

Cuba marks May Day with unity and strength despite adversity

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Photos: Abel Padrón Padilla/ Cubadebate

This May Day, Cuba did not hold its traditional parade in the capital's Revolution Square for the second consecutive year. The lack of fuel made it impossible to provide the necessary transportation for thousands of Cubans in the surrounding neighborhoods and provinces to travel to the iconic Paseo Avenue in Havana. This event every year attracted all generations of Cubans parading with Cuban flags in hand, and with the typical excitement and pride that characterizes us. The blockade's impact is real and today is like a punctuation mark on what we face on a day to day basis.

Nevertheless, despite the obstacles, over 260,000 Cubans and international supporters today filled the squares of the country. This date could never go by unnoticed on the Caribbean island because Cuba as a country is solidly on the side of working people and not the rich and privileged and has been that way since the revolution in 1959.

It should be remembered that International Workers Day began in the US in 1886 when police in Chicago attacked workers fighting for the 8 hour work day. The government would like to forget that but it won't go away. For example the Port of Oakland today, one of the busiest in the US, was shut down by members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) in honor of the holiday. Retired leader of the ILWU, Clarence Thomas, who participated in the rally in Havana said that, "there is an effort going on in the Teamsters Union to include May Day as a holiday in future contracts."



The José Martí Anti-Imperialist Tribune, located next to the U.S. embassy, was the main event on the island. The feeling there was strong, enthusiastic and united despite the difficult economic situation the country is going through, aggravated by the blockade imposed on Cuba for more than 60 years.

A major theme that underscored the air of resistance at the Tribune was the pervasive support of the heroic Palestinian people that was evident amongst Cubans and the solidarity activists attending from around the world. Palestinian flags, buttons, t-shirts and keffiyehs could be seen throughout.

The U.S. policy of maximum suffocation of the Cuban people and our internal insufficiencies mark this new anniversary of proletarian struggle. The problems

derived from the blockade constantly affect Cuban workers in their own lives and the fulfillment of their work in fields such as production, education, health, science, and agriculture.



In this context, Cubans once again demand an end to the U.S. economic blockade and the exclusion of the island from the illegal list of countries allegedly sponsoring terrorism. The great majority of people on the island continue to stand behind Cuba's socialist project.

The First Secretary of the Central Workers' Union of Cuba (CTC), Ulises Guilarte, addressed the event, which was attended by Army General Raul Castro Ruz, President Miguel Diaz-Canel, and other senior leaders of the Revolution. He referred to the current complex and adverse socio-economic context of the country by explaining, "The hostilities of the U.S. government negatively impact the quality of life of the people, who suffer daily food and medicine shortages, as well as the devaluation of salaries and pensions. It limits access to inputs and raw materials destined for our industrial plants and puts pressure on banking institutions and companies around the world interested in commercial exchange and foreign investment in Cuba.

"There is not a single sector of the country free from these effects. Faced with these challenging circumstances, we dedicate this celebration of the world proletariat to the heroism of the Cuban working people, who concentrate their efforts on the country's economic recovery as their fundamental cause.

"There are good examples in all the territories of the country that show that it is possible to achieve productive efficiency beyond the limitations of material and financial resources. And at the center of these good experiences are men and women who show us that human capital is the most secure and solid resource we have today, and we are not allowed to waste it," Guilarte concluded.



General Raúl Castro Ruz, President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, and Prime Minister Manuel Marrero Cruz during the celebrations for May 1 at the José Martí Anti-imperialist Tribune.

[Source: Resumen Latinoamericano - English](#)

