



CUBA Newsletter

Winter 2007 (2)

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Newsletter Contributions

We welcome contributions to the Cuba Newsletter. If you would like submit an article, please contact the Newsletter Coordinator by email at:

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SECRETARY'S REPORT

In his 1960 essay, *On Revolutionary Medicine*, Che Guevara posed the question: *How does one unite individual endeavour with the needs of society?* He went on to explain: *"For this task of organisation, as for all revolutionary tasks, fundamentally, it is the individual who is needed. The revolution does not, as some claim, standardise the collective will and the collective initiative. On the contrary, it liberates one's individual talent. What the revolution does is orient that talent. And our task now is to orient the creative abilities of all medical professionals toward the tasks of social medicine."* Because of the priorities embodied in its unique social system, Cuba has succeeded in making quality healthcare a right for all people in the country, not a privilege for those who can afford it. By making free, accessible health and education a priority of the revolution, Cuba is making Che's words a reality. Cuba has also undertaken significant humanitarian efforts around the world. Cuban assistance in many areas including Africa, Asia and Latin America as well as current initiatives in partnership with the Venezuelan government, have seen enormous social advances including in health and education. Amongst the 2100 recent graduates from the Latin American School of Medicine in Cuba, there were 8 from ethnic minorities in the US. All students receive six years of free training in medicine and return to their own countries to work in poor communities.

We don't need to look far to see why it is that a small Third World country like Cuba can achieve so much while rich countries such as our own have huge inequalities in health and health care. Social inequality has been shown to affect health in the most profound ways. In this country, the indigenous population's life expectancy is 20 years less than that of the non-indigenous population. There are enormous health problems and limited access to healthcare for indigenous and many other people in this country. The shameful neglect of indigenous health and wellbeing and the talking up of draconian measures inflicted on an already vulnerable group as an election draws near only underlines the difference between a society built on private profit and one that can 'liberate individual talent' into the service of humanity. We can learn from Cuba.

You can hear more about the work of Cuban medical teams in Timor-Leste and elsewhere at our Solidarity with Cuba dinner on August 18. All proceeds go towards the tour of Leonard Weinglass, lawyer for the Cuban Five political prisoners in the US. Enclosed you'll find a leaflet with details about this event. It should be a great night and a unique opportunity to learn more about a system that puts people before profits.

And for the experience of a lifetime, don't forget this year's Work/Study Brigade to Cuba. It focuses on Cuba's environmental achievements and includes a trip to Santiago de Cuba and a tour of the Cuban part of Guantanamo Bay (overlooking the US-held part where their concentration camp is illegally established). Have a look at the enclosed leaflet and please contact us if you would like more information.

It is with deep sadness that we note the passing on July 2, 2007, of Australia Cuba Friendship Society member, Gail Lord. Gail was a founding member of the Democratic Socialist Party and a lifelong activist for socialism. She worked untiringly for the rights of oppressed people, both in Australia and internationally. Gail was a tolerant and caring person with a great sense of humour, an optimistic outlook and a deep understanding and commitment to internationalism. She treated everyone equally and never patronised anyone or made them feel stupid, inferior or ignorant and we knew that in the struggle for justice and equality, Gail would always be standing strong. Condolences from the Australia Cuba Friendship Society go to Gail's family, friends and comrades. Gail was a friend of Cuba, a great comrade and a good person and she will indeed be greatly missed.

I look forward to seeing you at an upcoming ACFS event or meeting.
In solidarity, Joan Silk

UPCOMING APPEALS HEARING FOR THE MIAMI FIVE

By Cort Greene
Fri Jul 20, 2007

For almost nine years, Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramon Labañino, Fernando González, and René González have been imprisoned in the United States for fighting against terrorism.

On August 20th in Atlanta, two judges from the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals will be hearing arguments on over 20 irregularities that occurred during this political show trial, ranging from venue prejudice, prosecutorial misconduct, governmental lowering in its burden of proof of espionage conspiracy, errors in sentencing instructions given to the jury, and relevant discovery principles.

While U.S. imperialism fights its so-called "War on Terrorism", it is the height of hypocrisy that these men, who committed no crime nor harmed to the people of North America, only taking non-violent action to find and stop the perpetrators of terrorism against Cuba, Venezuela and other countries, find themselves in this situation to begin with.

In the United States, a country that declares itself based on the "rule of law", there are over 800 organisations of a violent nature. Some of these groups have been trained, financed and given carte blanche by the government and its sycophants in Miami. Paramilitary groups like the F-4 Commandos and Alpha 66, among many others, have training camps in the Everglades.

Carter Cornick, a retired counter terrorism expert for the FBI, has said that Posada was involved "up to his eyeballs" in planning these attacks, and at the time of the bombing, Venezuelan police found maps and other evidence in his home. Recently released FBI/CIA documents confirm his presence at these planning meetings. It is also ironic that the "anti-terrorist" Bush family has played a major role in these tragedies. George Bush Sr. was head of the CIA during the D.C. bombing, and he pardoned Orlando Bosch, Posada's

cohort in these acts while he served as President.

