

Havana Syndrome, the U.S.'s monumental hoax

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 26, 2022



U.S. Embassy in Havana. Photo: Bill Hackwell

Jan. 23 — Last week, the United States decided to recognize for the first time in five years that the phenomenon baptized as “Havana Syndrome” is nothing more than a big farce. On Thursday, the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) admitted that its allegations against Cuba for the so-called “health incidents” against its diplomats in Havana back in 2016 were not caused by “a deliberate attack.”

A report released by the CIA on the events confirms what the scientific community in Cuba and the rest of the world has said to exhaustion, “There is no evidence that an attack of such magnitude was planned by a government.”

“The new study confirms Cuba’s position, strongly held since the first alleged cases came to light,” Johana Tablada, deputy director-general for the United States at the Cuban Foreign Affairs Ministry, told local journalists.

According to the CIA security report, the symptoms - nausea, drowsiness, fatigue, headaches, and hearing and vision problems - cannot be attributed to a common cause and even less to such a far-fetched hypothesis as a "sonic attack."

That hypothesis has been advocated by the Donald Trump administration and his successor, the current president, Joe Biden and has been used as the primary justification for keeping Cuba on their list of countries supporting terrorism, slapping on over 240 sanctions, cutting the staffs of the embassies to skeleton crews while maintaining in full force the over 60 year blockade on the island nation.

Experts overwhelmingly agree that for an ultrasound to be capable of destroying molecular tissue, it would need to involve huge weapons. They explained that such devices would have to be placed close enough to the target to avoid being blocked by walls but hidden as much as possible to cause such damage invisibly.

In January 2019, biologists with expertise in tropical insects suggested that the most plausible explanation would be that the noise perceived by the diplomats was the mating song of one particularly noisy species, the short-legged guinea fowl crickets.

Now, the U.S. intelligence agency acknowledged that most cases could be categorized as "environmental causes, undiagnosed medical conditions, or stress." The information dismisses the "attacks" being perpetrated by Russia or other enemy foreign powers, as U.S. politicians have tried to make them seem during the last five years.

Consequences of such lies

Cuba denounced to exhaustion the political manipulation behind this scandal due to the lack of scientific foundations and the proliferation of increasingly less credible excuses, such as the use of microwaves and supersonic weapons, as if we were dealing with a James Bond movie.

The United States relied on the disease to apply a battalion of sanctions against Cuba that are still in force today. The “syndrome,” which seems more a phenomenon of collective hysteria than a disease per se, complicated the process of visa applications by Cubans wishing to travel to the country.

Washington decided to transfer those procedures to embassies in other nations, a situation that is still maintained along with other measures that were born to “weaken relations between the two countries,” Johana Tablada explained.

“Although incidents have been reported in several countries, the United States has only taken Draconian measures against Cuba, which has had a negative impact on the Cuban family,” she complained.

Why is the U.S. discourse changing now?

There was never a scientific consensus on the issue. The United States was never able to prove that this symptom exists but that didn’t stop them from punishing Cuba on a failed assumption. Today, five years later, the great farce has become untenable.

The new report does not mean that the neighboring country will cease its hostilities against the island, nor that they will stop investigating the alleged events recorded in their diplomatic community.

In fact, the CIA assured that, although it is not a “deliberate event,” they will continue to analyze specific cases. They maintain the rhetorical hook to continue encouraging the anti-Cuban far-right in Florida, key voters for the new administration.

Just last week, U.S. Foreign Affairs Minister Antony Blinken assured that the U.S. was continuing to “get to the bottom” of the issue to find out who was behind the attacks. He said so after the country documented new cases in Geneva Switzerland,

and Paris France.

But this sudden decision to acknowledge that Cuba, Russia, and other “enemies” are not behind the events is the first stone they lift in the Hollywood movie story they no longer have a way to sustain.

The report is also an effort to contain the cascade of denunciations and new cases that have proliferated in various parts of the world since the U.S. Congress approved in September 2021 a resolution to grant economic aid to diplomatic officials afflicted by the alleged syndrome.

Why hasn't the White House dismissed this fantasy altogether? Because they do not want to admit that the “phenomenon” has become a boomerang for them, bringing them more losses than gains. They want to make the whole story go away in a fade, without recognizing the great ridicule.

They neither want to admit that it has been a farce, because they know that, historically, whatever story they make up against Cuba, the world will believe it without asking questions, even if it includes supersonic weapons, murderous microwaves, deafening sounds in the middle of the night, or malicious short-legged crickets.

Source: [Resumen Latinoamericano - English](#)



Alicia Jrapko, présenté! (in English)

written by Struggle - La Lucha
January 26, 2022



Dear comrades and friends,

With deep sorrow and on behalf of her family, we announce that our dear colleague, sister and friend Alicia Jrapko passed away last evening after fighting a cruel illness for more than two years. In spite of the hard treatment, she never stopped working as much as she could. Alicia regretted not being able to continue contributing, loving and living with the energy that always characterized her.

Alicia was a great Argentine revolutionary, the daughter of workers who at a very young age took up the struggles of a generation that dreamed of building an Argentina with social justice for the people. Alicia once said in an interview: "In Latin America a great admiration was forged for Cuba, for Fidel, Raul, Che and so

many other revolutionaries. In Argentina we wanted the same thing, but it was not achieved and a great part of my generation lost their best children."

Alicia was born on January 1, 1953 in Merlo, Buenos Aires province, grew up and was educated in Córdoba, where she studied journalism. Argentina's military dictatorship imposed in 1976 unleashed a fierce repression against all popular militants. Thirty thousand were detained-disappeared, among them many of Alicia's classmates. She was unable to finish her degree, and with the clothes she was wearing, in the same year she had to go into exile.

Each of Alicia's three children bear the middle names of her disappeared comrades: Gabriela Emma, Eileen Mabel and Juan Alberto.

For several years she lived in exile in Mexico, then settled in the United States, the most difficult country and at the same time the most necessary to support the causes of Latin America and fight against imperialism ... it was difficult for her to understand the aggression, the lies and the attacks against Cuba by the media and the government.

Alicia became committed to the struggles of U.S. workers and starting in the early 1990s to Cuba solidarity work through IFCO-Pastors for Peace, where she worked closely with Rev. Lucius Walker as his West Coast coordinator and helped organize and recruit African American and Latino students to attend the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) for free to become doctors in their communities. Her solidarity work brought her closer to Cuba every day; she became a spokesperson for many caravans of Pastors traveling thousands of miles through the U.S. to counter the lies of the U.S. government against the revolutionary island while collecting humanitarian aid as a symbol of solidarity with the Cuban people. "We knew that the humanitarian aid we were taking to Cuba was symbolic, but we wanted to show that the U.S. government could not block solidarity between peoples. And we wanted to show that Cuba was not alone. The experience of

traveling to Cuba on Pastors for Peace caravans changed my life forever and brought me closer to Cuba and its people."

In 2000 Alicia was in the forefront of the battle for the return of Elian Gonzalez to his father in Cuba but her pivotal work can be found in the struggle to free the Cuban 5 political prisoners, unjustly incarcerated for monitoring the activity of terrorists in the U.S. against Cuba. Alicia assumed with determination and incomparable courage the leadership of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five in the United States, and managed to get trade unionists, religious leaders, congressional representatives, jurists, intellectuals, actors and artists to join the campaign for the release of Cuban anti-terrorist fighters Gerardo Hernandez Nordelo, Ramon Labañino Salazar, Antonio Guerrero Rodriguez, Fernando Gonzalez Llort and Rene Gonzalez Sehwerert.

