

# New York City remembers Fidel

written by Stephen Millies

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Two brothers from Santiago de Cuba read the poem “Ronda de la fortuna” by the Cuban poet Nancy Morejón.

Nov. 25 — On the third anniversary of Fidel Castro's passing, people came to the Cuban mission to the United Nations to celebrate his life. The historical leader of the Cuban revolution, who was loved by poor people around the world, died on Nov. 25, 2016.

A film showed scenes of Castro and his comrades during the guerrilla war to defeat the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista. Twenty thousand Cubans were killed by Batista's secret police.

Those were the "good old days" for U.S. corporations and organized crime that exploited the Caribbean country. Their immensely profitable \$2 billion investment — worth almost \$18 billion today — kept Cubans poor.

The Cuban Revolution changed that forever. In one year, volunteer teachers abolished illiteracy. Despite Wall Street's cruel economic blockade, Cuban children now have a lower infant mortality rate than kids do in the U.S.

Fidel Castro Ruz was also a teacher. The film showed Castro speaking to a 1992 UN conference in Rio De Janeiro about how capitalism was destroying the environment.

### **Helping poor people in the U.S.**

Jorge Luis Cepero spoke for younger Cuban diplomats. "Fidel turned into a symbol of the anti-colonial, anti-apartheid and anti-imperialist struggle," he said. Castro was able to combine "the thinking of Simón Bolívar, José Martí and Karl Marx."

Ike Nahem spoke on behalf of the New York/New Jersey Cuba Sí Coalition that fights to end the U.S. blockade.

Daniel and David, two young brothers from Santiago de Cuba, read the poem "Ronda de la fortuna" by the Cuban poet Nancy Morejón.

Gail Walker, executive director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO)/Pastors for Peace, reminded listeners that when Africa called, Cuba answered. Cuban volunteers fought alongside African soldiers that defeated the fascist army of the apartheid regime that then ruled South Africa.

Dr. Damián Suarez graduated in 2015 from the Latin American School of Medicine in Havana. Twenty years ago Fidel Castro founded this institution that has trained 30,000 doctors from 115 countries.

Among them are 200 hundred doctors from the U.S. who didn't have to pay a dime in tuition. They're helping poor people from Maine to Mississippi to Los Angeles. Cuban-trained doctors work in 10 New York City hospitals.

Her Excellency Ana Silvia Rodríguez Abascal, the Cuban ambassador to the United Nations, was the last speaker. She quoted the German playwright Bertolt Brecht: "There are people who struggle for a day and they are good. There are people who struggle for a year and they are better. There are people who struggle many years, and they are better still. But there are those who struggle all their lives: these are the indispensable ones."

Fidel Castro and the Cuban Revolution are indispensable.