In 2002, as governor of Florida, Jeb Bush appointed Orlando Bosch's attorney, Raoul Cantero to the Florida Supreme Court. Cantero is the grandson of Cuban dictator Fulgenico Batista.

The Miami Five have been denied their basic human rights during their incarceration, and some have even not been able to receive visits from their wives. The bias is clear.

The U.S. ruling class tolerates terrorism if it is directed against those it considers its enemies.

We demand the extradition of the likes of Posada Carriles to stand trial in Venezuela and freedom for the Miami Five! Hands off Cuba and Venezuela!

Luis Posada Carriles, a known terrorist and a CIA operative, is a fugitive from justice in Venezuela; and yet he sits in comfort in Miami and

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he has been given a de facto pardon by U.S. government despite his role in the bombing of a civilian Cuban airliner flying from Caracas to Cuba, killing all 73 people on board. He is also wanted for committing acts of torture while working for the DISIP in Venezuela, and for the 1976 car bombing of former Chilean government minister Orlando Letelier and U.S. citizen Roni Moffitt in Washington, D.C. This bombing ranks as one the worst acts of foreign terrorism on U.S. soil.

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GET INVOLVED! HELP BUILD THE LEONARD WEINGLASS TOUR IN AUSTRALIA

The Leonard Weinglass Tour Committee is a network of community based organisations, political groups and activists established to organise a speaking tour of U.S. based Attorney, Leonard Weinglass. Weinglass is the Attorney for Antonio Guerrero, one of five Cuban revolutionaries framed and imprisoned by the US government since 1998. In his long career, Weinglass has defended many high profile political activists, including Angela Davis and Mumia Abu Jamal.

The aim of the Committee and the tour is to raise awareness of the case of the Cuban Five and build a stronger international campaign for their release in Australia.

At this stage we anticipate that Weinglass will visit Australia and New Zealand in early April 2008.

To date our efforts have focused on fundraising to cover tour costs such as flights, venues and publicity.

How can you help?

We need support from all members and friends. Come to an organising meeting or alternatively make a donation to the tour fund. If you would like to assist, contact us by email: freethefive@yahoo.com or call 0424 652 802.

VILMA ESPIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE STRUGGLE

Fidel Castro Ruz
June 20, 2007

Vilma is dead. Even though the news was expected, it was still an impact. Out of respect for her delicate health condition, I never raised her name in my reflections.

Vilma's example today is more necessary than ever. She devoted her entire life to the struggle for women's rights when in Cuba most women were discriminated against as human beings, the same as in the rest of the world, with only the honourable revolutionary exceptions.

It was not always this way throughout the historical evolution of our species, leading her to fulfil the social role befitting her as a natural workshop where life is forged.

In our country, women came out from under one of the most horrible forms of society that of a Yankee neo-colony under the aegis of imperialism and its system, where everything that the human being is capable of creating was turned into merchandise. When what has been defined as the exploitation of man by man started far back in history, the mothers and children of the dispossessed bore the brunt of the burden.

Cuban women used to work as domestic servants, or in luxurious shops and bourgeois bars, selected for their good looks. Factories assigned them the simplest jobs, the ones that were the most repetitive and worst paid.

In education and healthcare --services provided on a small scale-- their indispensable cooperation was as teachers and nurses who had only been offered basic training. The country, 2,009.92 miles from end to end, only had one higher education centre located in the capital and later, several faculties in university campuses in two other provinces. As a rule, the only young women who could study there were those from the most affluent families. In many

activities, the presence of a woman was not even dreamed of.

For almost half a century, I have been witness to Vilma's struggles. I cannot forget her presence at the meetings of the July 26 Movement in the Sierra Maestra. She was eventually sent by the movement's directorate to carry out an important mission on the Second Eastern Front. Vilma did not shrink from any danger.

After the triumph of the Revolution, she began her ceaseless battle for the rights of Cuban women and children, which led her to found and lead the Federation of Cuban Women. There was no national or international forum too distant for her to attend in defence of her assailed homeland and of the noble and just ideas of the Revolution.

Her gentle voice, steady and timely, was always listened to with great respect in Party, State and mass organization meetings.



Today women in Cuba make up 66 percent of the technical work force of the country, and they take part, in the main, in almost all the university degree courses. Previously, there were hardly any women involved in scientific activities, since science

and scientists did not exist, but exceptionally. In this field as well, today women are in the majority.

Revolutionary duties and her immense work load never prevented Vilma from fulfilling her responsibilities as a loyal wife and mother of several children.

Vilma is dead. Long live Vilma!

VILMA ESPIN: BIOGRAPHY

Vilma was born in Santiago de Cuba on April 7, 1930. From a young age she assumed political and revolutionary positions, actively participating in the student demonstrations following the coup d'etat carried out by Batista in 1952.