From 2002 until his release in 2014, regardless of the risks and the enormous distances, together with her partner in struggle and dreams, Bill Hackwell, she visited Gerardo Hernandez more than a hundred times in two maximum security federal penitentiaries, and was the constant and affectionate supporter of family visits.

Alicia's enormous work and political commitment transcended before the Cuban people who conferred her several distinctions, among them the Felix Elmuza Medal awarded by the Union of Journalists of Cuba, the Shield of the city of Holguin and the Medal of Friendship awarded by the Council of State of the Republic of Cuba through the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), for her immense work during the long years of struggle for the freedom of the Five.

Pages would not be enough to describe the enormous work that this courageous woman carried out with extraordinary modesty, simplicity, dignity and fidelity, with all her energies placed at the service of human betterment throughout her precious life.

Alicia's work focused on Latin America including the defense of the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela and she was also a visible presence in the antiwar movement to end the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Since 2011 Alicia has been a co-chair of the National Network on Cuba (NNOC). She was the coordinator of the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity for the Peoples in the U.S., and founder and co-editor of Resumen Latinoamericano in English. She created the U.S. chapter of the Network in Defense of Humanity and was a member of its General Secretariat. In her last project, despite being ill, Alicia was the co-chair of the Nobel Committee for Cuba's Henry Reeve medical brigade, in one more effort in her tireless fight against the criminal blockade of Cuba.

Her name, Alicia, is the essence of truth. That truth was carried as a banner by our dear Ali throughout her life, the truth of the people against injustice, the truth, honesty, dignity and modesty of true revolutionaries, capable of giving their all, without any other personal ambition or motive. Alicia's style of leadership pulled people to her and the struggle, always with her big smile and sincerity, earning her the respect of all.

She honored us with her friendship and affection, with her enormous courage. And she leaves us all in this infinite sadness, but she also leaves us with her example of how to live a life of struggle, nobility, dignity and hope.

All our love goes to Gabriela, Eileen and Juanito, her beloved children, her life partner Bill Hackwell, her six grandchildren, the youngest Che Simón, born this Jan. 5, whom she could not see or hold in her arms, but was able to listen to an audio of his cry for the future with a big smile; to her dear brother in Argentina, family, friends and colleagues in the United States.

We will never forget you, soul mate, dearest sister and mother.

Hasta Siempre Ali Querida!
You will always be present!
Until Victory Always!

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo and Graciela Ramírez Cruz

January 12, 2022 from Havana

Source: [Resumen Latinoamericano](#)



Alicia Jrapko, présenté! (en español)

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Con profundo dolor y en nombre de su familia, comunicamos que nuestra querida compañera, hermana y amiga Alicia Jrapko, partió este 11 de enero en horas de la noche, tras luchar contra una cruel enfermedad por más de dos años. A pesar del duro tratamiento nunca dejó de trabajar en todo cuanto podía. Si algo lamentaba Alicia era no poder seguir aportando, amando y viviendo con la energía que la caracterizó siempre.

Alicia fue una gran revolucionaria argentina, hija de trabajadores que desde muy joven asumió las luchas de una generación que soñaba construir una Argentina con justicia social para el pueblo. Dijo Alicia en una entrevista...»en América Latina se forjó una gran admiración por Cuba, por Fidel, Raúl, el Che y tantas otras y otros revolucionarios. En Argentina queríamos lo mismo, pero no se logró y gran parte de mi generación perdió a sus mejores hijos».

Alicia nació el 1ro de enero 1953 en Merlo, provincia Buenos Aires, creció y se

educó en Córdoba, donde estudió periodismo. La dictadura militar de Argentina impuesta en 1976 desató una represión feroz hacia todos los militantes populares. Treinta mil fueron detenidos-desaparecidos, entre ellos muchos compañeros de clase de Alicia. No pudo terminar la carrera, y con la ropa que vestía, en el mismo año '76 tuvo que exiliarse.

Cada uno de los tres hijos de Alicia lleva el segundo nombre de sus compañeros desaparecidos: Gabriela Emma, Eileen Mabel y Juan Alberto.

Durante varios años vivió exiliada en México, luego se radicó en Estados Unidos, el país más difícil y a la vez el más necesario para apoyar las causas de América Latina y luchar contra el imperialismo...era difícil entender la agresión, las mentiras y los ataques contra Cuba por parte de los medios y el gobierno.

Alicia se comprometió con las luchas de los trabajadores estadounidenses y a principios de los años '90 con el trabajo solidario con Cuba a través de IFCO-Pastores por La Paz, donde colaboró estrechamente con el Reverendo Lucius Walker como su coordinadora de la costa Oeste, ayudó a organizar y promover las becas para que los estudiantes afroamericanos y latinos pudieran asistir a la Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina (ELAM) de forma gratuita para convertirse en médicos en sus comunidades. Su labor solidaria la acercaba cada día más a Cuba; se convirtió en vocera de muchas caravanas de Pastores que recorrieron miles de kilómetros a través de Estados Unidos para contrarrestar las mentiras del gobierno estadounidense contra la isla, mientras recolectaba ayuda humanitaria como símbolo de solidaridad con el pueblo cubano. «Sabíamos que la ayuda humanitaria que llevábamos a Cuba era simbólica, pero queríamos mostrar que el gobierno de EEUU no podía bloquear la solidaridad entre los pueblos. Y queríamos mostrar que Cuba no estaba sola. La experiencia de viajar a Cuba en las caravanas de Pastores por la Paz cambió mi vida para siempre y me acercó más a Cuba y su pueblo» dijo en una entrevista.

En el año 2000 Alicia estuvo al frente de la batalla por el regreso de Elián González junto su padre en Cuba, pero su trabajo fundamental se encuentra en la lucha por la liberación de los Cinco Patriotas cubanos, injustamente encarcelados por monitorear la actividad de los terroristas en los Estados Unidos contra Cuba.

Alicia asumió con decisión e inigualable valentía la dirección del Comité Internacional por la Libertad de los Cinco en Estados Unidos, y logró que sindicalistas, líderes religiosos, congresistas, juristas, intelectuales, actores y artistas se sumarán a la campaña por la liberación de los antiterroristas cubanos Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez, Fernando González Llort y René González Sehwerert.

Desde el año 2002 hasta su libertad en 2014, sin importar los riesgos y las enormes distancias, junto a su compañero de lucha y de sueños, Bill Hackwell, visitó más de cien veces a Gerardo Hernández en dos prisiones federales de máxima seguridad, y fue el constante y afectivo apoyo de las visitas familiares.

El enorme trabajo y compromiso político de Alicia trascendió ante el pueblo cubano que le confirió varias distinciones, entre ellas la Medalla «Félix Elmuza» que otorga la Unión de Periodistas de Cuba, el Escudo de la ciudad de Holguín y la Medalla de la Amistad otorgada por el Consejo de Estado de la República de Cuba a través del Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos -ICAP-, por su inmensa labor durante los largos años de lucha por la libertad de los Cinco.

Alicia apoyó fuertemente la Revolución Bolivariana de Venezuela, el legado de Hugo Chávez y al presidente Nicolás Maduro.

No alcanzarían las páginas para describir el enorme trabajo que esta valiente mujer realizó con extraordinaria modestia, sencillez, dignidad y fidelidad, con todas sus energías puestas al servicio del mejoramiento humano a lo largo de su preciosa vida.

Desde 2011 Alicia ha sido la copresidenta de la Red Nacional sobre Cuba (NNOC). Fue coordinadora del Comité Internacional Paz, Justicia y Dignidad de los Pueblos en Estados Unidos y fundadora y coeditora de Resumen Latinoamericano en inglés. Creó el capítulo estadounidense de la Red en Defensa de la Humanidad y fue miembro de su Secretaría General. En su último proyecto, a pesar de estar enferma, Alicia fue copresidenta del Comité Nobel de la Brigada Médica Cubana Henry Reeve, como un esfuerzo más en su incansable lucha contra el criminal bloqueo a Cuba.

