

Union organization votes to #unblockCuba

written by Struggle - La Lucha
October 4, 2019



The Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (AFL-CIO) 15th Biennial Convention

unanimously called “for an immediate end to the U.S. government’s economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba, including restrictions on travel to Cuba by U.S. peoples.” The convention concluded Aug. 11.

The [APALA resolution](#) urged action, sending “the resolution to its chapters encouraging other unions to pass similar resolutions and acts to encourage Congress to pass strategic pieces of legislation that would completely repeal the blockade and travel ban regarding Cuba, including the recently introduced HR 3960 and the Senate companion bipartisan bill that would end the Cuba travel ban.”

APALA is the largest national organization for Asian American and Pacific Islander workers. APALA is one of the AFL-CIO constituency organizations.

The resolution was submitted by APALA’s Seattle chapter. Seattle also became the 12th U.S. city calling to end the illegal, unilateral, U.S. blockade of Cuba.



U.S. denies visa to Cuban Health

Minister to attend international health meeting in Washington

written by Struggle - La Lucha

October 4, 2019

Health ministers from throughout the Americas gathered in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 30, for a week of meetings to set regional health goals and priorities at the 57th Directing Council of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

The meeting opened, however, without Cuba's Minister of Public Health Dr. José Ángel Portal Miranda. According to Reuters, [the United States denied his visa](#), intentionally preventing a leading public health official from participating in an international meeting.

"There can be no doubt that we, as a region, are making significant and tangible progress on the road towards achieving universal health coverage and universal access to health," [stated PAHO Director Carissa F. Etienne, in her opening remarks](#). These include the highest rating of any region on a global measure of health services coverage (79 out of 100 on the UHC Service Coverage Index).

Certainly, Cuba's white-coated army of doctors and generations of local doctors trained in Cuba's medical schools and deployed from Haiti to Venezuela contributed to the outstanding statistics included in PAHO's opening report.

The visa denial is part of the U.S. government's genocidal economic, financial and commercial blockade that has cost Cuba's universal health care system millions of dollars. According to a [news release](#) from the Republic of Cuba's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, "Between April of 2018 and March of 2019, losses to the Cuban healthcare sector amounted to \$104,148,178, a figure exceeding that of the

previous year by \$6,123,498.”

“This hostile policy hinders the acquisition of technologies, raw materials, reagents, diagnostic aids, equipment and spare parts, as well as medicines for the treatment of serious diseases such as cancer. These consumables must be bought in faraway markets, often through intermediaries, and this necessarily increases their prices,” the statement said.

The U.S. slander campaign against Cuba’s renowned medical internationalism and well organized public health system cannot erase the experiences of human beings in underserved rural and urban areas around the globe who received culturally competent medical care from Cuban doctors when no one else would help them.

In 2017, Cuba’s Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade (HRIMB) received international recognition at the 70th World Health Assembly, the global equivalent of the regional PAHO gathering this week, for “its emergency medical assistance to more than 3.5 million people in 21 countries affected by disasters and epidemics since the founding of the Brigade in September 2005.”

The PAHO article continued, “A country of just 11.5 million people, Cuba has more than 50,000 of its health professionals serving in 66 countries. Cuba is also globally recognized for its preventive, community-based approaches to primary health care, disease prevention and medical education.”

In 1999, Cuba founded the Latin American School of Medicine at the request of the historic Cuban leader Fidel Castro. Tens of thousands of young doctors have graduated since then and returned to their home countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean—nearly 200 of them to the U.S.—debt-free thanks to the generous Cuban scholarship awarded to them.

“Dr. Felix Baez, who survived Ebola infection while serving during the crisis in

Sierra Leone and accepted the award along with the Public Health Minister, said that the award to the HRIMB ‘confirms our commitment to continue our work, to go to the world’s most difficult places and to serve people who are in greatest need. We want to keep doing this, and to save many more lives — no matter how difficult it gets.’”

LaBash has helped Doctors4Detroit in its efforts to recruit and support Detroit area students studying medicine at the Latin American School of Medicine.



Cuba resists economic strangulation

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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A Sept. 16 [Business Insider headline](#) alerted readers: “Grocery stores would run out of food in just 3 days if long-haul truckers stopped working.” Scary thought? But what if they stopped working because they had no fuel — and they had no fuel because a powerful neighbor had blocked oil and gasoline deliveries?

Isn't that what Cuba is facing today? On Sept. 24, the U.S. Department of the Treasury doubled down on its economic war against the Republic of Cuba by blocking four shipping companies based in Cyprus and Panama—countries outside of the United States—and four tanker ships that deliver fuel to Cuba.

