

VANCOUVER MONTHLY CAR CARAVAN TO: LIFT THE U.S. BLOCKADE ON CUBA!



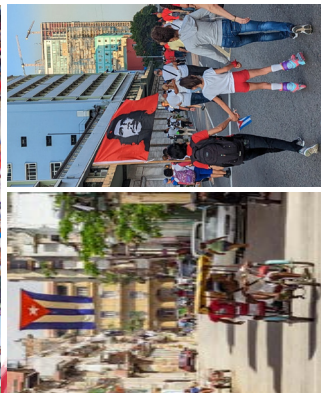
SUNDAY MAY 28 2023
12pm Car Caravan
For location call 604.780.4029
Vancouver, BC, Canada

#PuentesDeAmor
 #BridgesOfLove
 #CubaVsBloqueo
 #UnBlockCuba
 #ByeByeBlockade
 #OffTheList

ORGANIZED BY: FRIENDS OF CUBA AGAINST THE US BLOCKADE - VANCOUVER

WWW.VANCUBAVSBLOCKADE.ORG | @NOBLOQUEOVAN

In Solidarity with:



THURSDAY MAY 25, 2023
MOUNT PLEASANT
NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE
800 E. Broadway
Vancouver, Canada
6:30-8:30pm
778-882-5223 | vancubasolidarity@gmail.com
WWW.VANCUBASOLIDARITY.COM

CUBA
TODAY:
A Revolution
in Motion

Join us to greet and welcome the Cuban delegation to the Latin American Studies Association Conference (LASA) to Vancouver!

A free public event featuring 3 Cuban speakers, live music, discussion, and a raffle! All funds raised will help support Cuban delegates during their stay in Vancouver.

CUBANS SPEAK IN VANCOUVER:

RAÚL RODRÍGUEZ



Director of the Center for Hemispheric Studies and the United States - CEHSEU

RAFAEL EMILIO



CERVANTES MARTÍNEZ
 Director of History and Marxism-Leninism for Cuba's Ministry of Higher Education

LEIMA MARTÍNEZ FREIRE



Director of the North America Desk of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP)

CO-ORGANIZED BY:
 Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba
 Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade - Vancouver
 ENDORSED BY: Fire This Time Movement For Social Justice, Socialist Action BC Branch, Communist League, CPC-ML Greater Vancouver, Canadian Network on Cuba, Celito Garcia Brigade

Workers Around The World Unite With Cuba! The urgency of ending the U.S. Blockade on Cuba

By Tamara Hansen

February 2022 marked 60 years since President Kennedy signed the economic blockade into law. This angering anniversary means that every Cuban under 60 was born and has lived their whole life under this unjust and brutal U.S. policy.

Since marking 60 years of the blockade in February, it has been a challenging year for Cuba. The Saratoga Hotel explosion, the Matanzas fire, and most recently, Hurricane Ian. From Canada, we have been fundraising and working to provide solidarity, but we know the more important help is to bring an end to the cruel U.S. blockade of Cuba.

Some people argue it has no effect – so why does the U.S. government keep it?

In just the first seven months of 2021, the blockade caused Cuba losses of more than \$2.5 billion. This number represents an average impact of more than \$365 million per month and more than \$12 million per day. Cuba cannot purchase any product, from medical equipment to school supplies, if it has more than 10% or more components manufactured in the United States. Anyone who dares to ship products to Cuba by air or sea risks having their ships and airplanes barred from entering the United States ports for six months.

The acceleration of U.S. attacks on Cuba and Cuba's challenging post-pandemic recovery reinforces our responsibility to strengthen our efforts to defeat the blockade on Cuba. This must be a political priority for the solidarity movement, all friends of Cuba around the world, and the great heroic Cuban people.

As working people discover more about Cuba around the world, we know how Cuba's inspiring vision of the socialist project has shown what it means to put human beings ahead of profit. Cuba's leadership in healthcare, education, pandemic response, and response to climate change all provide necessary examples for working people in our own countries – in Canada, the Philippines, and worldwide.

It is up to us to overcome the lies and slander against the

Spring 2023



The Newsletter of
Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba - VCSC
WWW.VANCUBASOLIDARITY.COM

Cuban revolution and show working people that a better world is possible and necessary — and that, despite challenges — Cuba is showing us the way forward! Cuba today undoubtedly is the vanguard of the struggle to win a new world, a socialist world.

Building an international Cuba solidarity movement

While Covid-19 has made our Cuba solidarity work very different and more challenging, we have also been able to use new technologies to maximize our cooperation across time zones and borders. Like tonight, it is 5pm in the Philippines and 1am here in

Vancouver, Canada – but we are here together, united on Zoom for dear Cuba. While we work locally or nationally in the U.S. and Canada, we strive to build a stronger and more effective Cuba solidarity movement worldwide.

Hey President Biden,
CUBA IS NOT A 'SPONSOR OF TERRORISM'!
REMOVE CUBA FROM YOUR LIST!



