whether a Democrat or a Republican is in the White House or Congress, Cuba has had to suffer," Cuban American, Brigada Antonio Maceo leader, and NNOC co-chair Andrés Gomez told the demonstrators. "A Democratic administration put the blockade in, a Republican administration with a Democratic Congress implemented the Torricelli bill, and a Democratic administration tightened the restrictions."

The November 12 march proceeded without interruption despite threats from right-wing Cuban Americans. A week before the demonstration, three right-wing Cuban Americans attempted to firebomb a warehouse in Miami which held 25 tons of material aid bound for Cuba, including medicines, incubators, and food. Acting on a tip, authorities arrested the trio before the bomb could be ignited. The aid was not damaged and was taken by the caravan.



Former CIA agent Philip Agee.

Brian Adams

Visit Cuba with the *Venceremos Brigade*

Join the Brigade on its annual trip to Cuba in July 1995. For 25 years, the VB has given people in the United States the unique opportunity to work alongside Cubans and to see the Revolution for themselves. For \$1000 you can spend two weeks of your summer in Cuba and help to break the blockade. For more information call one of the following numbers: New York (212)228-6000, ext. 503; Chicago (312)663-0527; Detroit (313)836-8752; Portland (503)230-9427; San Francisco (415)267-0606; Washington, D.C. (202)452-5966.

Following the march and rally, the *caravanistas* stayed in Washington for two days of lobbying before heading to Buffalo, NY to cross the border into Canada. U.S. Customs officials offered only minor harassment to the convoy. The only standoff occurred when a van filled with computers was prevented from crossing into Canada. When a tow truck attempted to tow the van away, caravan supporters sat in around and on top of the two vehicles. After four and a half hours, Customs released the van and all its contents. About 150 tons of aid was carried into Canada for shipment to Cuba.

Gail Walker of Pastors for Peace told the *Bergan Record* (NJ), "It's a victory for people who are outraged over the embargo and who were determined to force the release of the van and supplies. ...We proved three times that the U.S. blockade cannot be enforced by going through Mexico. Today we demonstrated that the Canadian government will also not enforce the U.S. blockade. This demonstrates the isolation of the United States to its northern neighbor, just as we've demonstrated the U.S. isolation to its southern neighbor."

Article originally appeared in the Gainesville Iguana, December 1994, P.O. Box 14712, Gainesville, FL 32604, \$10/yr.

IFCO-Pastors for Peace Work Brigades to Cuba

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Bill Cathey

*Several thousand
protestors marched
against the U.S.
economic blockade of
Cuba on November 12.
Participants in the 4th
U.S.-Cuba
Friendshipment caravan
took part in the march on
their way to delivering
150 tons of material aid
to Cuba.*



Bill Cathey

*The march passed
through the Adams
Morgan neighborhood of
Washington, DC on its
way from Malcolm X
Park to Lafayette Park
across from the White
House.*

9.9 infant mortality in 1994

by José A. de la Osa

Granma International, January 18, 1995

For the second consecutive year, national infant mortality rates were below ten per 1000 live births, once again placing Cuba among the 25 countries with the lowest infant mortality figures in the world. This achievement highlights the efforts of the health personnel working in mother-infant care, backed up by the unshakable political will of the revolutionary government to maintain the high levels of health care enjoyed by the nation, even in such difficult economic conditions.

Infant mortality rates are an international indicator that shows not only the frequency of deaths among infants, but also the quality of life and the health risks during the period in which the child is most susceptible to adverse health conditions. Preliminary figures provided by the National Statistics Department of the Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP) indicate that 147,442 babies were born in 1994, with 1458 deaths, giving a rate of 9.89, which together with that of 1993 are the lowest in the history of Cuba. Six of the country's 14 provinces, together with the Isle of Youth special municipality, displayed rates of under ten. Havana, on this occasion, registered the lowest figure in its history, much lower, of course, than that recorded in the U.S. capital, and maintained its decreasing trend of the last few years.

MINSAP, with the firm support of the [Communist] Party, the government and grassroots organizations, ensured the necessary calorie intake and medicines for expectant mothers with any nutritional problems, twin pregnancies, anemia, and other high-risk categories. For this reason, throughout the year these women were admitted to hospitals or to the 179 maternity homes in the country (with a total of more than 3000 beds) whose main objectives include contributing to the

reduction of low birth weights. A close monitoring program has been established for the expectant mothers and children under the age of one through the extensive network of family doctors and nurses which covers more than 95 percent of the country's 11 million inhabitants. The pediatric and neonatal intensive care services receive considerable attention to facilitate their smooth operation. Top priority was given to medicines and equipment used in mother-baby care and the high levels of immunization were maintained.