The Treasury Department press release used heavily coded wording to assert the source of the oil shipments is Venezuela, another independent, sovereign country suffering from Washington-instigated coup plots and U.S. economic, political and even threatened military assaults.

On the same day, at the United Nations, the U.S. representative again and again lauded defense of sovereignty as a supreme goal while shamelessly undermining and assaulting Cuba's sovereign right to trade without extraterritorial interference.

Why Cuba buys oil from Venezuela

Cuba and Venezuela initiated the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America-Trade Treaty of the People ([ALBA-TCP](#)) in 2004 as a “political, economic, and social alliance in defense of independence, self-determination and the identity of peoples comprising it.”

An offshoot of the ALBA-TCP cooperative association is [PetroCaribe](#), a program to “provide low-interest oil sales to nearby countries facing expensive imports” from imperialist-dominated oil monopolies.

Can Cuba buy oil from the United States? No, by U.S. law, Cuba can only buy food and medicine from the U.S. Even those purchases are often impossible because international banks are fearful of being fined for conducting legal financial transactions.

What about other Western Hemisphere oil producers? Mexico, Brazil and Colombia all depend on business relationships with the U.S. Even if they had the will to sell oil

to Cuba, their partnership with U.S. multinational corporations prevents it.

Cuba's oil deliveries will continue to arrive. Because of the unilateral U.S. economic, financial and commercial blockade, the fuel will cost more, taking resources from other needs of the Cuban people.

Behind U.S. government slanders

Big Oil wants to keep prices high and seeks to control Venezuela's oil and other natural resources to keep it that way. But for Venezuela, promoting a solidarity economy by providing low-cost oil to small neighbors, and giving voices and inclusion to the Indigenous, Afro-descendants, workers, women and poor farmers, is important.

By building and providing 2.8 million homes so the poorest Venezuelan families have dignity, while in the U.S. developers gentrify cities and force working families to live on the street, Venezuela shows another world is possible.

Working with Cuba's advanced medical capabilities and development brings Cuban doctors to Venezuelans who had never had health care, and builds medical schools to train more doctors. It includes partnering with Cuba to restore sight to [nearly 50,000 people](#) through Operation Milagro surgeries.

It means teaching everyone to read. Illiteracy was eliminated in 2005, as certified by UNESCO.

Venezuela's oil profits partnered with Cuba's medical and educational strength have helped millions of people lead better lives.

The corporate press uses code words like "dictator," "corruption" and "tyrant" to hide these truths that can be very appealing to workers and oppressed nations inside the U.S., where, for many, life is not so great, and getting worse.

The union adage “an injury to one is an injury to all” and “solidarity” live in Cuba and Venezuela. But in the U.S., schools teach self-marketing and individual achievement, plus the false wonders of a “free market” where wealth and benefits go to the already wealthy.

The climate catastrophe threatening all life on earth moved hundreds of thousands of youth into the streets on Sept. 20. Many already understand that the profit-before-people capitalist system perpetuates climate deniers and blocks changes that are needed now, not later. International cooperation and socialism, where humanity is the priority, are becoming a realistic and necessary alternative in the eyes and hearts of many.

Solidarity and unity are Cuba’s secret weapons. Solidarity is Venezuela’s shield against the multiple U.S.-inspired coup attempts this year alone. Both of these sovereign and independent countries are resisting the economic war waged by the huge U.S. economic bully that is cruelly attempting to starve people into embracing capitalism. We have only to look at Haiti and Puerto Rico to see the real “wonders” promised by capitalist exploitation.

On Nov. 6 and 7, Cuba’s resolution to end the U.S. blockade will come before the United Nations General Assembly. The people of the world will vote to #UnblockCuba as they have annually since 1992.

It is up to us in the U.S. to #UnblockCuba. Plan now to come to New York or organize in your community. Together we can do it.



‘Cuba cannot be intimidated’: behind U.S. expulsion of diplomats

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Statement of Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations

Last September 12, the United States Mission to the United Nations in New York sent a communication to our Permanent Mission to the above global organization informing that two Cuban diplomatic officials had carried out activities outside their official capacity which were considered harmful to the United States.

The aforementioned communication stated that, unless Cuba provided information to justify otherwise, within 48 hours it would be requested to make the necessary arrangements for the departure of the two officials and their families before the end of September 20, 2019.

The Cuban Mission responded before the expiration of the period granted, specifically within 24 hours after receipt of the communication. However, the U.S.

side, in flagrant violation of basic principles of diplomatic protocol, decided to respond by means of a tweet. This was done despite the fact that the consultation channel between the two Missions had been open since the beginning of the process.