Su nombre, Alicia, significa verdad. Esa verdad la llevó como bandera nuestra querida Ali durante toda su vida, la verdad del pueblo contra la injusticia, la verdad, la honestidad, la dignidad y la modestia de los verdaderos revolucionarios, capaces de darlo todo, sin otra ambición o motivo personal. El estilo de liderazgo de Alicia atraía a la gente hacia ella y las luchas que lideraba, siempre con su gran sonrisa y sinceridad, ganándose el respeto de todos.

Nos honró con su amistad y cariño, con su enorme valentía. Y nos deja a todos en esta tristeza infinita, pero con su ejemplo de vida, de lucha, de nobleza, dignidad y esperanza.

Llegue todo nuestro cariño a Gabriela, Eileen y Juanito sus amados hijos, a su entrañable compañero de vida Bill Hackwell, sus seis nietos, el más pequeño Che Simón, nacido este 5 de enero, a quien no pudo ver ni tomar en sus brazos, pero del que escuchó un audio de su grito por el futuro con una gran sonrisa; a su querido hermano en Argentina, familia, amigos y compañeros en Estados Unidos.

Jamás te olvidaremos compañera del alma, hermana más hermana y más querida.

Hasta Siempre Ali Querida!
Siempre estarás Presente!
Hasta la Victoria Siempre!

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo y Graciela Ramírez Cruz

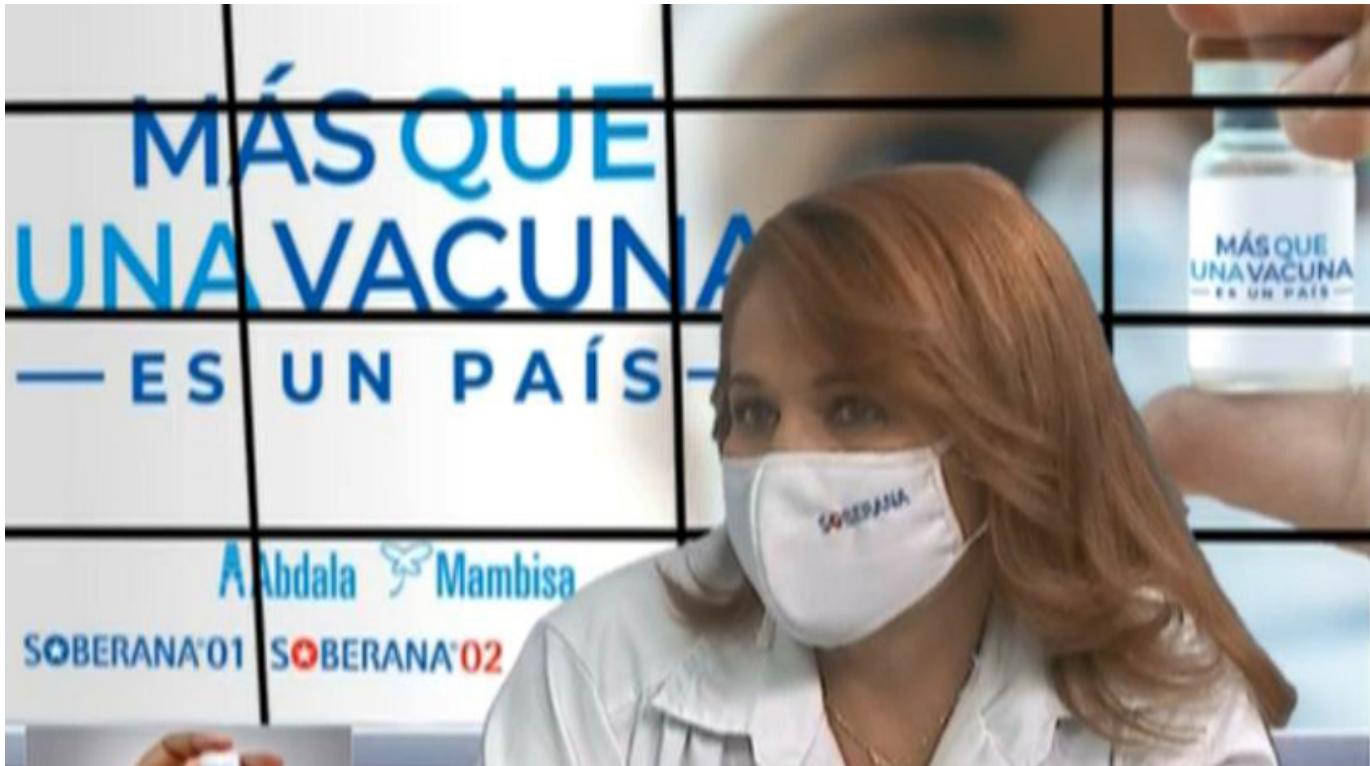
Fuente: [Cuba en Resumen](#)



Cuba, más cerca de superar el COVID-19

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Con más del 84% de su población [totalmente vacunada](#) contra la COVID-19 y con números de contagios y muertes diarias por el virus en franca disminución, Cuba podría estar a las puertas de vencer a la pandemia, después de meses de confinamiento, una marcada paralización económica y los [malabares](#) para conseguir sus propias vacunas.

El esfuerzo parece estar rindiendo frutos. Desde inicios del mes de noviembre de 2021, los números de contagios y fallecimientos a causa del Sars-Cov-2 han descendido drásticamente: desde las primeras semanas de diciembre de este mismo año, el promedio diario de casos positivos [no supera los 100](#) y varias jornadas han transcurrido sin que el país reporte muertes. Un panorama más que alentador para una isla que a mediados de 2021 llegó a ver cifras de hasta 8.000 casos positivos y cerca de 100 muertes diarias.

Durante una reunión del [Grupo Temporal de Trabajo para la Prevención y Control](#)

del nuevo coronavirus, el ministro de Salud, José Ángel Portal Miranda, dijo que estas cifras “si bien siguen teniendo la máxima atención por parte del Gobierno cubano, hablan de cuánto se ha avanzado en el control de la epidemia en el país”.

Otro dato que da cuenta de la gestión de la pandemia que han hecho las autoridades sanitarias es la tasa de recuperación: el 99,1% de quienes se han contagiado con el virus en Cuba se ha recuperado, según datos oficiales.

Las cifras dan cuenta del modelo de atención a la pandemia implementado en el país, así como de la efectividad que han tenido hasta ahora las vacunas anti-COVID19 desarrolladas en la isla. Con la aplicación principalmente de sus fármacos *Abdala*, *Soberana 02* y *Soberana Plus*, las autoridades sanitarias cubanas han logrado frenar la curva de contagio, cuyo pico llegó a poner en jaque al sistema de salud en varias provincias hace tan solo unos meses.

Hasta el pasado 18 de diciembre, unos 9.494.597 cubanos y cubanas ya contaban con el esquema completo de vacunación, lo que equivale a más del 95% de la población vacunable; así la isla se ubica en el segundo puesto entre los países con mayor porcentaje de su población inmunizada, solo detrás de Emiratos Árabes Unidos y por delante de países como Estados Unidos, España, Chile y Argentina.

Como cuestión de hecho, Cuba podría convertirse en el “*primer país latinoamericano completamente vacunado contra la COVID-19 para junio de 2022*”, según proyecciones de la Organización Panamericana de la Salud (OPS), citadas por el director nacional de Epidemiología, el Dr. Francisco Durán.