Another positive aspect, reflecting security and benefits for the family, is that during 1994 there was the lowest infant mortality rate due to congenital malformations achieved up until the present time: 2.3 per 1000 live births. This is the result of the improvement and universalization of prenatal diagnoses. Breastfeeding also contributed to this low infant mortality rate. At the present time, over 95 percent of mothers start off breastfeeding and around 50 percent of them continue this beneficial practice until the baby is four months old. That is one of the reasons why 40 of the 46 maternity hospitals in which over 1000 babies are born in a year have attained the international distinction of Baby Friendly Hospitals. By way of comparison, Sweden has achieved this distinction in 41 of its 61 centers.

According to UNICEF, in 1990 over a million children under the age of one died throughout the world, who would have survived had they been fed exclusively on their mothers' milk for the first six months of life. Looking toward the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in Copenhagen in March, UNICEF has stressed that the world will not resolve its most pressing problems until it learns to improve on its protection of, and investment in, the physical, mental, and emotional development of its children.

Infant Mortality in Cuba

1970	38.7	1984	15.0
1971	36.1	1985	16.5
1972	28.7	1986	13.6
1973	29.6	1987	13.3
1974	29.3	1988	11.9
1975	27.5	1989	11.1
1976	23.3	1990	10.7
1977	24.9	1991	10.7
1978	22.4	1992	10.2
1979	19.4	1993	9.4
1980	19.6	1994	9.9
1981	18.5		
1982	17.3		
1983	16.8		

SOURCE: National Statistics Department, Ministry of Public Health (MINSAP).

Infant Mortality in Latin America

Haiti	85	Mexico	27
Bolivia	78	Argentina	24
Guatemala	53	Venezuela	20
Brazil	52	Uruguay	19
Nicaragua	51	Panama	18
El Salvador	45	Colombia	16
Ecuador	45	Chile	15
Peru	43	Costa Rica	14
Honduras	43		
Dominican Republic ...	40		
Paraguay	28		

SOURCE: The State of the World's Children 1995, UNICEF.

Labor Seminar on HIV/AIDS Infection in Cuba

As part of the seminar you will visit HIV/AIDS hospitals, schools, child care centers, etc., where you will have the chance to see first-hand how Cuba is caring for patients with HIV/AIDS and how it's researching cures despite the intense blockade by the United States. Seminars available for April/May 1995:

1 week, Saturday, April 29 to Sunday, May 7

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For further information and/or application, contact:

U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange, PO Box 39188, Redford, MI 48239, (tel/fax) 313-836-3752.

Cosponsored by 1199 Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, SEIU, AFL-CIO District Indiana/Iowa.



MediCuba to continue aid shipments despite tightened blockade

MediCuba activists have vowed to continue and even step up their efforts to send medical aid to Cuba in the wake of President Clinton's announcement of tighter restrictions on travel, remittances, and gift parcels. MediCuba has sent some \$160,000 worth of medical aid to the island in the past three years.

Most of the medicines and medical supplies have been carried as gift parcels by travellers on the Miami to Havana charter flights. Clinton has now essentially shut off this avenue for sending humanitarian aid to Cuba. Despite this, MediCuba activists vow to find other avenues for shipping the aid. MediCuba will also continue to send delegations to deliver the aid shipments, learn about the progress of Cuba's health care system, and express solidarity with the Cuban people.



Brian Adams

MediCuba activist loads shipment of medical journals and supplies to accompany 4th U.S.-Cuba Friendship caravan in November, 1994.

☐ Here's my contribution of: \$100 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$25 ☐ \$15 ☐ other: \$ ____

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MediCuba; PO Box 21560; Washington, DC 20009; (202) 319-1215 or (202) 234-2000.

Australian foreign minister visits Cuba

by Malcolm Cummins

Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans visited Cuba in late January to open trade talks with the Cuban government. This was the first official visit by an Australian minister to Cuba. Along with many other countries, Australia has sought to take advantage of the international isolation of the U.S. over its blockade of Cuba and explore the possibility of opening trade links. Australia had until recently abstained from voting on resolutions in the United Nations which condemned the US blockade. This policy was changed in 1993 when Australia, along with most other countries, voted to support a resolution condemning the blockade. Australia's vote was repeated in 1994, when only Israel voted with the U.S.