In addition to the decision to unjustifiably expel the two Cuban diplomats, the said tweet also announced the aggravation of the illegal policy of restriction of movement to which the personnel from the Permanent Mission to the United Nations has historically been subjected, in clear violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Agreement regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations.

The Permanent Mission of Cuba categorically rejects the unjustified expulsion of its diplomats and the tightening of the policy of restrictions on the movement for its officials accredited in New York and their families.

At the same time, it denounces that the situation created seeks to provoke a diplomatic escalation that will lead to the closing of the bilateral embassies; to intensify even more the genocidal economic, financial and commercial blockade against the people of Cuba; and to hinder the battle the island is waging against it at the United Nations, only a few days before the beginning of the 74th session of the General Assembly.

The government of the United States intends to tarnish the prestige of Cuban revolutionary diplomacy, using the vulgar slander that the Cuban diplomats carried out acts incompatible with their diplomatic status.

With these actions, the U.S. government intensifies its hostile policy against the island, openly launching itself onto a provocative and interfering path against Cuba. It continues to ignore that the principles of Cuban diplomacy are not negotiable.

The new aggressions against the people, whom they have not been able to subdue

after 60 years of heroic resistance, are an act of revenge and impotence. Cuba cannot be intimidated, neither with these nor with other provocations. Cuba will not renounce to fight for its independence and sovereignty. Cuba knows that it has right on her side and that it relies on the unity and determination to fight of its entire people and the support of the international community.

New York, September 19, 2019



‘Cuba no podrá ser intimidada’: Declaración de la Mision Permanente ante Naciones Unidas

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Declaración de la Mision Permanente de Cuba ante Naciones Unidas

El pasado 12 de septiembre, la Misión de los Estados Unidos ante la Organización de Naciones Unidas, en Nueva York, hizo llegar a nuestra Misión ante dicha

organización internacional una comunicación informando que dos funcionarios diplomáticos cubanos habían desarrollado actividades fuera de su capacidad oficial, consideradas como lesivas hacia los Estados Unidos.

La Nota planteaba que, a menos que Cuba brindase información para justificar lo contrario, en un plazo de 48 horas se le pediría que hiciese las gestiones necesarias para la partida de los dos funcionarios y de sus familiares, antes del fin del día 20 de septiembre del 2019.

La Misión de Cuba respondió antes del vencimiento del plazo otorgado, específicamente en las 24 horas posteriores al recibimiento de la comunicación. Sin embargo, la parte estadounidense, en flagrante violación de principios básicos del protocolo diplomático, decidió responder mediante un twit. Ello, a pesar de que el canal de consultas entre ambas Misiones se encontraba abierto desde el inicio del proceso.

Junto a la decisión de expulsar injustificadamente a los dos diplomáticos cubanos, dicho twit también anunció el agravamiento de la ilegal política de restricción de movimiento a la que históricamente ha estado sometido el personal de la Misión Permanente ante las Naciones Unidas, en franca trasgresión de la Convención de Viena sobre relaciones diplomáticas y el Acuerdo relativo a la sede de la Organización de las Naciones Unidas.

La Misión Permanente de Cuba rechaza categóricamente la expulsión injustificada de sus diplomáticos y el recrudecimiento de la política de restricción de movimiento para todo su personal acreditado en Nueva York y sus familiares.

Al propio tiempo, denuncia que la situación creada tiene como objetivo provocar una escalada diplomática que lleve al cierre de las embajadas bilaterales; endurecer aún más el genocida bloqueo económico, financiero y comercial contra el pueblo de Cuba y entorpecer la batalla que la Isla despliega contra el mismo en Naciones

Unidas, a solo pocos días del comienzo del 74 periodo de sesiones de la Asamblea General.

El gobierno de los Estados Unidos pretende afectar el prestigio de la diplomacia revolucionaria cubana, usando la vulgar calumnia de que los diplomáticos cubanos realizaron actos incompatibles con su status.

Con estas acciones, el gobierno estadounidense arrecia su hostil política contra la isla, lanzándose abiertamente a un curso provocador e injerencista contra Cuba. Continúa desconociendo que los principios de la diplomacia cubana no se negocian.

Las nuevas agresiones contra el pueblo, al que no han podido doblegar tras 60 años de heroica resistencia, son un acto de venganza e impotencia. Cuba no podrá ser intimidada, ni con estas ni con otras provocaciones. Cuba no renunciará a luchar por su independencia y su soberanía. Cuba sabe que le asiste la razón y que cuenta con la unidad y la decisión de lucha de todo su pueblo y el respaldo de la comunidad internacional.

