NEWSLETTER
Amistad
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Report from the Membership Meeting



Photo: Membership Meeting participants

The CCFA Toronto membership meeting was held on May 24th, and was a success. We had a high turn out including many participants of the 2025 Che Guevara Voluntary Work Brigade. During the meeting, CCFA exec member Tess Stuber gave a thorough and heartfelt overview of this year's brigade and current conditions in Cuba. Tess spoke to the resilience of the Cuban people despite increasingly dire circumstances including insufficient state stores of food, electricity, and beyond. Despite the challenges, all 22 Brigadistas came home with a new/renewed dedication to supporting the Cuban Solidarity Movement in Canada. Several have even joined CCFA Toronto!

After Tess's updates, CCFA exec member Alexandra Moss led a dialogue session intended to be an opportunity for group discussion. By engaging in dialogue and reflecting on feedback from members, our hope is to encourage more member-involved initiatives, as well as brainstorm about future endeavours. This session proved to be quite helpful and the suggestions given by members will be utilized in the future. The highlight suggestion was that CCFA needs to communicate more with other solidarity organizations to build our network, which is a fantastic idea!

It's not too late to offer your feedback and ideas to the CCFA executive, even if you missed the meeting. Please send us an email, write us a letter, or utilize the Google form (**tinyurl.com/CCFAFeedback**) at your convenience. Thank you again to all members who attended and shared ideas, feedback, and lovely conversations.





★ CCFA TORONTO UPDATES

CCFA Brings Cuba's Family Code to Pride March



CCFA Toronto brought Cuba for the third time to Pride Toronto, the largest Pride march in North America. Carrying Cuban flags and signs saying: *Cuba's Family Code is the Most Progressive in the World, and Trans Kids Have Rights in Cuba*, our small contingent got lots of cheers and warm support from the happy crowds lining Yonge street on June 30th . We gave out **400 flyers**, outlining how Cuba's families code represents love, respect and Unity. The event was a resounding success, dramatically boosting our organization's visibility and reinforcing Cuba's leadership in LGBTQ+ rights on the global stage.



From Cuba to Palestine: CCFA Joins Nakba Day Rally



On May 17, CCFA Toronto had the honour of joining the Nakba Day rally organized by the Palestinian Youth Movement (PYM).

Nakba (Arabic for "catastrophe") marks the ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948, when the state of Israel violently displaced hundreds of thousands and systematically dismantled Palestinian society. Today, this oppression continues through apartheid, bombardment, starvation, and forced displacement, all backed by U.S. imperialism.

Cuba has stood firmly with Palestine since 1959, recognizing its struggle as part of the global fight against colonialism. Che Guevara himself visited Palestine, witnessing the brutality of occupation and affirming solidarity with its people. His legacy reminds us that Palestinian liberation is not an isolated cause but a cornerstone of anti-imperialist movements worldwide.

As an organization rooted in internationalism, CCFA Toronto members, Che Guevara Brigadistas and allies proudly marched alongside the Palestinian resistance. Our contingent was met with warmth and solidarity. We remain committed to building bridges with PYM and other anti-imperialist force, because collective action is how we win.

Viva Palestina Libre! Viva Cuba Socialista!

Reflections on the Che Guevara Brigade from the CCFA Toronto Scholarship recipients

"As a recipient of the 2025 CCFA Toronto scholarship, I was able to attend the 31st annual Che Guevara Brigade in support of the Cuban Revolution. There, I was able to witness how resilient the Cuban people are despite the U.S.'s 63-year blockade against their country.

Cubans are a beaming example of perseverance, resourcefulness, solidarity and community despite the blockade. Throughout the trip, Cubans proclaimed their feelings of brotherhood and sisterhood with the Palestinian people and emphasized that under the blockade, they too are experiencing a genocide.

The dire effects of the blockade cannot be overstated. Daily power outages impact vital infrastructure, leaving people without running water, medical care and communication networks. I now understand that it is my duty to decry this genocide and to support existing networks of solidarity between our countries."

Natalie Escalante

"I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the Executive Committee of the Canadian Cuban Friendship Association Toronto for awarding me the scholarship that made it possible to join the 31st annual Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade. This was a moving, once-in-a-lifetime experience that deepened my understanding of Cuba, its socialist model, and the global movement for solidarity and self-determination.