According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Minister Evans is going to Cuba to try and expand trade between the two countries in the areas of mining, tourism, and infrastructure development. One Australian company, Western Mining Corporation (WMC), has already signed an agreement with the Cuban government to explore the possibility of mining for nickel and cobalt in southeast Cuba. Under the terms of the agreement, Western Mining will have a controlling interest in the project, which is potentially worth millions of dollars in profits to the company. This is the first time that the Cubans have allowed a foreign company to take a controlling interest in a mining venture. The project, if it goes ahead, will

further weaken and undermine the US blockade. Cuba will gain jobs and valuable hard currency, which will assist the country to consolidate the gains of the revolution and move beyond the economic crisis created by the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

Western Mining has a controversial history in Australia. It has signed agreements to drill for oil in the ocean off East Timor, an island to the north of Australia that has been illegally occupied by Indonesia since 1975. The East Timorese national liberation movement has declared the agreements a violation of the sovereignty of their country. Foreign Minister Evans was involved in the negotiations for the oil drilling, and has long supported the genocidal Indonesian occupation of East Timor. Jan Allen, an activist with the Australia-Cuba Friendship Society and the Aboriginal support movement in Australia, criticized WMC for its treatment of Aboriginal people there. "We are supportive of Cuba's attempts to rebuild their economy by establishing joint ventures with transnational corporations. As Fidel pointed out, the Cuban revolution has to bend a little in order not to break. At the same time, we feel compelled to point out that Western Mining is responsible for the seizing of Aboriginal land and the desecration of Aboriginal sacred sites. Its CEO, Hugh Morgan, is an arch-racist who loudly proclaims that Australia was an empty land before it was occupied by whites."

Books...Books...Books...Books...Books...In Review

The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara

Che's Bolivian Diary, long out of print in English, has been brought out in a new edition by Pathfinder Press. The Diary tells the story of the painstaking effort organized by the Argentine-born Guevara to forge a fighting movement of workers and peasants that could win the battle for land and national sovereignty and open the socialist revolution in the South American continent. Che's day-by-day account of the eleven-month guerrilla campaign in 1966-67 is a powerful narrative providing insight into the practical activity, leadership capacities, and political thinking of one of the outstanding revolutionary and communist leaders of this century. This newly translated edition also contains letters and political statements written by Che in Bolivia, as well as extensive excerpts from the diaries and accounts of other combatants, including "My Campaign with Che" by Bolivian leader Inti Peredo. Much of this material appears here for the first time in English.

The history of Che Guevara's Bolivian Diary is itself a political saga. At its heart has been the ongoing battle pitting

those who have sought to accurately present Che's political legacy against those seeking to discredit him and distort his place, as well as the place of the Cuban Revolution, in the history of the twentieth century.

Carried in his knapsack, the diary was among the items that fell into the hands of the Bolivian military when Guevara was wounded and captured on October 8, 1967. The document was immediately relayed to the army high command, with copies sent to Washington.

The existence of the diary became public knowledge within days of the murder of Guevara. In November 1967 passages were read by the Bolivian military prosecutor in the trial of French journalist Regis Debray. Debray, as Guevara recounts in the diary, had been captured by the Bolivian military following a visit to the guerrilla camp. Sentenced to a thirty-year prison term, he was released in 1970.

The military regime and its backers in Washington used carefully selected quotations — as well as fabrications and rumors about the diary's contents — to justify widespread arrests, incriminate prisoners, and attempt to discredit Guevara and Cuba.

At the same time, Bolivia's dictators instinctively saw the diary as an opportunity for personal financial gain. Although his murderers had no moral or legal basis to exercise literary rights belonging to Guevara's widow, Aleida March, Bolivian government leaders entered into negotiations with major U.S. and French publishers to sell the rights. Figures as high as \$400,000 were floated in negotiations.

As condemnation of the Bolivian dictatorship's [and the CIA's] cold-blooded murder of Che mounted worldwide, however, divisions appeared within the inner circles of the regime. Antonio Arguedas, the country's interior minister and chief of intelligence throughout Che's Bolivian campaign, grew increasingly resentful of CIA pressure on him and growing U.S. dictates. He decided to provide microfilms of the diary to the Cuban government. Supporters of the Cuban Revolution organized a clandestine operation that succeeded in delivering the microfilms to Havana in mid-March 1968.