Nueva York, 19 de septiembre de 2019.



Twitter Blocks Cuban Media: What are they Afraid Of?

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Sept. 12 — For more than 60 years now, Cuba has been a victim of a brutal U.S. commercial, financial and economic blockade. Now, in a blatant act of mass censorship and blockage of internet access, Twitter has pulled the plug on all the

major Cuban news outlets, government ministries and just about all the leading journalists on the island. [See the Cuban News Agency (ACN) article below for a complete listing.]

It is not a coincidence that it happened last night at the same time that Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel started explaining on the well watched nightly TV program “Mesa Redonda” about the new measures of the Trump administration against Cuba and how it has brought about a severe shortage of diesel fuel affecting amongst other things the trucking of produce to market.

While Twitter is indicating that these accounts had violated provisions of their use agreement, and as a separate business it can decide to close accounts at any time, this act of sabotage is clearly at the direction of the U.S. State Department. Millions of dollars are now being directed through the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) for projects in Cuba just like this one, whose goal is thought control and the muzzling of Cuba’s voice in the battle of ideas, where they have been winning.

It is ironic that the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees freedom of expression — apparently except when the message is anti-imperialist in nature. The response of the U.S. media to the Twitter attack against Cuba has been minimal to none, with no outcry for free speech. As investigative reporter Dan Cohen said on his Twitter account: “Twitter just suspended the accounts of the biggest media outlets in Cuba and has given no reason. This is the equivalent of silencing CNN, Fox, WaPo and NPR’s accounts, but Cuba is a target of the Empire, so these arbitrary suspensions don’t generate outrage.”

Without a doubt, the U.S. and Cuban media are very different. They represent different systems and ways to communicate. For instance, the Cuban government uses TV as an honest deductive educational tool to communicate to the entire population about their history and current situations that affect them and to discuss ways to prepare and plan for the future. TV in the U.S., on the other hand, is all

about selling products and news designed to confuse.

So why are the Empire and its compliant media so afraid of the Cuban media and the Cuban media's message? Could it be as Rosa Miriam Elizalde, vice president of the Union of Cuban Journalists, said, "The Cuban media are doing a good job in reporting the truth and the reality of Cuba"?

The time has come not only to complain and denounce Twitter's arbitrary decisions by order of their masters, but to think how we can design a communicational platform independent of corporate media control that can serve all peoples and media around the globe.

Coincidentally or not, the Twitter account of Resumen Latinoamericano in English was also suspended at the same time. We wrote to Twitter to find out why and are waiting for a response.

Following is the Statement of the Cuban Union of Journalists (UPEC) about the censorship that took place yesterday.

UPEC statement: Twitter massively censors journalists and media in Cuba

On Wednesday afternoon, dozens of Twitter accounts of Cuban journalists and media were blocked by the platform, a few minutes before the television appearance of President Miguel Díaz Canel and other top Cuban government officials began. For an hour and a half, they exhaustively presented emergency economic measures in response to the intensification of U.S. economic warfare against our country.

As soon as the live broadcast of the program Roundtable began at 6:30 p.m. (local time) to millions of expectant Cubans, dozens of professionals denounced through Facebook, Whatsapp and other social media channels that their Twitter accounts had been suspended. They could access their timeline, but the options "like," "retweet" and "comment" were blocked.

Among the media blocked “for violating Twitter rules” are @Cubadebate with almost 300,000 followers and @Granma_Digital with about 167,000 followers, in addition to @MesaRedondaCuba, @RadioRebelde, @DominioCuba, @Cubaperiodistas, @CanalCaribe, @RadioHabanaCuba, among other users, which include active journalists.

Several professionals also complained on Facebook about the closure of their channels on Twitter. They suspended, for example, all the accounts of Cubadebate’s journalists and directors, without exception, as well as those of Leticia Martínez (@leticiadecuba) and Angélica Paredes (@aparedesrebelde), of the president’s press team; that of the first vice president of the Union of Cuban Journalists, Rosa Miriam Elizalde (@elizalderosa), and of Granma’s journalist, Enrique Moreno Gimeranez (@GimeranezEm), among others.

“It seems to be a concerted operation of false denunciations for abusive use and violation of platform policies. It reveals the political bias, the selectivity of the affected users and the opportunism: when President Díaz Canel speaks,” Elizalde wrote.

In addition, the institutional account of the Ministry of Communications (@MINCOMCuba) and that of government officials, such as Yaira Jiménez Roig (@yairajr), director of Communication and Image of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, were also blocked. Also, the director of the National Center for Sexual Education, Mariela Castro Espín (@CastroEspinM).