El experto precisó que las estimaciones de la OPS apuntan a que la mayor de las Antillas “*liderará en el escalafón regional en cuanto a esquemas de inmunización completos aplicados por cada 100 habitantes*”.

En paralelo, la campaña de vacunación en la isla ya se encuentra en la etapa de aplicación de las dosis de refuerzo a aquellas personas que completaron los esquemas de inmunización hace seis meses, en lo que constituye un nuevo esfuerzo de la medicina cubana por hacer frente a la amenaza que supone la nueva - [y más contagiosa](#) - variante Ómicron. Hasta la fecha, cerca de un millón de personas ya cuentan con la dosis de refuerzo de alguna de las vacunas *Abdala, Soberana 01 o Soberana Plus*.

En La Habana, la campaña de refuerzo inició el pasado 6 de diciembre en cuatro de sus municipios, el resto de las zonas capitalinas deberá completar el proceso en lo que queda de diciembre y el mes de enero de 2022. A buen ritmo marcha además la aplicación de la tercera dosis de la vacuna Soberana 02 a la población infantil entre dos y 18 años.

Sobre la nueva cepa Ómicron, los expertos cubanos han dicho que, si bien la isla ya posee “un nivel de inmunidad importante”, se debe mantener la alerta sanitaria y reforzar las medidas de vigilancia en las fronteras, mientras los científicos trabajan en saber si las vacunas cubanas son efectivas contra la variante.

“Actualmente es apresurado decir que nuestras vacunas protegen totalmente contra esta variante específica y se trabaja en inmunizantes para ella, pero estamos conscientes de que la batalla contra la COVID-19 no está del todo ganada mientras el mundo enfrente estas situaciones”, [sostuvo](#) Portal Miranda en un medio local.

Para diciembre del 2021, Cuba había [informado](#) la detección de seis personas contagiadas con Ómicron, cuatro de ellas cubanas y dos turistas, procedentes de Sudáfrica, Kenia y Mozambique.

Por su parte, Eduardo Martínez, presidente del [Grupo Empresarial BioCubaFarma](#), [afirmó](#) en su [cuenta](#) en Twitter que “*observamos con detenimiento los reportes sobre el comportamiento de la nueva variante*” y aseguró que “ya

estamos diseñando vacunas específicas [...] si fuera necesario, en poco tiempo las desarrollaremos”.

Por lo pronto, las autoridades [han llamado](#) a la población a no bajar la guardia y han subrayado la necesidad de aprender a “convivir con la enfermedad, de manera responsable”.

Este artículo fue producido para [Globetrotter](#).

Luis de Jesús es un periodista puertorriqueño con cerca de 10 años de experiencia. Graduado de Licenciatura en Periodismo de la Universidad de Puerto Rico. Tiene una Maestría en Política Internacional de la Universidad Pompeu Fabra de Barcelona, España. Ha sido enviado especial en España y otros países de Europa y Corresponsal de la agencia EFE en París. Durante alrededor de cuatro años fue periodista ancla de Noticias en la cadena internacional TeleSUR, en Caracas, Venezuela. Actualmente, es Corresponsal en La Habana, Cuba, del periódico Claridad de Puerto Rico, único órgano de comunicación dirigido a la lucha por la independencia y soberanía de esa isla. También es mantenedor de su canal “A Buen Entendedor” en Youtube, donde realiza entrevistas y análisis de índole geopolítico.



'The Cuban Soberana vaccine is not due to a miracle but the consequence of political decisions'

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"Do you know the difference between our Soberana vaccine and Pfizer?" With this question, Dr. Vicente Vérez Bencomo, general director of the Cuban Finlay Institute for Vaccines, welcomed the Italian delegation for the clinical trial called *SoberanaPlusTurin* in La Pradera, the international health center inaugurated in Havana in November 1996.

SoberanaPlusTurin is the name of the observational clinical trial with 35 volunteers from Italy previously vaccinated in Europe who received a single dose of the Cuban vaccine SoberanaPlus as a boost. The observational study of the SoberanaPlus vaccine authorized by the Cuban regulatory entity [CECMED](#) (Centro para el Control Estatal de Medicamentos, Equipos y Dispositivos Médicos) seeks to evaluate its reactogenicity and immunogenicity in adult subjects resident in Italy.

This clinical trial, the first of its kind on the Caribbean island, is the result of an important and deep international scientific collaboration in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, mainly between the [Finlay](#) Vaccine Institute of Cuba, the *Amedeo Di Savoia* Hospital of Turin, and the Italian Agency for Cultural and Economic Exchange with Cuba ([AICEC](#)).

A people's vaccine

Dr. Vicente Vérez Bencomo's answer was direct and clear: "Pfizer developed a commodity to sell to the governments and make big profits; the collateral effect was that the populations were partially protected from the virus. In Cuba, we developed a vaccine to protect our people and we are succeeding. If we will be able to earn some money from our work, obviously we will be happy to invest it in new public research."

Even without a prevailing mandatory vaccination, by the end of November 2021, almost 10.2 million Cubans have received at least one dose of vaccine (practically 100% of the vaccine-eligible population). Of these, over 9.2 million have received the second dose and 8.7 million Cubans (78%) have received the third dose. 82.1% of the total Cuban population (9.18 million people) has even completed the entire vaccination schedule (two doses of Soberana02 and one dose of SoberanaPlus or three doses of Abdala).

This is not only a higher vaccination rate compared to other low-income countries around the world, where on an average, only 2.8 per cent of the population was vaccinated by the end of November. It is also a higher vaccination rate compared to developed countries in the global North. And Cuba has also already started its booster vaccination program. By the end of November, over 311,000 people had received a fourth vaccination. As scientific studies show, this Cuban vaccination scheme has a [protective effect](#) of 92.4 percent.

The vaccine alone was not enough to bring the virus under control. Stringent containment measures - wearing masks, strict adherence to physical distancing, and a radical lockdown until November 15, 2021 - were necessary to control the spread of the virus. As a result, [Cuba](#) recorded only one death linked to COVID-19 in the last week of November and a transmission rate of less than 1%. Even today, despite low numbers, rules to minimize transmission of the virus are respected across the island.

What exactly is Soberana?

Soberana Plus is designed for people recovering from the virus or who have already been given another vaccine. Soberana is a protein vaccine, unlike Pfizer or Moderna, which use mRNA technology. Cuba has thus used a conventional technology based on the platform of already known vaccines for the development and production of its own vaccine. This means that in Cuba, traditional technology is used to put a small piece of the virus - the so-called "spike" - into the vaccinated person, who then produces the necessary antibodies. The mRNA vaccines, on the other hand, provide the 'instructions', the body learns them and raises the antibodies.

[Studies](#) carried out so far show that Soberana Plus is an absolutely effective vaccine. It builds up a very high wall of antibodies, both in those who have already been infected and recovered, and in those who have received other vaccines. Soberana Plus is also effective against the Beta and Delta variants, the former being extremely aggressive and the latter now being the worldwide dominant variant. Moreover, clinical studies showed that the vaccine has almost no side effects: less than 1% of the vaccinated population suffers from fever, reddening of the injection site, general malaise, and/or erythema.

From the perspective of global control of COVID-19, the Cuban vaccine has two other key advantages. First, its production costs are extremely low. This means that the vaccine can potentially be produced in any corner of the world (Iran is already producing a vaccine based on Cuban technology), even in countries whose per capita

healthcare expenditure is less than \$20 per year, which would be as much as the [cost](#) of a single Pfizer vaccine dose. Second, the Soberana vaccine has no special logistical requirements; no advanced or costly technology is needed to store and transport the vaccine.