As a PhD candidate and lecturer in urban studies and global human geography, one of the most meaningful moments was our visit to the University of Sancti Spíritus. There, we encountered a pedagogy rooted in practice—directly tied to public service and community need, where students help shape their own curriculum and education is understood as a pillar of national development. It stood in stark contrast to the debt, austerity, and precarity that define higher education in Canada.

Another key highlight was the International Meeting in Solidarity with Cuba. It's rare to find yourself agreeing with heads of state, but hearing President Díaz-Canel describe solidarity not as charity, but as a duty against imperialism, was deeply affirming. There is something transformative about seeing things with your own eyes—including the power outages and water shutoffs—visceral reminders of what the U.S. blockade means in daily life. I'm grateful to have shared this journey with such committed brigadistas. I return to Canada inspired—to share what I've learned with my students and to stay actively engaged in the internationalist struggle.

Thank you again to the CCFA for making this trip possible. I look forward to continuing the work together.

In solidarity,
Sophia Ilyniak

Trump & Rubio tighten the noose on Cuba

Cuba is once again facing a severe, multi-faceted crisis, not due to the hurricanes that pummel through the Caribbean every year, but from the relentless and suffocating pressure exerted by its powerful neighbour to the north. This is a recurring story of a people striving for independence under an unyielding siege and blockade. Through deliberate actions, the US government has been meticulously constructing and enforcing even greater barriers that threaten the very survival of the Cuban people.

The latest expression of this crisis came on May 30 with an announcement from ETECSA, Cuba's state-owned telecommunications company, regarding a significant rate hike for mobile data. While seemingly minor to outsiders, for Cubans, it ignited a major criticism born of simmering frustrations. The new rates, particularly for additional data, are high in comparison to the average salary. An extra 3 GB now costs 3,360 Cuban pesos, nearly ten times the price of the monthly 6 GB plan. This is not merely a price adjustment; it came as a shock to the vast majority of Cuba's 8 million mobile phone users, many of whom rely on internet access for education, work, and to connect with family abroad. This ETECSA announcement, though, is not an isolated incident; it underscores the immense strain under which Cuba attempts to meet the basic needs of its people under the US blockade.

Tightening the blockade

For those less familiar with Cuba's recent history, the island's economy, already reeling from the pandemic's devastating blow to tourism and the six-decade blockade, has been further squeezed since Trump first took office. The 243 sanctions imposed by Trump during 2017-2021 remain in place, a suffocating blanket woven into the fabric of daily life. Even under President Biden, who campaigned on promises of change, the pressure was maintained.

Back in 2017, the US accused Cuba of "sonic attacks" on its embassy officials. A claim later proven false, yet it served its purpose: a pretext for Trump to freeze relations, collapsing tourism, and closing the door to the over 600,000 annual US visitors. Then came the shutdown of Western Union in 2020, disrupting vital remittances. The suspension of visa services at

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the US Embassy in Havana in 2017 sparked the largest wave of irregular migration since 1980, a desperate exodus of Cubans seeking any way out.

The economic devastation since then has been profound. Cuba's GDP shrank by a staggering 15% in 2019 and an additional 11% in 2020. Imagine a country unable to purchase basic necessities due to banking restrictions, its public services and industries crippled. When COVID-19 hit in 2020, Cuba's robust public healthcare system, a point of national pride, found itself under immense pressure. Its only oxygen plant, critical for treating patients, became non-operational because it couldn't import spare parts due to the blockade. Thousands of Cubans struggled to breathe, yet Washington refused to make exceptions.

