



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

LGBTQ+ Cuba delegation report back forum

written by Verde Gil Jímenez

June 28, 2023

6pm at 2533
Columbus St.
Jun. 22

Feat. Verde Gil
Jimenez
TransMasc
Group of Cuba

Pizza
provided!

Panel: Cuba's New Families Code

A report back by the LGBTQ Solidarity Delegation
Women in Struggle - Mujeres en Lucha, Freedom Road Socialist
Organization, Real Name Campaign NOLA

June 22, New Orleans - NOLA participants of the Cuba delegation, U.S. Friends Against Homophobia and Transphobia, gave a report back on their recent experiences in Havana. This forum was part of the National Network on Cuba's [Off the List Action Weekend](#). Verde Gil Jimenez — a young communist, transmasculine organizer from Cuba — joined the panel live and gave the following presentation.

Video:

[RealNameCampaign on Instagram: “LGBTQ Cuba delegation report back forum”](#)

Hello colleagues. My name is Verde. I am a Cuban trans activist and a member of the Union of Young Communists. I'm 25 years old. I am a graduate of social communication. I currently work at the Central University of Las Villas as a social researcher. I live in a city in the center of the island called Santa Clara. I was regional vice coordinator of the Transcuba Network for a year and currently coordinate the Grupo Trans Masculino de Cuba (GTMC).

Transmasculine activism is a fairly recent development in my country. We are quite few and inexperienced. So we are slowly taking steps.

We created our Group at the beginning of the year [2023] with the intention of it being a place of support and learning for the transmasculine community because although there was a National Network of trans people for 20 years, its agenda focused almost exclusively on the demands and experiences of transfeminine people.

In less than a year with our group, we have achieved the following:

- Participated in: workshop on liberating masculinities with a feminist approach; in the conference against homophobia and transphobia (Cenesex); in the conference on maternity and paternity in equity (Cenesex); in a theological workshop on gender and diversity (Movimiento Estudiantil Cristiano); in a photographic exhibition on non-hegemonic masculinities, in a course on sexual education with second-year students of the medical school.
- We have created spaces for the art of male drag.
- We have held forums on various topics in our WhatsApp chat.
- We have held exchanges with different official and alternative media to

visualize trans issues.

- On March 31, we held a film debate on trans childhoods.
- We have delivered donations of binders and clothing to trans from the three regions of the country.
- We have organized recreational activities for familiarization.
- We have designed educational products on how to accompany trans students and practice the cytological test on trans people AFAB [assigned female at birth].
- Permanently offer counseling and personalized advice to face difficult situations, effective support, legal guidance, and medical guidance on the transition process.
- We are currently organizing a community sale fair to raise funds to help the most needy people in the group.

For the short time that our group has been in existence, we believe that we are achieving good results and that, most importantly, we no longer feel alone.

Regarding the problems of trans people in Cuba, they are similar to those that most trans people face in Latin American countries.

It is true that the project of the Cuban Revolution, from its beginnings, sought to vindicate the role of women in society and supported the historically oppressed and marginalized sectors. However, it is still a very young project to banish all machismo, homophobia, transphobia, and sexism from our culture. They are very deep cultural roots from the colonial era.

It is worth celebrating that in recent times, after the constitutional reform of 2019, our country has generated a normative production that recognizes a series of rights for the benefit of trans populations (despite the fact that the term trans people is not expressly mentioned in any text).

It is of special importance the recognition from the constitution of the right to equality and non-discrimination based on gender identity and the right to the free development of personality.

The family code is also outstanding, which allowed equal marriage and recognized parental responsibility and the progressive autonomy of childhood. This progressive code grants an arsenal of protections in the family environment that favors affective, safe, and respectful environments for all people and family models.

In addition, there are pending reform laws that have also announced that they will recognize more guarantees for the trans community: Identity Law, Labor Code, Education Law, Health Law.

But we know that political will and written laws are one thing, and the materialization of those rights is another. Unfortunately, there is still a lot of transphobia in our country, based on a high level of ignorance about trans identities and naturalized machismo.

On the other hand, the economic crisis generates serious infrastructural obstacles for these rights to be effective. This crisis has been aggravated by phenomena such as the COVID-19 pandemic, in which our country devoted its greatest efforts and resources to saving people's lives by producing three excellent vaccines that are a lesson in humanism for the entire world.

Another of our permanent obstacles, and in recent years strengthened by the resurgence of neo-fascist governments, is the genocidal blockade of the U.S. government towards Cuba that causes losses of unquantifiable figures and hundreds of limitations for our free technological, commercial, scientific, and cultural development.

I take this opportunity to request the end of the blockade and denounce the cruel

policy of the North American government towards our country. Their aggressions also fall on the lives of LGBTIQ+ populations. Trans people are also victims of North American politics.