Soberana was designed as a children's vaccine

There is more: Cuba is the country furthest ahead in the vaccination campaign for the [pediatric population](#). It has already vaccinated more than 2 million children and adolescents aged between 2 and 18. Indeed, Soberana02 is a product originally designed for children. While at the beginning of the pandemic, experts and governments around the world were rushing to say that the virus would not affect children, scientists in Cuba were working to ensure that none of them actually died or were intubated because of COVID-19. "For us it was clear that no child should die from COVID-19. That's why a vaccination program for children that was planned in detail was of central importance," explained Ricardo Pérez Valerino, Head of International Relations at the Finlay Institute.

Pérez Valerino added, "It's true, children cope with the virus better than adults, but they are vectors of the disease. Our grandparents, adults were getting sick and sometimes the virus was carried by their grandchildren and children. At the same time, however, we started to see that even the youngest children were getting sick. So the ideal thing was to have a vaccine that worked and was safe for our children too."

In Western countries today, new infections are actually increasing in the younger population, which led to school closures in Germany, Italy and other countries. In the [United States](#), for example, children accounted for 25.1% of the weekly reported COVID-19 cases in November 2021. In [Italy](#), more than 30% of new Corona cases around the same time were currently in minors, with children between 6 and 11 years of age particularly affected. Many Western countries - above all the US and

Italy, but also other countries in the European Union – have already started vaccinating minors.

Cuba is also a pioneer in this respect. First of all, a vaccine against Sars-Cov-2 was developed on the basis of vaccines already used in infants, which reduced the health side effects and problems of the new vaccination to practically zero and strengthened parents' confidence in the new vaccine. Second, the entire population – including children – was integrated into the vaccination campaign from the very beginning, which can be defined as forward-looking in view of the latest developments in the pandemic.

International cooperation against the pandemic

"The Cuban vaccine and its vaccination campaign are not the result of any miracle, but the consequence of political decisions," said [Fabrizio Chiodo](#), an Italian scientist who collaborates with the Cuban Finlay Institute in developing the vaccine and is part of the clinical collaboration between Cuba and Italy. He added, "If in the global struggle against the pandemic we are looking to Cuba and to its vaccines today, it's because Cuba was visionary in developing a public healthcare system and public biotechnological research."

Public versus private is not simply an ideological question. The small Caribbean island, under a blockade for more than 60 years, was able to develop three vaccines and two vaccine candidates in a very short time because Cuba didn't surrender itself to the logic of multinational corporations and Big Pharma, but invested in [public healthcare](#) and educational and [research systems](#) which guaranteed top quality professionals.

In mid-September 2021 – shortly after the start of the vaccination program on the island – Cuba applied for [approval](#) of its vaccine at the World Health Organization (WHO). For the international recognition of Soberana, the Cuban government

deliberately decided against applying for approval at the European Medicines Agency EMA and the US Food and Drug Administration FDA. The rejection of the Chinese Sinovac and the Russian Sputnik by EMA and FDA are proof that these agencies make political decisions. However, in the perspective of global cooperation against the pandemic, in Cuba, only the WHO is recognized as a multilateral, neutral body.

Cuba's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic is thus a lesson for the whole world: it puts people's health before private profits, promotes international cooperation and strictly rejects trade wars between states and multinational corporations. It would therefore be a fatal mistake to disregard the Cuban experience with regard to a globally united fight against COVID-19.

The author is one of the participants in the clinical trial mentioned in the story.

Source: [*Peoples Dispatch*](#)



Why Cuba does not have an anti-vaccine movement

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 26, 2022



Increasingly, large sectors of the European population, and in the US to a lesser extent, openly express their distrust towards their government's policies to combat COVID-19. The reaction of the traditional policy is one of panic and is characterized by paternalism and repression: general obligation to vaccinate and restricting freedom of movement. This is not the way to build support among the population. This will require, at the very least, listening to the fears and concerns of the unvaccinated. But there are other elements at play as well. The comparison with Cuba is interesting.

Distrust in the government

Many unvaccinated people rightly doubt the competence and/or good faith of their

governments that now want to vaccinate everyone as soon as possible. It is not so incomprehensible.

European countries have been improvising since March 2020. There is no uniformity or logic in policies to attack the COVID-19 pandemic. With similar contagion rates the measures differ greatly from one country to another.

In Belgium, where I live, as in other countries in Europe, the improvisation was incomprehensible. The Belgian government waited until mid-March before taking action. That was a month and a half too late. If they had taken action earlier, the rate of spread would have been much lower and thousands of deaths from COVID-19 would have been avoided. And they don't seem to learn from their mistakes. The response to each new wave of COVID-19 comes too late.

Although experts had been warning about it for years, the Belgian government was not prepared for a pandemic. At first it said that the masks were useless, because they were not (yet) available due to mismanagement. Then, suddenly, they became mandatory.

In September 2021 the measures were relaxed in Belgium with worse figures, while in the Netherlands they were tightened with better figures. How does one explain that? In Belgium seven health ministers have to agree in order to implement a new policy. At the same time, governors and mayors introduce stricter or more permissive rules and party presidents polish their image at the expense of public health.

When that distrust reaches the streets and social networks, the far right just has to stick the ball upside down. They attract to their side those who are legitimately disgruntled just by showing empathy with their distrust of the government. Their goal, of course, is not to demand more democracy for the voiceless. History teaches us why the goal of the far right is to hasten the formation of an authoritarian regime

that will completely shut out these people and push to the extreme the exploitation of everything and everyone by the 1%.

The anti-COVID-19 measures in many European countries were and still are a huge chaos. But, in reality, the distrust is much deeper. In the previous big crisis, the banking crisis of 2008, it was also the citizens who paid the price. The banks that had speculated with our money got away with it and were saved. And we ordinary people paid the bill. It is obvious, and for good reason, there is such distrust in the government's ability to manage a crisis.

And in Cuba?

As early as January 2020, almost two months before the politicians in Europe got into action, the Cuban government launched a national plan to combat the coronavirus. Massive information campaigns were launched in working-class neighborhoods and on television. There were no contradictory governments, no seven health ministers who had to agree, and no discussions about mandatory masks.

The government acted decisively and did everything possible to nip the virus in the bud. No easy promises saying that we were going to regain the 'kingdom of freedom' thanks to vaccines, no letting go of the reins too quickly, due to electoral motives or lack of political courage, but firm measures. Here are some examples. Tourism, the main source of income but also of contagion, was stopped immediately. Children from the age of six are obliged to wear masks. When it became clear that schools were also important foci of contagion, Cuba switched to home education, with very good support from school television, among other things.

"By properly informing the population about health risks, Cubans understand the importance of staying at home. They know how the disease is transmitted, and they take responsibility for their own health and that of their relatives and neighbors,"

says Aissa Naranjo, a physician in Havana.

Health care in Cuba focuses mainly on prevention and is highly decentralized. Each neighborhood has its own polyclinic and there is a strong bond of trust between the local population and health personnel. Since March 2020 almost 30,000 'contact tracers' have gone door to door, to the farthest corners of the island, to check each family to see if one of its members was infected. University students were mobilized to assist in this screening. In Belgium, the detection was carried out by anonymous people in call centers, which does not exactly inspire confidence.

In the meantime, everything was focused on the development of vaccines against the coronavirus. In March 2021, three vaccines were already in the testing phase. Cuba currently has five vaccines of its own, one of them for children as young as two years old.