This is not the first time that Cuban Twitter users have reported problems logging into their accounts and have received messages that their accounts have been blocked and that they should follow the procedure to recover them. What is new is the massiveness of this obviously planned act of cyber warfare, which seeks to limit the freedom of expression of Cuban institutions and citizens, and to silence the leaders of the Revolution.

The State Department's Internet Task Force for Cuba last June issued its recommendations to use the network as a subversion highway in Cuba. It has proposed giving more funds to open digital sites, generate "attractive content" on the net, provide scholarships and finance a cyber militancy trained in harassment, lies and political assassination, which is not usually affected by this type of Twitter actions.

The Cuban Union of Journalists strongly denounces the disappearance of these spaces for the expression of ideas, in an act of massive censorship of journalists, editors and media. We demand the immediate re-establishment of the blocked accounts that, in no instance, have violated Twitter policies. Meanwhile the platform flagrantly tramples on the rights of communicators, prevents them from carrying out their work and tries to muzzle a first-rate news event in our country.

National Presidency of the Union of Journalists of Cuba

Source: ACN

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Venceremos Brigade — 50 years of solidarity

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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The 50th Venceremos Brigade to Cuba departed from Bayamo, capital of Granma Province, Aug. 8, on a sunny, warm, humid morning. Thus began the final week of the three-week celebration of the first International Solidarity Brigade with the Cuban Revolution half a century ago.

Already behind us is the official celebration on July 30 in the tree shaded courtyard at the Institute for Friendship with the Peoples. New and veteran brigadistas heard from Leslie Cagan, an early brigade founder; ICAP president and Cuban 5 hero Fernando González Llort; and reunited with old friends and comrades.

Behind us are the two weeks of working and learning at the rural Julio Antonio Mella International Camp. There, we picked the green beans that we ate for dinner,

maintained the campgrounds and drank coconut water from coconuts opened with machetes. Behind us is our visit to the city of Camagüey.

Next, in Santiago, the African roots of the Cuban revolution, nation and culture are further explored. In Guantánamo, we will see and learn up close the damage done by the illegal U.S. occupation of the naval base straddling the entrance to the large bay.

In 1969, hundreds of youth from the U.S. anti-imperialist, anti-Vietnam war and Black Liberation struggles overcame the U.S. blockade. The brigades at that time traveled via Canada or Mexico, sometimes on converted cattle ships, to work alongside Cuban women and men.

This year, 2019, the brigade recognized—as Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel affirmed recently—that everyone who travels to Cuba today is breaking the blockade. So all 160 brigadistas departed and returned using the direct U.S.-Cuba flights from U.S. airports.

Veterans of the early brigades remembered their inspiration from international delegations, cutting cane with Vietnamese and Korean comrades, learning about the fight against apartheid in South Africa.

In addition to cutting cane, earlier brigades worked in citrus orchards and the construction of housing, schools and the Pan American games facilities. VB50 was welcomed into the Cuban homes constructed by earlier brigades, invited by the Committees to Defend the Revolution to share an evening of dance and song.

The 50th Brigade maintained the Julio Antonio Mella International Camp, picked green beans, pulled vines off lime trees and cut grass with machetes. Visits to cooperative gardens educated us about Cuba's remarkable ecologically sustainable practices, including bee keeping.

Remarkable journey

This 50th Anniversary Brigade program was a once-in-a-lifetime journey through Cuban history, traversing the country from the western provinces of Pinar del Río to the far eastern Guantánamo — the site of the territory illegally occupied by the U.S. Naval base and the torture chamber prison.

More than through distance, the 50th Venceremos Brigade reached back through centuries to the resistance of Indigenous people all but exterminated and the rebellions of Africans brought against their will to slave in mines and on sugar plantations.

In El Cobre—where VB50 shared the morning with a Committee to Defend the Revolution—a monument to the Cimarrón, or Memorial to the Rebellious Slave, reaches to the sky from a hilltop. The same noted Cuban artist who designed the stunning statue of Antonio Maceo at Santiago's Revolution Square, Alberto Lescay, crafted this monument. He personally welcomed the brigadistas to his gallery for music and discussion. The powerful rebellion of Africans enslaved to mine copper here forced the Spanish Crown in 1831 to grant them freedom.

In honor and recognition of Cuba's African roots, Cuba's military aid to Angola that broke the back of white supremacist apartheid in South Africa, was named Operation Carlotta, for the martyred woman leader of the 1843 Triunvirato Rebellion in Matanzas.