One of the fundamental demands of trans people is access to comprehensive medical coverage for the transition process. I am referring to specialized consultations and access to hormonal therapies and gender reaffirmation surgeries.

In Cuba, for decades, there has been a commission of experts for these issues led by Cenesex. But the economic crisis has greatly affected our public health and has generated a serious lack of medical supplies and human resources. We are living in very difficult times because one of the most important achievements of the Revolution is being affected.

Currently trans people:

- We cannot attend to the specialized psychological consultation because there are no mental health specialists to attend to us.
- We cannot perform endocrinological medical check-ups to start or sustain hormone therapy because there is a lack of reagents for blood tests.
- There has been no sale of hormones in pharmacies for more than three years because, apparently, Cuba lost its trading partner to import hormones.
- Access to gender reaffirmation surgeries is practically impossible. In the case of transmasculine people, for nine years, mastectomies have not been performed because there are no doctors trained in this type of surgery.
- In addition, services are still centralized in the capital. That is, a person from any region must travel to Havana to receive these attentions.

One of the consequences of all this is that trans people buy hormones on the black market from unreliable suppliers and at costs that triple the average salary. And that people consume these drugs without medical supervision.

The saddest thing is knowing (firsthand) that before the Donald Trump government and the COVID-19 pandemic, several of these obstacles did not exist. At that time, there were sales of hormones in the pharmacy at insignificant prices, and we had psychological and endocrinological care, perfectible but systematic.

We are clear that it is very difficult for our government and our institutions to worry about issues of social minorities when they have to invest in urgent issues that affect the vast majority, such as food sovereignty (food production). It is very difficult to advance in the midst of a multidimensional crisis and a constant imperialist siege. Because it would be unfair not to warn that although all the problems are traversed by our economic barriers, some of them could be solved more easily, and this is not the case due to a lack of awareness and will.

To name a few:

- Lack of training and awareness about trans people by legal operators (jurists, notaries, lawyers, judges, mediators). Here we highlight the persistent barriers to legal name change for trans people. Bureaucratism, corruption, and ineptitude of civil status registrars.
- The still non-permission to wear a school/work uniform according to the gender identity of the student/worker.
- The lack of a Comprehensive Sexuality Education in which the various sexual orientations and gender identities are discussed from an early age. As well as the lack of protocols to accompany the trans student.
- Provisional shelters for victims of gender-based violence in the family.
- Scarce and stereotyped representation in the national cultural industry (film, television, theater, cartoons, etc.)
- Lack of updated regulations that clarify how trans people entering compulsory military service or sports teams or prisons will be integrated and respected.

Due to all these problems, we believe that it is fundamental to be united and articulate initiatives that promote a humanist culture, peace, and equity, in favor of the social integration of sex-diverse populations.

As communist militants, my sources of inspiration are in the ideals of Marx, Fidel, Che, Rosa Luxemburg. Those who, beyond their contexts, always advocated for a world where people were increasingly emancipated from the mechanisms of oppression that the colonial-capitalist society has imposed on us.

I am clear about the dangers of carrying out a fight of this nature. There are not a few questions that from conservative and dogmatic positions (even amongst militants) are exercised to dismiss the validity of our activism.

I also understand that fears are not unjustified. It is true that social denunciations in Cuba are frequently used by the hate industry of the enemies of the Revolution (citizen movements manipulated by subversive organizations at the service of Washington's interests). It is also true that LGBTQ+ activism is being instrumentalized and fetishized for neoliberal, commercial, and political purposes.

And we, as a socialist project, cannot reproduce these formulas, but we must take advantage of the contradictions of capitalism that are revealed with our struggles to dismantle with more force that enslaving value scheme and those logics of privatization for an alternative society.

I defend the need to nurture communist militancy with a gender approach, as well as to address the problems of the trans community from a socio-class and Marxist analysis that allows us to understand where inequalities arise from and how the capitalist system perpetuates them. I believe that achieving this would make it possible to overcome prejudices and at the same time strengthen the common struggle that must put an end to the division of social classes, the social and sexist division of labor and, above all, the different hegemonies with their macro and micro

powers to exercise violence against minorities.

As Rosa Luxemburg said: to build a world where we are socially equal, humanly different, and totally free.

The road is long, but we trust that we will not advance alone. We have the advantage that the Cuban Revolution has founded a very valuable fabric of social and mass organizations and public institutions, with which we can articulate to design new projects and find solutions. It is a matter of knocking on doors and mobilizing consciences. We have forged ourselves in a country where something that has not been lost is the spirit of resistance and solidarity.

I have tried not to go on too long, but it is always very difficult for me because there are many edges. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the attention you have given me. I am going to post some messages in case you want to show solidarity with our Group. Any questions you have, you can ask me!