Working with accelerated speed and great secrecy, a team of Cubans including Aleida March verified the authenticity of the diary and arranged for its virtually simultaneous translation and publication inside and outside of Cuba in eight different editions.

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An essential source of information on the Cuban Revolution.

On July 1, 1968, the Cuban government published the diary, distributing hundreds of thousands of copies free of charge to the Cuban people. News of its publication made front pages around the world.

The first English language edition was published July 2, 1968, in a special edition of *Ramparts* magazine in the United States, under rights granted by the Cuban government on behalf of Aleida March. This version was released a week later as a paperback book by Bantam." (*From the introduction by Mary Alice Waters.*)

ISBN0-87348-766-4, 467 pages, glossary, index, photographs, US\$ 21.95. Published by Pathfinder Press, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014, (tel) 212-741-0690, (fax) 212-727-0150.

Island Under Siege — The U.S. Blockade of Cuba

"Just at the moment I'm so angry with that infernal little Cuban Republic that I would like to wipe its people off the face of the earth. All that we wanted of them was that they should behave themselves and be prosperous and happy so that we would not have to interfere. And now, lo and behold, they have started an utterly unjustifiable and pointless revolution and may get things into such a snarl that we have no alternative save to intervene — which will at once convince the suspicious idiots in South America that we do wish to intervene after all..."

— **President Theodore Roosevelt letter to Henry White, Sept. 13, 1906**

This brief book by Cuban journalist Pedro Prada presents a compelling case against the last remaining vestige of the Cold War, showing how the three-decade-long blockade has affected life in the island nation, and how U.S. trade opportunities have been squandered. Includes a chronology, the text of Foreign Minister Roberto Robaina's report on the blockade to the U.N. Secretary General, and such salient quotations as those above and below. Prada is presently an adviser to Robaina.

"Shortly after I entered the White House in 1961, a series of dramatic events occurred. In April, 1961, the United States

went through the disastrous error of the Bay of Pigs.... Several months later, the President called me into his office early in the evening. 'Pierre, I need some help,' he said solemnly. 'I'll be glad to do anything I can Mr. President,' I replied. 'I need a lot of [Cuban] cigars.' 'How many, Mr. President?' 'About 1,000 Petit Upmanns.' I shuddered a bit, although I kept my reaction to myself. 'And when do you need them, Mr. President?' 'Tomorrow morning.'

I walked out of the office wondering if I would succeed. But since I was now a solid Cuban cigar smoker, I knew a lot of stores, and I worked on the problem into the evening.

The next morning, I walked into my White House office at about 8 a.m., and the direct line from the President's office was already ringing. He asked me to come in immediately.

'How did you do Pierre?' he asked, as I walked through the door. 'Very well,' I answered. In fact, I'd gotten 1,200 cigars. Kennedy smiled and opened up his desk. He took out a long paper which he immediately signed. It was the decree banning all Cuban products from the United States. Cuban cigars were now illegal in our country...

— **Pierre Salinger, as told to *Cigar Aficionado* magazine**

ISBN 1-875284-88-5, 58 pages, appendices, US\$7.95, published by Ocean Press, The Talman Co., 131 Spring St., New York, NY 10012, Tel.: 212-431-7175, Fax: 212-431-7215, orders: 1-800-537-8894.

Cuba in brief • Cuba in brief • Cuba in brief • Cuba in brief • Cuba in brief

Cuba Criticizes Guantánamo Visits

The Cuban Foreign Ministry has strongly reacted to news reports in the U.S. stating that the Clinton administration will authorize Cuban Americans to visit Cuban rafters currently confined in concentration camps at the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo, eastern Cuba. In a press briefing today, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lufs Delfin said that if actually put into practice, the U.S. announcement would amount to another violation of Cuba's sovereignty on the portion of the island which is illegally occupied by Washington. Delfin added that the act would also further reveal the hypocrisy of the U.S. government, which has obstructed normal relations of Cuban Americans with their relatives on the island. The U.S. government, argued the official, guided by political motives, insists on forbidding normal relations between Cuba and its emigration, in an overt attempt to undermine Cuban family ties. During the rafters' crisis last summer, the Clinton administration drastically cut charter flights from Miami to Havana and only authorizes visits of Cuban Americans to the island who are granted a Treasury Department License for humanitarian reasons. (*Radio Havana Cuba, Feb. 23, 1995*)