Of special note was the visit to La Demajagua, the former plantation of Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, where, on Oct. 10, 1868, the plantation owner declared the enslaved African workers were free. Together they would be strong enough to free all of Cuba from Spanish colonialism — beginning the 10 Years' War, which ultimately led to Cuban independence. This, in fact, is viewed as the beginning of the united struggle that culminated on Jan. 1, 1959.

How different from the U.S., where, in nearly 250 years since the U.S. Declaration of

Independence, there has been no accounting for the original suppression of Indigenous people and accumulation of capital from the free labor of enslaved Africans. And no uniting of all to fight for the benefit of all, a foundation for real equity.

Céspedes' Mambi army

In Bayamo, VB50's welcome in Céspedes Square included the recitation of important historical facts. The first declaration in Bayamo, in December 1868, following its liberation from Spain, ended slavery, reinforcing Céspedes' appeal at La Demajagua. When the Spanish army retook the town, they found only ashes. The people of Bayamo demonstrated their revolutionary spirit, desire for independence and self-determination by burning their city to the ground rather than be subjugated again.

This is something that U.S. imperialism needs to bear in mind as it attempts to suffocate both Cuba and Venezuela. It is no accident that the Cuban national anthem after 1959 remained La Bayamesa. The lyrics and author are memorialized in Bayamo's central square.

Revolutionary Santiago

The cradle of the independence wars against Spain is the eastern Cuban provinces of formerly Oriente (now Granma), Santiago, Guantánamo, La Tunas and Holguín. But Santiago is also where the July 26, 1953, attack on the Moncada Barracks began the march to the Jan. 1, 1959, victory of independence.

A visit to the mangrove swamp, where the overloaded yacht Granma disembarked Fidel and some 80 other fighters, makes the physical hurdles recounted in books a reality previously unimaginable. Without machetes, carrying supplies and weapons, how did they make their way through the tangle of roots, branches and razor grass, brigadistas wondered?

A concrete paved road winds up the mountain to the national park entrance for a trek to Fidel's mountain command post, the Comandancia de la Plata, and the tallest point in Cuba, Turquino. The concrete road was not there in 1956, more than doubling the length on foot or by donkey to the Comandancia.

As we switched out of our tour buses into smaller vans for the trip to the trail head, we received a special treat, a performance of the Rebel Quintet — a musical family who played and sang for the revolution. All, except for one who died recently and was replaced by a grandson, still wear their olive green uniforms and play their songs for the revolution.

The Moncada Barracks itself still bears the bullet holes from 1953. Now, in addition to a museum, it is a school where two thousand students study. The Latin American School of Medicine, where young doctors study, including some from underserved U.S. communities, is also a transformed military base.

Guantánamo is more than the prison

A fact emphasized to us more than once during our visit to Guantánamo province and its provincial capital, Guantánamo city: Guantánamo is more than a prison and more than the U.S. naval base. From two vantage points in Cuban territory we viewed the U.S. base. In Caimanera, a small Cuban town near the base, we watched



All Guantánamo is Ours, a short video featuring the words of Caimanera residents, historians and students who describe the current and

historic damage suffered by Guantánamo residents from the U.S. occupation of their territory.

We prepared to leave Cuba on Fidel Castro's 93rd birthday. We remembered Fidel with workers at a pharmaceutical plant where we collectively unveiled portraits of Cuban heroes and martyrs in the main hallway. We placed flowers at the huge granite rock that holds Fidel's ashes, but isn't large enough to represent the vision and example that another socialist world is possible, is winnable. We have work to do.

Join us at the [international anti-imperialist conference](#), Nov. 1-3 in Havana, Cuba.

And mark these dates: Nov. 6, when the United Nations General Assembly votes to condemn the U.S. blockade; March 2020, the National Conference in New York City to Normalize Relations with Cuba; and the 15th May Day Brigade and 51st Venceremos Brigade.

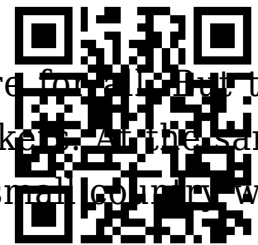
Let's go to Cuba. Let's end the U.S. blockade. ¡Sí, se puede!

1199SEIU retiree says Cuban travel restrictions will reverse progress

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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A letter to the 1199 Magazine, 1199SEIU United Healthcare Workers, from an 1199 retiree. It was printed in the July/August issue, which goes out to about 400,000 members and retirees.

Working people all over the country are demanding healthcare for all. But the Trump Administration is trying to cut back health care for workers. At the same time, Trump is trying to economically strangle the people of a small country who years ago actually achieved free, universal healthcare.