Cuba's response to deepening crisis

Trump's final act in office, listing Cuba as a state sponsor of terrorism in January 2021, was a devastating blow. This designation makes it nearly impossible for Cuba to engage in normal financial transactions, cutting off vital trade. Then in the first 14 months of the Biden administration, the Cuban economy lost an estimated USD 6.35 billion due to the continued Trump sanctions, preventing crucial investments in its aging energy grid and the purchase of food and medicine. The Cuban peso plummeted, devaluing already low public sector wages. While the rationing system provides a subsistence diet, this level of deprivation hasn't been felt since the "Special Period" of the 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Faced with these severe constraints, the Cuban government has had to adapt. In 2020, it began to rely more heavily on the private sector as both a new source of employment and an importer of basic goods – a pragmatic step born of necessity. Over 8,000 small and medium-sized businesses have registered since 2021, and in 2023, the private sector was on track to import USD 1 billion in goods. While this rise of the private sector has boosted the import of some supplies, it has also introduced new challenges for Cuba's socialist project by creating income disparities, a stark contrast to Cuba's historic emphasis on equitable wealth distribution.

President Miguel Díaz-Canel has consistently emphasized the government's commitment to providing essential services while acknowledging the need for change due to the current scenario of an ever-tightened blockade. He defines Cuba's socialist project of social justice not merely as welfare, but as a fair distribution of income where those who earn more contribute more, and those who cannot are supported. This is the tightrope the Revolution walks: balancing economic realities with its foundational principles. The leadership insists on safeguarding the socialist project and guaranteeing essential services while resisting calls for major privatization efforts.

The pandemic, which decimated tourism, Cuba's leading industry, further exacerbated the crisis. Despite dwindling access to hard foreign currency, the government spent hundreds of millions of dollars on medical supplies and continued to guarantee salaries, food, electricity, and water, adding USD 2.4 billion to its debt to cover basic needs.

Six decades of US regime change attempts

The ultimate contradiction consuming Cuba's every effort to meet the basic needs of its people is the open and unrelenting antagonism of the United States. The US government's objective from day one of the Cuban Revolution has been regime change, achieved by manufacturing worsening conditions and sponsoring internal subversion. While the blockade has always hindered Cuba's development, for the first three decades, Soviet support and a favourable environment in the Third World offset much of its impact. The 1990s, which became known as the "Special Period", was a crisis of immense proportions, as Cuba had to face the might of the US blockade on its own, yet it forced innovative responses that allowed Cuba to survive.

However, the current moment is different. The cumulative effect of Trump's sanctions, the pandemic, the global economic downturn, Biden's inaction, and the return of Trump with a vindictive Marco Rubio as Secretary of State, have created a perfect storm for the US to attempt its long-held objectives of regime change. Lester Mallory's infamous memorandum from 1960, which explicitly stated that the blockade's aim was to cause internal rebellion through hunger and desperation, has found a new, more sophisticated application. This strategy is forcing the Cuban state to adopt measures that might be contrary to its project but are critical for its survival in a period of great hostility.
State-owned enterprises, the bedrock of Cuba's socialist economy, are crumbling under the inability to fund much-needed maintenance or generate enough foreign currency reserves, due to the blockade.

ETECSA, heavily sanctioned by the US, has been left with little to no options to renovate its entire internal infrastructure besides raising its rates for the first time in years. From its servers to radio base stations, all require imported technology. The state, historically capable of subsidizing everything from education and health to transportation and food, is being forced to reduce, adapt, and in some cases, relinquish its ability to meet all needs at once.

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Garbage collection, water services, and most critically, electricity, face such severe challenges that their dysfunction breeds not only frustration but a growing disbelief in the state's capacity to solve these problems.

While the US government, in 60 years of economic warfare, has failed to overthrow the Cuban state outright, its measures have now begun to have their most severe impact, to the point where the Trump administration and its henchmen, like Marco Rubio, are further tightening the noose on the Cuban state's ability to meet the people's needs. Whatever measures Cuba takes at this moment are not signs of weakness or surrender, but a direct consequence of the crisis forced upon it by the blockade.

The people's responses to this crisis have been varied. Since July 2021, protests, often small and isolated, have become a normal occurrence across the island, and Cubans overall have become more vocal in their criticisms and demands of the Cuban state. In response to the ETECSA price increase, Cubans across diverse sectors of society have voiced criticism. Among them are students and chapters of the Federation of University Students (FEU) across campuses which, since the announcement, have not only criticized but also led direct negotiations with the Cuban state and ETECSA to find solutions. Nonetheless, like clockwork, anti-Cuban voices in the US have tried to exploit this moment of crisis to manipulate the students' criticisms into attempts to overthrow the Cuban Revolution.