International Seminar on Guantánamo

The 1st International Scientific Conference on the illegality of the U.S. Guantánamo naval base in Cuba is scheduled to kick off in June. According to the organizers, the encounter will bring together historians and legal experts from around the world to discuss the illegal occupation of Cuban territory by the U.S. naval base. During the seminar, participants will also analyze similar situations around the world. The meeting will also include visits to the area around the naval base. Debates on U.S. military interventions in Latin America and the Caribbean and differences between Cuba and the USA will also be part of the program. (*Radio Havana Cuba, February 23, 1995*)

Academic Freedom

A group of U.S. university professors traveled to Cuba in December in defiance of the additional restrictions placed on academic and research travel by President Clinton last August 19. Upon their return, "the scene was right out of the 1980s TV show, 'Miami Vice,' American University professor Philip Brenner wrote in the *Christian Science Monitor*. "A surly Treasury Department agent, wearing a black T-shirt with a badge tucked over the collar, boarded our plane, barked out our names, and demanded we 'step forward' off the charter flight that had landed at Miami International Airport." The group, which was led by Wayne Smith of Johns Hopkins University, a former Chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, was detained, questioned, and harassed by U.S. Treasury agents. Researchers wishing to go to Cuba

must now submit proposals to the Treasury Dept. and apply for a license to travel. The Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control then assesses the validity of the research and grants or denies the license. "This license is a privilege, not a right," one Treasury official warned the group. Brenner, Smith, and the other professors consider the procedure to be an assault on academic freedom. To date, no charges have been brought against any member of the group.

Academic Freedom II

Dr. Wayne Smith returned to Havana on January 17 with another group of U.S. academics to attend a conference at the University of Havana. Undeterred by earlier threats, the group again refused to apply for a license to travel. Smith told Radio Havana Cuba, "We consider the requirement that we ask for a license unconstitutional, a blatant violation of First Amendment rights, and an infringement of academic freedom. It's unnecessary, it's illegal, and we will not cooperate with that requirement. ...When we return to the United States, we will state openly that we have traveled without a license and we will invite the government to take us to trial if they wish, to take the matter to court. ...We believe that this law, this requirement, would be overturned by the courts." Smith said that when the U.S. Supreme Court last upheld the travel restrictions a decade ago, it did so on national security grounds stemming from the Cold War. With the end of the Cold War, Smith believes that the courts are likely to overturn the restrictions. He feels that the Clinton Administration has been deliberately avoiding prosecution of Travel Challenge participants in order to avoid having the restrictions invalidated. The mere existence of the travel ban, even if it is unenforced, is enough to deter most U.S. citizens from going to Cuba. And that is the goal of U.S. policy. Smith was again detained and questioned upon his return to the U.S.

U.S. Seizes Passports

On January 21 and 22 U.S. Customs agents in Chicago confiscated the passports of three youths who returned from a reporting trip to Cuba. The three were participants in an international youth brigade that brought together 70 young workers and students from the U.S., Britain, Canada, Iceland, Mexico, and Sweden to see Cuba for themselves and report their findings upon their return. Dannen Vance, 27 of Des Moines, Iowa, was held and interrogated on Jan. 21 along with Sukul Baul, 21, of Bloomington, IL. Aislinn Pulley, 15, of Chicago, was also interrogated at the airport when she arrived a day later. Baul, Vance, and Pulley were on editorial assignments from the *Daily Vivette*, the *Valley Courier*, and *Family Matters*, respectively. Participants in the brigade have launched a campaign to protest the passport seizures and demand their immediate return. "The recent passport seizures are a direct attack by the U.S. government on First

Amendment rights, free speech, freedom of the press, and freedom to travel," said a statement released by organizers of the brigade. "This attack, if unanswered, can create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation for those who want to go to Cuba to find out for themselves and report on what is happening in that country today," the statement added. "All the participants in the brigade were on editorial assignment from campus or community newspapers, or other media," stated Ken Riley, a brigade organizer. "Many of us have been active in groups defending Cuba." Customs officials in Chicago claimed any visit to Cuba was a violation of current regulations, which block most U.S. citizens from being able to travel to the island. Riley reported that dozens of other brigade participants reentered the U.S. without incident. Forty-nine youths from the U.S. took part in the brigade. (Laura Garza, *The Militant*, Feb. 6, 1995) [Ed. Note: As we go to press, it has been reported that the passports have been returned.]