The differences in COVID policies between Cuba and Belgium are also reflected in the figures. In Cuba there were 146 COVID-19 deaths at the end of 2020. In Belgium, with the same number of inhabitants, the figure was almost 20,000. That was before the Delta variant. Cuba did not arrive in time. Its own vaccines were only finished three months after the Delta variant began to proliferate. Rapid vaccination in Belgium, starting in late 2020, has significantly reduced the number of deaths caused by the Delta variant, at least in the early stages.

In Cuba the Delta variant actually arrived too early; there were no vaccines at the time. The peak of infection occurred in July. This caused many deaths and shook the health system. This precarious health situation added to the severe economic problems resulting from the U.S. economic blockade, loss of tourism and rising food prices. As a result, there was much discontent among the people. Through social networks, an attempt was made from the United States to stir up this discontent and channel it into protests. The attempt ended up failing.

Once the vaccination campaign began in Cuba, the results were spectacular. On September 20, at the beginning of the campaign, there were still more than 40,000 new infections and 69 deaths daily. Today there are around 60 new infections and one death per day. In Cuba, children from the age of two are also vaccinated. On December 2, 90% of Cubans had received their first dose. This is the second highest percentage in the world, after the United Arab Emirates, and the highest in Latin America. In Belgium we are at 75%.

Distrust of big pharma

Many unvaccinated people in Europe find it suspicious that the government provides vaccines free of charge. They have to pay more and more for other drugs. Health care costs patients more and more every year and now suddenly we all “have” to get vaccinated for free. Is there nothing behind it? Does it make you a conspiracy theorist if you ask this question?

People know that big pharma only looks at profits and does not always take people's safety seriously. Between 1940 and 1980 millions of expectant mothers took DES (diethylstilbestrol) against miscarriages and in the 1960s they were prescribed Softenon against the dizziness of pregnancy. These decisions produced thousands of deformed babies. In the United States, Purdue Pharma, owned by the wealthy Sackler family, until recently sold the potent painkiller OxyContin, knowing full well that it is highly addictive.

Purdue is responsible for the deaths of thousands of Americans and the addiction of millions. Fentanyl, invented by Paul Janssen of the Belgian pharmaceutical giant of the same name (now part of Johnson & Johnson), is also a highly addictive painkiller that was freely available in the United States and heavily promoted. Johnson&Johnson was convicted of liability in this case.

People also know that pharmaceutical companies are charging too high prices for

their COVID-19 vaccines and are heavily subsidized by the government, but are allowed to keep billions in profits. When these same companies then say that another booster shot is needed, this understandably arouses suspicion, even if the need is scientifically correct.

What about Cuba?

There is no private pharmaceutical industry in Cuba. All vaccines against COVID-19 are manufactured by government-owned biomedical laboratories. Eighty percent of the vaccines used in the country's vaccination programs are manufactured domestically. You won't find outrageous prices or usurious profits there

From infancy, the entire population is vaccinated against a range of diseases, just as here in Europe. This is one of the main factors behind the very rapid increase in life expectancy in Cuba in recent decades. Life expectancy in Cuba is higher than in the United States and infant mortality is lower. In recent months it has been shown that vaccines are also very effective. So it is not surprising that any Cuban person not only trusts his or her national pharmaceutical companies, but is proud of them.

Distrust in science

Real science and pseudoscience are often used to advertise all sorts of things here in Europe: food supplements, perfect diapers, hair growth products, supersonic cell phones.... As a result science has lost much of its status for many people. Frequent research and large-scale frauds (think dieselgate) make people even more suspicious.

In addition, many people leave secondary or higher education without being able to understand statistics or their representation in articles. "There are as many vaccinated people as unvaccinated people in the hospital, aren't there?" All this explains why large groups of people are attracted to obscure theories or at least

want to take them seriously because they think “they” are trying to make us believe something. That “they” want to force us to comply with a number of things: COVID passport, vaccinations, etc. “They” is, then, an amalgam of politicians, experts and the media.

And in Cuba?

In Cuba people face professional publicity only very sporadically. Science reaches people through education -of high quality- and non-commercial media. Even before the first infection, it was explained to all Cubans on television what COVID-19 is, how the pandemic developed worldwide, what can be done about it and, consequently, what measures were to be taken.

The Cuban population knows that their scientists are working for the common good of their country. The population sees it almost every year, for example, in the preventive evacuations of towns and cities in hurricane paths, drawn by the best meteorologists in the world. It saw how HIV was quickly contained with a strong commitment to prevention, how dengue and Zika are treated in a scientific, efficient and transparent manner, resulting in a minimum number of victims.

Distrust in solidarity

Effective pandemic management presupposes solidarity. The majority of the population, who personally have little to fear from the disease, must show solidarity with minorities of (very) old and physically weak people. Vaccination is important for a normal man or woman, and also for children, to reduce the circulation of the virus in the community as soon as possible in favor of the weakest. Most people - also in Europe - consider that a sufficient reason to participate. This also applies to compliance with safety measures.

It is really surprising that there are not more people in Europe saying, “I am healthy

and strong enough, I don't need a vaccine, the rest has to do their own thing." The whole commercial and neoliberal culture here reminds people on a daily basis of their duty to develop, to do better and better in life, i.e. to

become richer. The ideal is absolute autonomy, not to depend on others; much less on the 'State', otherwise one is a freeloader. The unions are then seen as the protectors of these 'freeloaders'. The State must be degreased, social and health care must be cut back. This is not exactly a culture that fosters solidarity.

And in Cuba?

Cubans are not in a situation of competition or 'every man for himself'. The Cuban population knows from experience that only together can they face the country's great challenges. Overcoming problems together is what they are used to, unfortunately today more than ever. Helping neighbors, cleaning the neighborhood together, holding meetings and making decisions together in the workplace, etc., is their way of life.

Solidarity is part of their DNA. For decades they have been sending doctors, nurses and teachers to the rest of the world. A small country of eleven million inhabitants, with ten times less resources than Belgium, sent doctors to fight COVID as far away as Italy.

This attitude and way of life is another reason why there are few or no anti vaccine people in Cuba. `

<https://www.alainet.org/es/articulo/214581>

[Source: Alainet, translation Resumen Latinoamericano - English](#)



D.C. anti-imperialists stand in solidarity with Cuban Revolution

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 26, 2022

On Nov. 13, a small group of activists led by the [D.C. Metro Coalition in Solidarity with the Cuban Revolution](#) gathered in front of the Cuban Embassy on 16th Street Northwest to reaffirm a core revolutionary anti-imperialist demand: an end to the murderous blockade and continuous U.S. interference in Cuban affairs.

Ever since corporate media propagandists bombarded the public with around-the-clock news updates on the overblown, U.S.-[cultivated](#) Cuban counterrevolutionary protests in July, many leftists living within the imperial core [have gotten](#) caught up in a manufactured spell that aims to drain any militant solidarity with the Cuban people and their revolution.

This increased complacency and inability to critically analyze information coming from a mainstream press in lockstep with U.S. regime change goals, in part, prompted a further emboldened hawkish establishment to attempt a second color

revolution within five months in Cuba.

Fortunately, protests scheduled for Nov. 15 and brazenly [advertised](#) by the U.S. State Department turned into a massive flop. A network of anti-imperialist solidarity events held in more than 80 cities around the world [helped](#) ensure that this act of aggression would become the latest addition to a long list of failed destabilization tactics designed to end more than 60 years of revolutionary socialism 90 miles from the epicenter of global capitalism.

In Washington D.C., several activists from the small rally days earlier returned to the Cuban Embassy on Nov. 15, reinforced by dozens of comrades from D.C.-area anti-imperialist organizations, including Black Alliance for Peace (BAP), Code Pink, the D.C. Metro Communist Party, the D.C. branch of the Party for Socialism & Liberation, the ANSWER Coalition, the Claudia Jones School and Friends of Latin America.