In response to this, Roberto Morales, a high-ranking leader of the Communist Party, condemned the "media manipulations and opportunistic distortions" that "enemies of the Revolution have attempted to impose." While legitimate critiques by the people are understandable and an important aspect of life in Cuba, he argues that they must be viewed within the larger context of a nation under siege. The objective of Trump and Rubio, as it always has been for the anti-Cuban elements in Miami, Morales declares, has been "to sow chaos, promote violence, and shatter the peace of our homeland."

Human toll of the blockade

An even bigger response to this crisis, however, has been the largest wave of migration in Cuban history, surpassing the Mariel boatlift and the 1994 rafter crisis combined. Nearly 425,000 Cubans migrated to the US in 2022 and 2023, representing over 4% of the population. Thousands more have gone to Spain, Mexico, Brazil, and other countries. Cuba's population has fallen below 10 million for the first time since the early 1980s, losing 13% of its inhabitants since its peak in 2012. Yet the US, which for decades has created the conditions for and promoted this mass migration of Cubans, has taken a sharp turn. Cuban asylum seekers are being deported and Cuba was just added to Trump's travel ban list, outright banning Cubans from traveling safely and legally to the US.

This is the stark reality for Cuba: a country besieged, its people enduring great hardship, and its government adapting in ways that are both necessary and challenging for survival. The challenges are immense, and the sacrifices of its people are profound to sustain the gains of its revolution.

It is in this context that the solidarity of people in the world and in the US must be forged anew. We cannot simply be aware; we must be active. We must go beyond raising awareness and take actionable steps to support the Cuban people. This means demanding an end to the brutal and genocidal US blockade, a cruel and inhumane policy that punishes an entire nation for its commitment to self-determination. It means supporting humanitarian aid efforts, advocating for diplomatic engagement, and mobilizing for a world without sanctions and blockades. The Cuban people need more than our sympathy; they need our active, unwavering solidarity.

Source: Manolo De Los Santos for People's Dispatch
Published on June 05, 2025

Cuba and Vietnam walk together in the construction of socialism



Inter-party ties constitute the cornerstone of Cuba-Vietnam relations in all fields. Under that maxim, Roberto Morales Ojeda, member of the Political Bureau and Secretary of Organization, exchanged with Nguyen Xuan Thang, member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, director of the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics, and president of the Central Theoretical Council.

This meeting takes place before the celebration of the 6th Inter-Party Theoretical Seminar and the 2nd Fidel Castro Ruz-Ho Chi Minh Scientific Conference, to be held today and tomorrow in Havana.

Morales Ojeda stressed the importance of this seminar, which takes place prior to the Congresses of both Parties and

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will allow the addressing of issues vital in the construction of socialism. He pointed out that experiences will be shared on how to face a phenomenon incompatible with our social system: crime, corruption, illegalities and social indisciplines.

Nguyen Xuan Thang emphasized that the exchange mechanism of the theoretical seminar is very important, as it helps to strengthen the links between both Parties and promotes cooperation in implementing the consensus reached between the leaders of both Parties and countries, especially the agreements reached during the State visit to Cuba of the General Secretary of the Party, To Lam, last September.

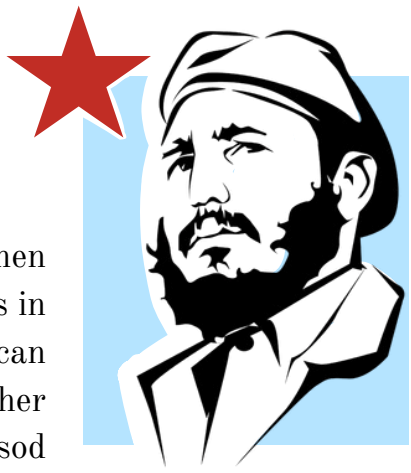
At the meeting, it was learned that the central theme of the vi Seminar will be Theoretical and practical experiences on the construction of socialism in Cuba and Vietnam.

Three commissions will work: the Party in conducting economic processes, experiences an lessons in the forms of state and non-state economic management, and political-ideological work with the youth.