A Call to Cuban Americans

A Cuban American National Steering Committee is contacting Cuban American groups and individuals in all corners of the U.S. to form an alliance in opposition to the travel and remittances ban imposed on Cubans living in the U.S. by the Clinton administration. We specifically support the formation of a Cuban American National Commission on Family Reunification. The argument for such a proposal lies in the insoluble and embarrassing crisis created by the Clinton policy, in relation to the potential for widening political support among the larger and more moderate elements in the Cuban American community. Another aspect of this plan is its potential for resolving the most bothersome immigration problems by addressing the fundamental incoherence of the current policy. Government policymakers must be persuaded to realize that the U.S. faces the alternative of being accused of human rights violations of Cubans living in the U.S., their relatives in Cuba, and the prospect that these abuses be linked to other immigrants threatened with loss of medical and social services. To exemplify our predicament, the proposal would also call for a freedom to travel challenge by Cuban Americans living in the U.S. While the call for an end to the travel and remittances ban constitutes an important immediate goal, it should be kept in mind that the end of the economic blockade of Cuba must be the ultimate objective. Towards this end, we are prepared to work with any business groups who wish to conduct unrestricted trade with and invest in Cuba. The people in Cuba have the right to decide what type of political and economic system they should have in their country. It is the moral imperative, and tradition, of Cubans living abroad to protect the motherland from foreign interference with this right. The time has come for us, their brothers and sisters abroad, to defend Cuba's sovereignty, as well as our own fundamental right to have normal ties with our families and friends in Cuba. Your participation in this proposed project will be most welcomed. Please write to us detailing how this alliance should be shaped and how you

would contribute to it. Contact: Raymundo del Toro at (201) 525-1957 (tel/fax) or Luis Martin at (505) 892-5489 (tel/fax).

USA-Cuba Friendship Committee of NM

A regional leadership meeting of pro-Cuba groups was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico on January 14, 1995. Participants from the U.S.-Cuba Friendship Committee of N.M., the N. M. Committee to Normalize Relations between the U.S. and Cuba, and Frente Amplio de Solidaridad con el Pueblo de Cuba of Ciudad Juarez, Mexico met for the purpose of coordinating the year's activities and planning in pursuit of accords drafted at the World Solidarity Conference in Havana in November 1994. Valuable input was also received via teleconference from the Cuban American Peace Committee in New Jersey. The meeting resulted in unanimous agreement to widen and strengthen efforts against the U.S. blockade of Cuba and travel ban on a number of fronts: (1) Promote travel to Cuba, to include the Cuban American community; (2) conduct cultural and technical exchanges between the U.S. and Cuba, to include the import and dissemination of Cuban music, films, documentaries, magazines, and exchanges of medical technology and students; (3) conduct community-wide petitions to lift the blockade and travel ban and disseminate related literature; (4) establish a speakers bureau to disseminate the truth about Cuba and promote investments in that country; and (5) to declare October 10, the day on which the Cuban people's revolutionary struggle began, World Day of Solidarity with Cuba. Each delegate will report to his/her organization for ratification of the agreements reached at the leadership meeting. For more information: Luis Martin; P.O. Box 15064; Rio Rancho, NM 87174; (tel/fax): (505) 892-5489.

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Cuban Parliament Marks Independence War

The centennial of Cuba's second Cuban independence war will be marked tomorrow all across the island. Cuba's national parliament will be convening an extraordinary session to commemorate the war that began February 24, 1895, under the leadership of Cuban National hero José Martí. The simultaneous uprisings in eastern Cuba on that day sparked a war of Cuban *independentistas* against Spanish rule which would end three years later with the so called Spanish-Cuban-American war. Unsolicited, the U.S. government sent an intervention force to the island which snatched the victory away from Cuba's Independence Army. The 1895-98 war, with the courage of its leaders and the gallantry of its fighters, is considered one of the most heroic events in Cuban history. (*Radio Havana Cuba, February 23, 1995*)

Tourism Increases Again

Granma reports that 630,000 tourists visited Cuba in 1994, 84,000 more than in 1993. Gross profits were reported at \$850 million, up \$130 million over 1993. Hotel capacities increased by 1700 rooms. This increase occurred despite the emigration crisis of last August and September and the accompanying propaganda campaign waged in some sectors aimed at discouraging tourists from visiting the island. By the year 2000, Cuba plans to have over 50,000 tourist accommodations (presently there are 23,000), receive 2.5 million visitors, and earn approximately \$2 billion annually.