I recently had the opportunity to visit Cuba as part of a people-to-people delegation representing more than 30 countries. We learned much on the trip, including that over the years, the Cuban government has implemented very successful universal free education and healthcare programs. Cuba has also sent thousands of doctors and other health workers and educators to many poor countries to provide services

for the under-served. Students from many countries, including the U.S., who want to become doctors but can't afford medical school can go to Cuba to receive a free medical education. In return, Cuba asks these new doctors to commit to providing healthcare to under-served communities in their home countries.

If a small, poor country like Cuba can do these things, why can't we do them here?

These programs are enormously popular in Cuba and among poor and working people all over the world, but not with billionaires and their allies. When we demand free universal healthcare and free universal education here they tell us these are too expensive. After seeing America's Cuba policy fail for decades, the Obama administration eased some of the worst restrictions on travel and trade. The Cuban people I met on my trip were very concerned that Trump's re-enforcement of the blockade will hurt them and their children. Yet, many people also insisted that the economic hardships imposed by the blockade will never force them to give up the healthcare, education, women's rights and ban on institutional racism that they have fought so hard to win.

Trump and his billionaire buddies are making travel harder again because they want to keep people here misinformed about life in Cuba and keep people from the U.S. from seeing what workers can really achieve. I encourage 1199ers to tell their elected representatives to restore our rights to freedom of travel. The U.S. needs to stop punishing Cuba and countries like it for defying the billionaires.

Hillel Cohen
1199 Retiree, NYC



On July 26, Cuba has a lot to Be Proud Of

written by Struggle - La Lucha
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Today marks the 66th anniversary of the simultaneous assaults on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba and the military garrison in Bayamo led by Fidel Castro and less than 200 combatants in what is known as the impossible storming of the heavens against the brutal U.S. puppet dictator Fulgencio Bautista, who in the 7 years before the Revolution, carried out a reign of misery and poverty punctuated by torturing and executing 20,000 Cubans.

The attacks marked a new stage of Cuba's quest for independence and sovereignty that is deeply ingrained in all Cubans. Fidel, however, made it clear that July 26 was not the beginning of the revolution; that was born in 1868 when Manuel Cespedes freed his slaves marking the beginning of the Wars of Independence against Spain. Heroic Moncada, which today serves as a middle school, was a dramatic reawakening of a flame that the Imperial powers could never extinguish.

For the Cuban people July 26 is a day of great pride for all the gains they have made through determination and sacrifice against all the nonstop attacks and a unilateral blockade by the United States that has remained in place throughout the last 12 presidents.

The ideals and principles of July 26 remain vibrant in Cuba and can be seen in the legacy of a people whose example has raised the bar of human conduct between each other and nations too. While insistent and determined in maintaining their sovereignty Cuba is the first to make and promote respectful agreements based on what is mutually beneficial with other nations while constantly promoting world peace as a goal.

Cuba opens its arms to the world not to profit off it but to make it a better place. Fidel Castro was the first world leader to sound an alarm about the global climate crisis back in the 1980's. When it comes to health and education Cuba is not just interested in that for their own country but for others too. Cuba is rightfully proud to export teachers to help combat illiteracy and has medical brigades working in 66 developing countries.

Just this past week Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) graduated another 500 doctors from 84 countries most of whom received full scholarships. Brought into existence in 1999 by the Cuban government, ELAM has graduated nearly 30,000 doctors from 115 countries in those 20 years including 170 from the United States, whose only cost was a moral one to go back and work in a community of need. This is not a token public relations program but one that has become the largest medical school in the world and a project that the Cuban people have given to the world.

The World Health Organization has reported that Cuba has 9 doctors per thousand inhabitants where the United States has 2.3 doctors per thousand. And the Cuban Ministry of Health has just announced that Cuba, a country of 11 million, has over

2,000 of its citizens who are right now over 100 years old. This is not a fluke but rather the priority of a society that never discards people even after they are no longer productive, or are living with a disability. All Cubans at all levels and capacity have access to health, education, culture, sports etc. to keep them fully engaged their entire life.

A Save Our Children report has ranked Cuba as the safest country in Latin America to be a child or adolescent (not to mention visit). And UNICEF has declared that Cuba, despite the blockade, has no malnutrition. Cuba has eliminated Malaria through its preventative health model, Cuba has eliminated mother to child HIV transmission, Cuba has invented a new drug that arrests lung cancer, Cuba's infant mortality rate per 1000 is 4, Cuba's life expectancy is close to 80, social indicators better than many developed countries including the US; and on and on.