Since 2012, Theoretical Seminars have been held between both Communist Parties, and they constitute important mechanisms for exchanging experiences in building socialism with their own characteristics.

Present at the exchange were members of the Secretariat, heads of Departments and Offices of the Central Committee of the Party, leaders of the Young Communist Youth Union, the Ñico López Party University and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Source: Wennys Diaz Ballaga for Granma
Published on May 13, 2025



> The fact is, when men carry the same ideals in their hearts, nothing can isolate them - neither prison walls nor the sod of cemeteries. For single memory, a single spirit, a single idea, a single conscience, a single dignity will sustain them all.
>
> **Fidel Castro**

Cuba calls for the urgent mobilization of the international community to stop the Zionist military escalation and a direct attack by the United States against Iran

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba

The Cuban Government reiterates its deep concern and alerts to the imminent risk of intensification of Israel's war against the Islamic Republic of Iran, the threat of a direct attack by the United States and the danger that the conflict could go nuclear or that radioactive leaks may occur with disastrous and devastating consequences for humanity.
We call upon the American people and the international community to demand the immediate end of the military aggression against Iran, which has entered its seventh day today, in view of an eventual involvement of the United States Government, whose financial, political and military support to Israel, threatening statements and the recent deployment of means of warfare in the region, is acting as a destabilizing factor and represents a dangerous escalation of the conflict.

Cuba reiterates its full solidarity with the Islamic Republic of Iran and recalls the disastrous consequences of previous military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, leaving a trail of chaos, violence and insecurity in those countries and in the regional environment.

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Cuba reiterates its full solidarity with the Islamic Republic of Iran and recalls the disastrous consequences of previous military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya, leaving a trail of chaos, violence and insecurity in those countries and in the regional environment.

We make an urgent call to achieve peace through dialogue and negotiations without preconditions or pressure.
Cuba supports the Statement issued by the Non-Aligned Movement and urges the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council to exercise their primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security; put an immediate end to this aggression, the impunity with which the Zionist regime is acting and work tirelessly to restore peace.
An end must be put to Israel's attacks against Iran's peaceful nuclear facilities, in flagrant violation of International Law, and harm to civilians, in breach of International Humanitarian Law.

The Cuban Embassy in Iran remains operational while observing the necessary safety measures for exceptional situations and providing continued service to Iran resident Cubans. Women and children were evacuated from our Embassy, together with three Cuban nationals living in Teheran.

Cuba reiterates, at this delicate moment in history, that only a comprehensive, fair and lasting solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will bring peace to the Middle-East region.
We must act with the urgency and determination required by this moment. Tomorrow will be too late.

Source: cubaminrex.cu
Published on June 19, 2025

CNC Statement: Washington's Criminality: Trumps Strengthening of Policy of the United States Toward Cuba

The Trump administration's so-called "strengthening" of U.S. policy toward Cuba - Fact Sheet: President Donald J. Trump Strengthens the Policy of the United States Toward Cuba, June 30, 2025 - represents yet another escalation in the criminal and internationally condemned economic war that the United States has waged against the Cuban people for over six decades. This policy is a direct assault on Cuba's sovereignty and right of self-determination, and an intensification of an inhumane blockade that constitutes the longest system of sanctions ever imposed on any country in modern history.

Under the pretense of supporting human rights, the Trump administration's measures – based on the infamous June 2017 announcement – deepened Cuba's economic siege, tightened travel restrictions, and targeted Cuba's internationalist programs.

These actions are not only morally indefensible but also flagrantly violate international law. The United Nations General Assembly has repeatedly, by overwhelming majorities, condemned the U.S. blockade as illegal and unjust. The Trump administration's new declaration is, therefore, one more insidious blow against the global principles of peace, justice, and the sovereign right of nations to choose their own path.

Cuba, a nation that has consistently upheld international solidarity, remains under an ever-deepening economic siege designed to strangle its economy, foster hardship, and ultimately destroy the gains of the
Cuban Revolution.

But what is it that Washington seeks to destroy? What is the society that the U.S. government is so zealously committed to undermining?