Sugar

Cuban sugar production has been in decline since the collapse of Cuba's trading arrangements with the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Production has fallen from 7.6 million tons in 1991 to 7.0 in 1992, 4.2 in 1993, and 4.0 in 1994, due to lack of fuel, spare parts, fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides. Production for the 1995 harvest has been estimated at 3-3.5 million tons, which would be the smallest harvest since the beginning of the Revolution. Sugar has been Cuba's leading export for more than a century and accounted for about 40% of the island's 1993 export earnings. In October 1993 Cuba reorganized many state farms, including those in the sugar industry, into cooperatives known as UBPCs (Basic Units of Cooperative Production). Reporters for *The Militant* who recently visited a sugarcane UBPC were told that canefield yield was only about half that achieved in 1991 due to the cumulative effect of the shortage of fertilizers and pesticides. The UBPCs have reduced the number of administrative workers and put more people into production. They have autonomy in such areas as setting norms and pay rates and in deciding what to plant. The UBPCs also grow food for their members and sell consumer goods to members at cost. It is hoped that they will lead to greater production efficiency. Some 112,000 workers are now employed by 1,200 UBPCs. More than 60% of the UBPCs have shown a profit in the last year. In December, President Castro called for foreign financing in the sugar industry, especially for the

purchase of fertilizers and other inputs needed to increase production. A joint venture between Cuba and a Spanish firm has boosted tobacco production by providing hard currency credits to finance inputs that increase tobacco crop yields. Cuban officials believe foreign investment could have a similar effect on sugar production. The Cuban government has reportedly divided the island's sugar-growing regions into fourteen areas and has signed agreements with foreign capital totaling several hundred million dollars for at least ten of the regions.

New Convertible Currency Planned

The Cuban government announced a plan at the end of December to gradually issue a new hard currency-convertible peso that will circulate alongside, but will not replace, the national peso. The convertible peso will replace a system of exchange certificates issued by the National Bank of Cuba for various types of payments. The convertible currency will not be purchasable with the national peso. It will also not replace the U.S. dollars circulating in Cuba, although this may occur gradually, according to Cuban economists.

Food Industry Recovering

The Cuban food industry, critical to the nation's recovery from the "special period," grew by 5% in 1994 after experiencing several years of decline. Fifty-three food industry enterprises met or exceeded their production goals and 24 of the 37 enterprises that did not show a profit at least reduced their losses over the previous year. Overall, the Cuban media reports that 18 of 21 industrial sectors are showing signs of recovery. Unfortunately, the production of root vegetables fell in 1994 to 976,500 tons, down from 1.2 million tons in 1993. Even the 1993 figure was not sufficient to meet national demand. Cuba's cattle and dairy sector registered gains in 1994. The disruption to feed imports and other factors reduced the national cattle herd from 7 million head in 1990 to 4.6 million head last year. Milk production fell from 1 billion liters in 1990 to 350 million liters in 1994. The 1994 figures, however, represent an increase over 1993.

Farmers' Markets Are Big Success

"...[C]ounters are overflowing with yams. Oranges are piled high. Fat white turkeys run behind a wire fence, minutes from becoming dinner. ...Cuba's 2-month-old farmers' markets are the most visible successes in a wave of internal moves designed to... ease the strain of the 'special period'..." reported *USA Today* in December. Cuban farmers are now setting aside 25% of their production for sale at the markets. The farmers set the prices and customers can pay in pesos or in dollars. In October, farmers' market sales island-wide reached a half million dollars. The existence of the farmers' markets has eased the problem of timely transportation and storage of perishables in urban areas. The result is an increase in the amount of food available in Havana and other cities. A byproduct of the markets is the strengthening of the Cuban

peso. The unofficial exchange rate has fallen from as much as 150 pesos to the dollar last summer to about 50 to the dollar today. Government measures aimed at reducing the peso currency supply by cutting nonessential subsidies, increasing tax revenue, and charging for certain services combined with the increased purchasing power of the peso at the markets has strengthened the currency. In October, markets for industrial and craft products were initiated, adding to the supply of consumer products purchasable with pesos.