Erica Caines, a BAP Coordinating Committee member, vehemently [condemned](#) this most recent manifestation of U.S. interventionism abroad and called on all anti-imperialist leftists to stand in solidarity with the Cuban people.

“As we know, sanctions kill. And while these will be framed as supporting human rights, the 60-plus-year-long blockade and recent Trump and Biden administration crackdowns are war tactics that represent violence against Cuban people, particularly Afro-Cubans,” Caines said.

“The Black Alliance for Peace’s Haitian-American community recognizes these signals as part of a long-term concerted attempt to destabilize and delegitimatize the Cuban government whose socialist principles and decades-long defiance of U.S. imperialism are unacceptable to the U.S. white supremacist empire.”

In addition to the longstanding economic blockade and the 243 additional punitive

measures enacted during the Trump administration, the U.S. government has continued to fund “human rights” organizations and anti-government media outlets through institutions like the National Endowment for Democracy, a CIA front founded by Ronald Reagan in 1983.

The Nov. 15 “Civic March for Change” — the failed anti-socialist protest in Cuba — was planned by organizations being funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), another CIA cutout used to destabilize any country whose government does not bend the knee to U.S. dictates.

Due to the blatant U.S. cultivation, funding and advertisement of the planned Nov. 15 march, the Cuban government denied permission to hold the protest, refusing to allow foreign interference in its affairs. The Biden administration subsequently threatened Cuba with more sanctions for denying its people permission to protest. Ironically, the U.S. government has had no problem violently repressing its own citizens protesting everything from police violence to corporate-led destruction of the environment.

Sean Blackmon, a local organizer with the Stop Police Terror Project D.C., led more than 50 activists in chanting “Cuba sí, bloqueo no” and “Let Cuba live”. Despite chants from across the street of “liar, liar, liar” from a handful of Cuban anti-revolutionaries attempting to drown out the solidarity rally, Blackmon continued the scheduled program with a speech.

“We don’t believe another people should be part of a quote-unquote ‘backyard’ for larger, more powerful and more wealthy nations. We believe in humanity. We are a people of conscience, unlike the U.S. government”, Blackmon said. “If you care about human rights, why would you stop people from eating and getting medicine and being able to send remittances back to their families?”

As Cuba reopens for travel and looks to jumpstart its tourism sector damaged by

U.S. sanctions and the COVID-19 crisis, activists standing in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution should expect the U.S. government to continue its suffocating economic warfare and destabilization tactics.

It's incumbent upon anti-imperialist activists in the U.S. to do our part to make sure these aggressions continue to fail. This includes educating comrades who have strayed away from militant solidarity with socialist movements in the Third World or been led astray by constant mass media propaganda.

Political education and media literacy are key to furthering the global revolution against all forms of neo-colonialism, white supremacy, and capitalist exploitation. As revolutionary freedom fighter Assata Shakur once said: "The people in the U.S. have to struggle against a system of organized lies."



A tribute to Comandante Fidel Castro

written by Struggle - La Lucha
January 26, 2022

Lars Bertling, Russell McClain and Sharon Black, three reporters for Struggle-La Lucha, members of the Socialist Unity Party, and representatives of the Baltimore Peoples Power Assembly, are participating in the 31st IFCO-Pastors for Peace U.S.-Cuba Friendship Caravan that arrived in Havana on Nov. 15.

On Nov. 25, the fifth anniversary of Fidel Castro's death, his legacy continues — not just in the hearts and minds of Cubans, but around the world. This includes young activists in the U.S.

For many, Fidel conjures up the image of the heroic guerilla fighter. Along with his comrades, he waged a war for Cuba's liberation against seemingly impossible odds. Only 20 comrades survived the actual landing of the Granma in November 1956.

But Fidel heroically pressed on. The July 26th combatants grew larger and larger with the support of the peasants and workers, who joined its ranks. In 1959, they were victorious in driving the brutal dictator Fulgencio Batista from the island.



Internationalist

For others, Fidel represents the best in internationalism and solidarity.

The saying "When Africa called, Cuba answered" refers to the sacrifices Cuba made under Fidel's direction in assisting the freedom struggle in Angola and South Africa. Thousands of Cubans died on African soil fighting apartheid and colonialism. This is why Nelson Mandela affectionately claimed Fidel as a brother.

Africa is not the only continent to remember Comandante Fidel. Everywhere on the globe where people are poor, oppressed or struggling against colonialism and neoliberalism, Fidel is viewed as an implacable friend.

Despite the decades-long U.S. blockade and numerous assassination attempts, Fidel offered to send a team of 1,586 doctors and medical assistants to help the people of the Ninth Ward in New Orleans after the Hurricane Katrina disaster. George W. Bush refused the offer. But this couldn't dissuade Fidel.

Instead, the Henry Reeve Brigade of doctors and nurses became a permanent feature of Cuba's internationalist solidarity. They traveled to the site of disasters around the world to assist, whether in West Africa, bravely fighting Ebola, or in Haiti, Mexico and China, to attend to the victims of earthquakes.

Few people in the U.S. are aware that Henry Reeve, the brigades' namesake, was born in Brooklyn. Reeve served as a drummer in the U.S. Civil War and later died in Cuba's "Ten Year War" against Spanish colonial rule.



Battle of ideas

One of Fidel's contributions that is not spoken about enough was his role as a teacher and ultimately a people's mentor. He was tireless, constantly educating everyday Cubans about critical developments in their homeland and worldwide. Fidel's speeches were the format through which much of this education was delivered.

Fidel extended this role on the world stage. He gave one of the longest speeches ever delivered at a United Nations session — eight hours — defending the downtrodden of the world and lambasting neoliberalism.

Young comrades from the Socialist Unity Party selected two speeches by Fidel to read and reflect on his legacy today. Their impressions are strongly informed by their current visit to Cuba as part of the IFCO/Pastors for Peace U.S.-Cuba Friendship Caravan.

"When an Energetic and Forceful People Cry, Injustice Trembles," Oct. 15, 1976

Russ McClain: Our caravan visited the Denouncement Memorial as the first stop of our two-week tour. What awaited us was an unflinching display of the brutal atrocities committed by the United States government in its decades-long crusade to overthrow the Cuban Revolution.

I wasn't sure what exactly to expect from the museum, but in hindsight, it provided us with invaluable context that would serve us well for the remainder of our stay.

In Fidel's speech at the memorial service for the victims of the Cubana Airlines plane bombing, he memorialized 57 "healthy, vigorous, enthusiastic, selfless, young" Cubans who were killed; later he went on to detail each terrorist act the U.S. sanctioned against Cuba between April and August of 1976. There is a deep reverence and gratitude for the stolen lives that can be felt in Fidel's words.

I had heard about some of the disgusting war crimes carried out by the U.S. against Cuba as retaliation for daring to purge itself of capitalism and imperialist domination. However, seeing all the horrifying proof of these sins was almost too much to bear. These images will remain with me, and only serve to strengthen my resolve.

Fidel's speech has inspired me. Like the beautiful Cuban athletes aboard the ill-fated plane, I pledge to carry out my revolutionary duties with "modesty and devotion."

"Can the Revolution be Reversed?" Nov. 17, 2005

Lars Bertling: My comrade and I were asked to examine one of Fidel Castro's many speeches over the course of our time with the caravan to Cuba. Before our arrival, I had done a bit of research on the country's ever-evolving socialist project and its recent permitence of certain free-market ideas within the existing system. I thought this was interesting — what forces in place prevent Cuba from becoming thoroughly capitalist?