So let's ask the question once again, why is it there is so much sustained hatred coming from consecutive administrations? Well, it's because Cuba provides an inconvenient good example of what collective striving for a better world looks like. An example that was catapulted onto the world stage with the attack on the Moncada Barracks, July 26, 1953.

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November anti-imperialist solidarity conference in Cuba

written by Struggle - La Lucha
October 4, 2019

Anti-imperialist Meeting of Solidarity, for Democracy and against Neoliberalism.

Havana, November 1-3/2019.

The Anti-imperialist Meeting of Solidarity, for Democracy and against Neoliberalism will take place in Havana from November 1 to 3 of this year, organized by the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), Central Organization of Cuban Trade Unions (CTC), along with the Cuban Chapter of Social Movements and the Continental Conference for Democracy and against Neoliberalism.

The meeting in Havana expresses the Cuban Revolution's decision to respond to the demand of the political, social left-wing and the Solidarity Movement with Cuba that our country continues to be a meeting point of the peoples struggles in our continent.

We have proposed the event to be a real contribution to confronting the current counterrevolutionary offensive of US imperialism, to the search for the widest possible unity of the leftist forces in the region and to strengthening militant solidarity with the just causes defended by the peoples. In the current political situation, marked by the aggressiveness of the Trump administration, new ways will be sought to reinforce solidarity with these causes in the world, mainly in our region.

In November, a heterogeneous representation of the United States and Canada will also be present in Havana, friends who have always been on the side of justice and who since the triumph of the Cuban Revolution have been in solidarity with us. We will also have important intellectuals, committed to the liberating struggles of the peoples.

The growing hostility against Cuba and other countries in the region, the judicial persecution of progressive leaders, the imposition of recycled neoliberalism, are distinctive features of the current North American policy towards Latin America and the Caribbean that awaken the fighting capacity of Latin American and Caribbean peoples.

In the same way, the mobilization for the occasion of hundreds of social fighters, political leaders, intellectuals, peasants, women, indigenous people, solidarity activists, among others; will constitute a formidable encouragement to the heroic resistance of the Cuban people, determined to defeat the Helms Burton Act, the blockade and to carry forward the updating of its economic and social development model.

Faced with pessimism and the claudication of some, the participants in the anti-imperialist solidarity meeting will respond with the strengthening of the struggle moral and the deep conviction that the Latin America and the Caribbean peoples will continue marching towards their second and definitive independence.

The Organizing Committee of the Anti-imperialist Meeting of Solidarity, for Democracy and against Neoliberalism, calls for an event that highlights the Cubans' best traditions of hospitality and their commitment to independence, justice, peace and fraternity among the peoples.

Those interested should send their attendance confirmation to the email address enc.jornada2019@gmail.com with a copy to AMISTUR emails direccion@amistur.cu and comercial@amistur.cu

Anti-imperialist Conference of Solidarity for Democracy and against Neoliberalism.

Havana, Cuba, November 1-3, 2019.

Program

1st day: November 1st

9.00-09: 30: Opening of the event. Tribute to Fidel.

09.30-09: 45: Words from comrade Fernando González LLort, ICAP President and the Coordinating Committee of the event.

09.45-10: 15: Audiovisual projection about Cuba, its foreign policy and solidarity.

10: 15-12: 45: MINREX speech: Cuba's foreign policy in the regional context. Fight against the blockade.

12: 45-14: 45: Lunch

15: 00- 17:00: Panel: Challenges of the left in the current regional scenario before the imperialist offensive.

17: 15-19.15: Anti-imperialist tribune in support of just causes.

- Closing of the tribune with Cuban troubadours and foreigners participating in the event.

2nd day: November 2

09.00- 09.15: Audiovisual material presentation

09: 15- 10:45: Panel: Challenges for a solidarity articulation of our struggles.

10: 45- 11:00: Break

11: 00- 13: 15: Working in Thematic Commissions.

- Solidarity with Cuba and other just causes.
- Peoples before free trade and transnationals.
- Decolonization and cultural war.
- Youth: strategies and continuity in struggles.
- Democracy, sovereignty and anti-imperialism.
- Strategic communication and social struggle.
- Integration, identities and common struggles.

1:30 - 3:00: Lunch

14:00 - 15:00 Anti-imperialist Twitterstorm

15: 00 - 16:30 Working in Thematic Commissions

16.30 - 18.00 Coordination Meetings

3rd day: November 3

09: 00- 12:00: Process of articulation in Plenary.

- Presentation of working Commissions.

12: 00- 13:45: Lunch

14:00 -16: 00: Closing Plenary.

- Presentation and approval of the Action Plan Project.
- Closing speech.

16:00 - 18:00: Cultural Gala.