Chico Buarque Won't Go

Well-known Brazilian singer-songwriter Chico Buarque rejected an invitation to perform at a party that will be given by U.S. president Bill Clinton during the Americas Summit in Miami. When he received the invitation from U.S. musician Quincy Jones, the organizer of the celebration, Buarque answered that he would only perform if he could do so along with Cubans Pablo Milanés and Silvio Rodríguez. Clinton did not invite Cuba to attend the summit, in line with the United States' policy to blockade the island for over 30 years. Commenting on Buarque's position, the Brazilian newspaper *O Globo* pointed out that the musician's demand to perform with Pablo and Silvio was "tantamount to telling the Yankees to go to hell." (*Granma Internacional*, December 7, 1994)

El Rápido

In a scene reminiscent of the movie *American Graffiti*, a new drive-in restaurant has opened in Havana's Vedado neighborhood. Waitresses on inline skates roll up to 1950s vintage cars serving hamburgers, hot dogs, french fries, sodas, and beer. The restaurant, called El Rápido, is owned by Cimex, a rapidly expanding Cuban enterprise that primarily works in the tourist industry. Since opening on December 30, El Rápido has quickly become one of Havana's hottest gathering spots. The drive-in is part of a plan initiated in November to open small eateries serving inexpensive food for U.S. dollars. Prices at El Rápido range from .25 for a bag of popcorn to \$2.00 for a hamburger, french fries, and a cola. The restaurants cater primarily to Cubans with small amounts of hard currency to spend. Fourteen more El Rápidos are planned for Havana.

Cuba Continues Developing Health Programs

Despite current economic hardships, Cuba continues developing public health programs. Cuban Health Minister Dr. Julio Tejas talked about the country's extraordinary health system in an interview published in the national press. Dr. Tejas explained why the island's experiencing an increase of leptospirosis, a disease caused by human contact with mice urine. He said that due to the general deterioration of hygiene caused by lack of chemicals, soaps, and cleansers, the disease has spread. However, in 1994 the number of deadly cases dropped in comparison to 1993. The Cuban health minister added that at present a hygiene program is being implemented on the community level with the support of the

people, local government leaders and scientists. According to international statistics, most nations have reported an increase in tuberculosis. Cuba has not been an exception. Dr. Tejas says the island's national health program is being carefully analyzed and revised by experts for revitalization at every level. Minister Tejas stressed, however, that mortality rates continue decreasing. Mortality in children under 5 years has dropped to 0.6 per thousand children, and in children from 6 to 14 years old is 0.3. Life expectancy is that of developed countries despite the impact of the island's economic crisis. Dr. Tejas also referred to Cuba's immunization programs aimed at protecting children. Deadly diseases like poliomyelitis, diphtheria, and tetanus have been completely eradicated while German measles, measles, and mumps are currently being eradicated. The Cuban minister also revealed that during 1994 over 204 kidney transplants were performed, totalling 2,169 from 1970 to present. He said that voluntary blood donations have reached close to a million, a historical record in special conditions. (*Radio Havana Cuba*, February 13, 1995)

Alternative Medicine in Cuba

Use of green or herbal medicine reached unprecedented levels in Cuba during 1994. More than 21,000 natural medications were produced by specialized laboratories. The initiative gained momentum as Cuba began suffering a shortage of medications sparked by a sudden decline in its economy in 1990. Defense and Interior Ministry experiences in the field promoted an agricultural project that includes the growing of medicinal plants aimed at supplying the pharmaceutical industry. Last year, the industry received 550 tons of raw materials including more than 80 different species of medicinal plants. At present, there are over 434 hectares of land producing plants with medicinal properties. At the beginning, the plan included 66 species of medicinal plants. Due to popular demand, emphasis will be now placed on 32 species. This branch of the pharmaceutical industry has been profitable and uses solar power to process the plants. (*Radio Havana Cuba*, February 17, 1995)

Federation of Cuban Women Congress

Cuban women are putting the final touches on their organization's 6th Congress. Scheduled for February 28th to March 3rd, over 687 Cuban women from all walks of life will gather in 6 work commissions to discuss topics including young women, structure and functioning of the organization, women's participation in the domestic economy, community, family, and women's image in mass media, among others. The 6th Congress of the Federation of Cuban Women will meet in plenary sessions at Havana's Convention Center. During the 3-day event, delegates will exchange criteria and suggestions as well as debate the report presented by the organization's leaders. A new central committee and secretariat will be elected during the congress. Over 40 special invited guests and 50 foreign visitors will also attend the meeting. (*Radio Havana Cuba*, February 15, 1995)

¡Baraguá!

¡Baraguá!, publication of the National Network on Cuba (NNOC), is named for Cuban revolutionary leader Antonio Maceo's immortal *Protest of Baraguá*, issued at the end of Cuba's 10 Years War for independence from Spain in 1878. At Baraguá, 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 homeland will be an eternal Baraguá!" expresses Cuba's determination to resist.



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