"Can the Revolution Be Reversed?" is the same question Fidel posed over 15 years ago at the University of Havana. It is also the same question many officials seem to be asking today. But it should be noted that a significant portion of this talk is dedicated not to a potential future collapse, but to a storied history of struggling to both develop and maintain a specific ideological framework, and of the lies and hypocrisy of the U.S. imperialist state.

It is remarkable how little has changed since then. The U.S. military continues to be a global threat to economic democracy, spending inordinate sums of money to prolong the empire for the rich. Mass media within its borders continues to normalize the drums of war as Cuba continues to be a scapegoat for many of its propaganda campaigns. (Let's not forget the false depiction last July of a people hungry for regime change.)

U.S. aggression dressed up as saviorism is a tale as old as time that Castro mocks in his Havana University talk. How moral of the U.S. to try and economically decimate another country so a puppet government that benefits the interests of the wealthy might be installed!

But I don't want to undersell how exemplary Cuba has responded to these ongoing attacks by not mentioning what I've seen in the country itself. Even with their ability to obtain resources abroad stilted, Cubans have managed to produce five vaccine candidates and a vaccination rate of over 90%. A panel led by several queer advocates showed how they were working hard to redefine what makes a family in

the official Family Code.

Masks are everywhere, and I have seen a very small police presence in this “authoritarian failed state” — cops in uniform are few and far between, and the only ones I witnessed on the road were our motorcycle escorts whenever we’d travel by bus. I saw one whole person asking people for money, and the homeless I’ve noticed are all cats and dogs, who are facing action to get them off the streets, into animal shelters, and eventually into caring homes.

Fidel noted the importance of the realistic building of socialism, not steeped in utopian ideals but in what is needed for success. This persists in continuous examination of what is necessary for people in the now. The revolution never ended in Cuba — it is an ongoing process of organizing that is intensive but worthwhile.

The late commander-in-chief did not deny that all things will likely come to end. He did, however, declare that should the Cuban Revolution fail, it would fail as a result of actions in constructing socialism, rather than through an outside instigator like the United States. In our talk with the minister of foreign affairs, he echoed Fidel’s sentiment, and also acknowledged that Cuba was not perfect.

Multiple times on our trip, the existence of free-market aspects in the economy was brought up. But how else can the country survive in a global capitalist economy? Both Fidel and the speakers on our trip have stressed the uniqueness in every brand of socialistic building across national lines. What appears strange in the economy of a country dedicated to communist revolution is there to preserve what has already been created.

Cuba still stands and it looks for how to best serve its people. It is a constant adaptation, and I’m pleased to see a government so firm in putting people before profit. In my opinion, that is definitely an example to follow.



‘My Gift to Cuba’: Baltimore socialists’ contribution to festival

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 26, 2022

Lars Bertling, Russell McClain and Sharon Black, three reporters for Struggle-La Lucha, members of the Socialist Unity Party, and representatives of the Baltimore Peoples Power Assembly, are participating in the 31st IFCO-Pastors for Peace U.S.-Cuba Friendship Caravan that arrived in Havana on Nov. 15.

On Nov. 20, the Friendship Caravan delegates and their hosts held a festival of experience called “My Gift to Cuba,” with contributions from each state participating in the caravan. This was our contribution:

We are from Baltimore, Maryland, where the police murder of Freddie Gray sparked a rebellion of the people of our city who were fed up with racist police terror.

Our delegation represents the Peoples Power Assembly, which does community work, including setting up weekly free food distributions because our government

won't feed the people, and also a "saving lives campaign" to demand vaccines for our community.

Among our own organizers, six people contracted COVID-19, four were hospitalized, and six other volunteers died. Only 60% of the people of Baltimore are vaccinated.

We know the Cubans like to say, "We are not perfect." But what we have seen and will take back is heaven to us in comparison to our conditions under capitalism.

We want to add that we are also writers from Struggle-La Lucha and members of the Socialist Unity Party. Our young comrades have a poem they wrote and a t-shirt to present as our gift.

Cuba you've welcomed us
Like an old friend
But soon comes the day
When our time here will end

We'll venture back home
A capitalist hell
But we'll breathe revolution
As did Comrade Fidel

You're a socialist project
That's been under attack.
And we're gonna show you
That we've got you back

Because your existence
Is no far-off dream
It's an ongoing process
Where the people are supreme.

So soon comes the day
When our time here will end.
Love and solidarity —
Until we meet again.

Viva Cuba!



Report from Havana: Fidel Castro Center, a profound experience

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 26, 2022

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This is their account from day three.

Havana, Nov. 19 — We were honored to be the first delegation to visit the Fidel Castro Ruz Center in Havana. It's important to share a small part of the background on the establishment of this museum and interactive teaching facility.

It was Fidel's wish that there would be no statutes, monuments or streets named for him. The "Comandante," as he is affectionately referred to here, knew his importance as a leader and teacher of the Cuban people and the international community. But his emphasis was always on the people.

Statues don't usually pass on ideas. Rather, it is an educated and organized people who do.

It must have been very hard for the Cuban people to abide by his wishes. However, the National Assembly, which is the equivalent of Congress in the U.S. — but much more representative of the people — passed a law that no statutes of Fidel could be erected or streets named after him.

So it took a full debate and vote by the Cuban National Assembly to allow this one exemption, the Fidel Castro Ruz Center. And it's wonderful that they did.

The Center is a tribute to Cuba's history. A hectare of gardens (about two and a half acres) surrounds the converted home of an aristocrat that was confiscated by the revolution in 1959.

The gardens were developed to reflect Fidel's commitment to nature and ecology.

There is no way to fully describe the beauty of this garden. Plants from the Sierra Maestra mountains are grown in a vertical garden with an exquisite waterfall, representing the mountains where the guerrilla army was based.

Guides explained that the modern bronze sculpture sitting near the center of the garden represented a species of tree that bends in the hurricanes. Raul Castro,

Fidel's brother and also a leader of the revolution, described the tree as representing Fidel's ability to weather storms.

While we surveyed the garden, a white dove flew to the top of the bronze statue and stayed until a light rain began.

Our tour of the inside was a profound experience of Fidel's history starting as a boy until his death. It illustrated all the important aspects of Cuban history.

Nothing was left out, starting with a display of the jeep that Fidel used before he entered Havana in January 1959, dressed in the clothes he wore in the mountains. Our Cuban guide, a young Afro-Cuban, was profoundly knowledgeable.

Inclusion of children, people with disabilities

What struck us was the Center's thoughtful accessibility to children and those with disabilities of all kinds.

Every exhibit, especially those that were interactive, allowed children and those using wheelchairs to access them through touch and voice, including QR codes.

This was true in the library area and also outside in the garden.

The use of digital technology, art, film, and sound was astounding. For instance, the library section featured facsimiles of books that could be scanned to reveal their contents. Throughout parts of the center you could view modern sculptures and displays. Special rooms were dedicated to audiovisual films and displays.

The detailed preservation of history and excellence in execution reflect the love of Fidel and the pride that Cuban people have in their history of resistance to imperialist domination.

Included in these displays is the tremendous international support carried out by

Cuba from Angola to Vietnam.

The accessibility of the museum is a testament to the Cubans' dedication to the next generation, and this is also shown in the detailed preservation of history. The Center contains more details than you could imagine, presented in a digestible way. Visiting is like reading several books on Cuban history.

We were unable to take photographs, as is common in museums that contain delicate displays, but especially because the Cubans do not want anyone to profit from or sell the images. Nevertheless, the Cubans plan to eventually create a special website for the Center that will be shared internationally.

Our delegation spent close to 4 hours at the Center and there was not a single person who was not deeply moved.