Cuba is a society where universal education and health care, housing, food, and access to culture are fundamental human rights, and the state — within its limited resources — does its utmost to transform these aspirations into reality.

Indeed, in Cuba there are no homeless children roaming the streets eking out an existence in a dog-eat-dog society where everyone fends for themselves, so characteristic and defining of profit-driven and capital-centred societies.

Washington's objective is clear: to overturn the Cuban people's revolutionary process and to discredit socialism not only in Cuba, but as a viable alternative on the world stage.

This campaign of economic strangulation and destabilization is a form of collective punishment that targets every facet of Cuban life, from healthcare and education to food security and infrastructure.

The Canadian Network on Cuba calls on the Government of Canada to unequivocally reject the U.S. economic war against Cuba and to take immediate, concrete action to counteract its effects.

These actions must include:

- Publicly denouncing the U.S. blockade and calling for its unconditional end;
- Ensuring that Canadian companies and institutions are not complicit in enforcing U.S. sanctions;
- Expanding trade, cooperation, and solidarity initiatives with Cuba that directly undermine the intent and impact of U.S. policies;

• Vigorously defending Canadian sovereignty by resisting the extraterritorial application of U.S. laws, such as the Helms-Burton Act.

The Trump administration's "Fact Sheet" is not a statement of policy; it is another even more overt declaration of economic warfare and ideological aggression. It must be repudiated by all governments and peoples committed to justice, sovereignty, and the right of nations to pursue their own development free from coercion and interference.

End the blockade! End the economic war against Cuba!

Isaac Saney, Executive Committee,
Canadian Network on Cuba
July 3, 2025

Cultural resistance, an identity shell



Photo: Dunia Álvarez

With consensus established that culture must be saved first, the critical question becomes: How can it be done? This central concern and the sector's commitment - described by Prime Minister Manuel Marrero Cruz as "a pillar of the Revolution's cultural and political resistance" - framed the 2024 review of the Ministry of Culture's work.

Chaired by President Miguel Díaz-Canel, the meeting outlined key priorities: stimulating decolonial artistic/literary creation; protecting heritage and historical memory; expanding public participation in cultural activities; leveraging science, technology and innovation; enhancing arts education and financial management systems.

Culture Minister Alpidio Alonso Grau stressed the need to strategically deploy artistic talent in alignment with national cultural policy across all regions and venues, while maintaining rigorous quality standards. He acknowledged progress in creator engagement but called for deeper dialogue to unite artists in defending Cuba against cultural colonization and fascism.

The review emphasized that institutions must engage with new digital art forms rather than reject them, focusing opposition on vulgarity and discrimination rather than specific genres. Community spaces were affirmed as cultural epicenters, with plans to bring professional artists to neighbourhoods and involve arts educators/students in major events.

Abel Prieto, president of Casa de las Américas, framed this as an ideological battle requiring critical resistance to cultural colonialism, guided by Martí and Fidel's humanist legacies.

The meeting, attended by senior officials including Party Ideology Vice Chief Marydé Fernández López and Vice Prime Minister Inés María Chapman Waugh, recognized artists' and cultural workers' efforts to preserve national identity, strengthen social cohesion and elevate cultural development Marrero Cruz highlighted ongoing needs including legal and financial protections for artists, heritage conservation, and enhanced history education support.

Source: Yeilén Delgado Calvo for Granma
Published on April 1, 2025



CNC Presents

IN DEFENCE OF THE REVOLUTION

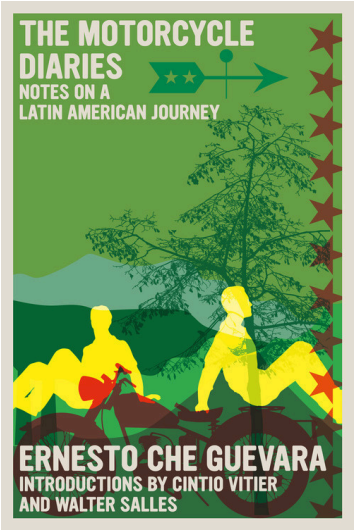
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Some thoughts on the Motorcycle Diaries by Ernesto Che Guevara



Introduction

Many of us are somewhat familiar with the history of Che Guevara in the Cuban Revolution. While we are aware of the central importance he played, some of us, including myself, had never read the record of Che's travels in Latin America. The account commented on here is an account written by Che in his own words and is of critical importance to more fully understand his contribution to Cuba later in his life. Che's travels with his companion, Alberto Granado were instrumental in enhancing Che's understanding of the conditions affecting all of Latin America and his own development as a revolutionary.