From that time, she was an inseparable collaborator of Frank Pais, joining organisations founded by him until the members of what was then called the National Revolutionary

Action joined the ranks of the 26th of July Movement.

The doors of her home were opened to protect the comrades who attacked the Moncada Barracks and persecuted by the Batista regime.

After finishing a post-graduate course in the United States, Vilma stopped in Mexico to meet with Fidel, receiving instructions and messages. Under the direct orders of Frank Pais, she took part in the armed uprising of Santiago de Cuba on November 30, 1956, in support of the expeditionary force arriving on the Granma yacht. Following that important action she converted her home into the headquarters of the revolutionary movement in Santiago de Cuba.

A member of the National Leadership of the 26th of July Movement, she was named the Provincial Coordinator of the clandestine organization covering the eastern province of Oriente. She carried out this role until she joined the Rebel Army in June 1958.

Upon the triumph of the Revolution in 1959 among other tasks, Vilma headed the unification of women's organizations and helped establish the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC). She led the FMC until her death.

She was a member of the Central Committee of the Party from its foundation in 1965. At the Second Congress of the Party in 1980 she was elected substitute member of the Politburo. At the Third Party Congress she was promoted as a full member of the leadership, a responsibility she held until 1991. She was a member of the National Assembly since its first legislature and a member of the Council of State since its constitution.

Vilma presided over the National Commission of Prevention and Social Attention from its creation and the Commission of Children and Youth, as well as the Commission on Women's Equal Rights of the National Assembly of People's Power.

Her name will be eternally linked to the most significant conquests of Cuban women in the Revolution and as one of the most important fighters for the emancipation of women in our country and throughout the world.

FIDEL IS WORKING HARDER EVERY DAY, RAUL SAYS

26 July 2007
Prensa Latina

Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro is doing a more intense and valuable work every day, Cuban First Vice President Raul Castro said on Thursday.

Speaking at the main event on the 54th anniversary of the attacks on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Cespedes garrisons, Raul Castro said that there was not even a hint on the hard blow Cuba will get one year ago, referring to the health problems that have affected the leader of the Revolution.

He noted Fidel Castro's recovery as expressed in the Cuban leader's reflections on Cuban media, although he has never stopped contributing his wisdom and experience on each problem and cardinal decision, not even in the worst moments.



Raul Castro pointed out that top US government officials wanted unsuccessfully to take advantage of that situation to destroy the revolution.

In fact, these have been very tough months, although they have had an

effect that is completely different from what our enemies, who dreamed about the entrenchment of chaos and the collapse of Cuban socialism, were expecting.

Raul Castro pointed out that top US government officials wanted unsuccessfully to take advantage of that situation to destroy the revolution.

Those who are amazed by our people's capacity to rise to each challenge, the only attitude consistent with our history, don't know them well, he stressed.

MOORE SUBPOENAED OVER CUBA TRIP

2 August 2007
@irelandon-line.com



Michael Moore has been served with a subpoena by the US government over his controversial trip to Cuba for his latest documentary Sicko.

Moore brought men and women who had assisted in the clean-up of lower Manhattan following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to Cuba to receive free medical treatment for the ailments they have developed over the past five years.

He claims they have not received adequate medical care in the US.

Cuba is under a trade embargo from the US and a majority of Americans are not allowed to visit the island.

In May, the US Treasury Department's Office Of Foreign Assets Control started an investigation into Moore's Cuba trip and wrote to him, asking him for information about the visit.

Speaking to Jay Leno on The Tonight Show, Moore says he has been ordered to court through his lawyer David Boies.

He says: "I haven't even told my own family this yet. I was just informed when I was back there with Jay that the (George W.) Bush administration has now issued a subpoena for me, going after me for helping these 9/11 rescue workers."

Leno interjects: "No, no, for going to Cuba, not for helping them."

Moore continues: "I didn't go there like Cameron Diaz, to get a tan. I was there to help them, and now I'm going to face this further harassment from the Bush people. Aren't they busy with something else?"

Moore maintains he is exempt from the travel ban because he visited Cuba as a journalist: "A journalist can go, and this is a work of journalism. And frankly, the larger point is being missed here. The point is that first of all, can we all agree we should take care of our 9/11 rescue workers?"

The Australia Cuba Friendship Society meets at 6:30pm on the first Thursday of every month except January, at the CEPU (Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union) building, 1st floor, 741 George Street, Sydney. Meetings are open to all friends of Cuba and those interested in finding out more about Cuba. Come and join us!

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR ACFS MEMBERSHIP LATELY?

Your membership fee and donations directly support our solidarity work and community projects in Cuba. Every cent towards our work counts!

Enclosed is a \$20/\$10 (concession) for 1 year membership.

Enclosed is a donation of _____ towards the work of the Society.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Please return to ACFS, PO Box K364, HAYMARKET NSW 1240