Some Personal Reflections on the Diaries

What really affected me in reading his words is that Che at the time he wrote his account in the early 1950s, was a typical young Latino male of Argentine birth who had grandiose plans to discover the reality of Latin America. Having graduated from university and attaining a medical degree as a doctor, he simply wanted to develop his own insights about Latin America. In so doing, he not only developed his abilities, but also in the process realized that for the people of Latin America to have a just and equal environment, a genuine revolution was necessary.

He writes about the culture and people through his many experiences in Chile, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela. He learns how the Indigenous Peoples of the continent are mistreated and exploited. In Chile, he learns of the tragic working conditions of miners who work for an American multinational corporation. There, he finds that the miners have little control over their working conditions, suffering many health and safety problems, including death from exposure to toxic work environments. He also visited several leper colonies and was amazed by the dedication of doctors and nurses who tried with valour and determination to help the suffering people, often themselves suffering terrible stresses due to inadequate resources to help the infected patients.

While all of these experiences are detailed and explained, he equally writes in his account of the opportunities to play football in several places, to enjoy the generous hospitality of people, especially in Chile and Peru, to savour the food and drink, and how often complete strangers would help them to overcome the obstacles of insufficient resources. They frequently did not have money and people would providethem with places to sleep as they continued their journey through the countries of South America. Che paints in vivid terms the climate conditions and the contrast between cold mountain areas, rich arable lands, and jungle conditions through which they traveled, sometimes via the motorcycle but more frequently on foot. While both he and his companion were well-educated health professionals, they often referred to themselves as bums. On visiting Peru's Machu Picchu, he marvelled at the sight of this mountain-based home and monument to the ancient civilizations that built it.

On June 14, 1952, Che turned 24 and in celebration of his birthday, a party was held. Following a toast he responded: "….we believe and after this journey more firmly than ever that the division of Latin America into unstable and illusory nations is completely fictional. We constitute a single mestizo race, which from Mexico to the Magellan Straits, bears notable ethnographical similarities. And so, in order to rid myself of the weight of small-minded provincialism, I propose a toast to Peru and a United Latin America." <Page 156>

This quote in particular really registered with me and captures the strong ideological basis of many actions revolutionary Cuba has taken to help sister countries and their peoples, not only in Latin America but also in Africa. This passage to me indicates that even at the young age of 24, Che was highly intelligent and articulate, qualities later confirmed and he demonstrated as a key leader of/in the Cuban revolution.

Conclusions

I did not expect to learn very much from this personal account of Che's journey through Latin America. I was definitely wrong. I had seen the film/video on the Motorcycle Diary some time ago and thought that was the complete version. His personal account was very educational and made that film version of the story and what came later after 1959, more understandable, clearer and more complete. For those of us who study and support various Latin American projects, Che's account is a must read. I strongly recommend this important historical resource.

Joe Grogan, CCFA Toronto Member, retired professor at Humber College, retired member of OPSEU

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CCFA Toronto Statement

The Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto is active in promoting friendship, respect, and co-operation between Canadian and Cuban peoples. We work with other Canadian groups and international organizations.

Our activities aim to:

- Provide information and organize events related to Cuba for the public and media, focusing on culture, health, education, sports, and Canada-Cuba relations
- Counteract the deliberate misinformation about Cuba spread by the U.S.
- End the illegal U.S. blockade of Cuba and defend Cuban and Canadian sovereignty from U.S. interference

About Amistad

Amistad is the newsletter of the CCFA Toronto, posted six times a year with volunteer labour. The Editorial Committee reserves the right to edit submitted material. The opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Editorial Committee.

We encourage everyone interested to submit media articles, editorial ideas, and letters.
Email canadiancubanfriendshiptoronto@gmail.com
Deadlines are the 10th of even months.

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