Get Involved with VCSC!
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Twitter & Instagram: @VanCuba_VCSC
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I want to suggest further extending this collaboration to worldwide international activities as an ongoing and consistent activity. We need to have a strong international movement to bring working and oppressed people to join us in campaigning against the U.S. blockade of Cuba. Our friends at the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) have started part of this work over the decades. Another key has been the tremendous recent work of Carlos Lazo and Puentes de Amor. However, we must explore new ways to broaden our solidarity movement. We try to focus on the blockade as a single issue in this area of work. This way, we can unite with people who do not agree with all political aspects of our work for Cuba but will unite with us on the specific issue of the blockade and sanctions against Cuban families. We know that Cuba needs this urgently!

On the other hand, it is our work to defend the socialist character of Cuba. In that area of our work, we hold events highlighting the gains of the Cuban Revolution. We watch films about Comandante Fidel Castro. We have events about Cuba's campaign to eradicate illiteracy and the important popular democratic nature of Cuba's socialism – such as the recent passing of the new revolutionary families' code. Cuba's democracy is unique and has the best political and democratic structure worldwide.

In defending Cuba's socialism and the gains of the Cuban socialist revolution, we also educate people in Canada about the need for social justice and socialism in Canada. We ask why Cuba, a so-called third-world country, can provide free college and university education for its people while here in Canada, college and university students struggle with deeper debt?

Cuba solidarity in Canada & Internationally

During the campaign to free the five

Cuban heroes, three cities across Canada committed to organizing monthly picket actions at United States embassies and consulates in Vancouver, Ottawa and Montreal. In my city, Vancouver, we organized 110 monthly picket actions before our 5 heroes were free! What an amazing celebration that was!

We then began monthly picket actions to end the U.S. blockade on Cuba in 2015. We were joined by our co-fighters in Kyiv, Ukraine, who organized monthly street actions against the blockade up until March of this year due to the security situation in their country. There have also been consistent monthly actions against the blockade in Perth, Australia, and other cities for years.

I highlight these monthly actions because we believe that all political work must be consistent and organized into campaigns to be effective. We know that U.S. imperialism is very organized and consistent in its attacks on Cuba, so our response to U.S. aggression must also be serious, consistent, and united to build an effective international movement. Unity and consistency are two crucial and necessary factors to do an effective and successful campaign.

We have two consistent monthly actions currently demanding an end to the unjust U.S. blockade on Cuba. The first is the monthly virtual pickets on the 17th of every month, people from around the world join on Zoom and Facebook to talk about their opposition to the unjust U.S. blockade on Cuba, as well as their local activities and perspectives. Since the start of the pandemic, we have also had three 26-hour monthly virtual picket actions with speakers from over 100 nations, with speakers from every continent except Antarctica!

The second consistent monthly project has been to unite with the international caravan movement on the last Sunday of every month. Carlos Lazo and Puentes de Amor have inspired us in Vancouver and across Canada. This movement needs

to keep growing and bringing together the Cuba solidarity movement and Cubans living abroad.

There are so many other ideas and areas to build: online petition campaigns, creative campaigns to build awareness, banner drops, art displays, poetry contests, Twitter storms, sharing articles and videos on social media, global days of action, letter writing to print and alternative media, Passing resolutions in the city councils and labour councils, webinars, rallies petitions, resolutions, campaigns to call politicians, etc.

Where do we go from here?

It has been a tremendous honour to speak to you today about the Cuba solidarity movement. I am so inspired to be talking to friends and organizers of the Philippines-Cuba Cultural & Friendship Association, to hear about our common struggles and to be inspired to continue to push for change and socialism!

This work must continue to find common ground and points of unity, develop collaboration and teamwork with patience, confidence building, and trust, to build a united front internationally to defend socialist Cuba! We need to work with consistency, cooperation, and creativity to build a solid campaign to end the criminal U.S. blockade on Cuba once and for all!

Our international work has grown in leaps and bounds, so let's continue working together to defend Cuba against the U.S. empire and its cruel and unjust blockade!

Lift the Blockade on Cuba!
¡Abajo el bloqueo contra Cuba!
¡Viva Cuba revolucionaria!
¡Viva Diaz Canel!
¡Viva Raul!
¡Viva Che!
¡Viva Fidel!

Vancouver Plays Chess
for Che & Cuba



Saturday June 10th | 1-3pm
Grandview Park
1255 Commercial Drive, Vancouver

An afternoon of Chess, Art & Prizes!
Celebrate Che Guevara's 95th Birthday

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba
WWW.VANCUBASOLIDARITY.COM | 778-882-5223

CELEBRATE CUBA'S 16TH ANNUAL DAYS AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA & TRANSPHOBIA

«Por Todas las familias, el amor es ley»
«For all families, love is the law»



THURSDAY JUNE 29, 2023
8PM EASTERN TIME
5PM PACIFIC TIME

Scan or visit
website
to register



INTERNATIONAL U.S.-CUBA NORMALIZATION CONFERENCE COALITION
WWW.US-CUBANORMALIZATION.ORG



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 CUBA - Spring 2023

 CUBA - Spring 2023

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Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade – Vancouver and the NY-NJ Cuba Si Coalition launched a new postcard campaign aimed at U.S. President Biden which declares, “Cuba is NOT a ‘sponsor of terrorism’! Remove Cuba from your list!”.

As part of this campaign, people can send postcards as often as they want to the White House. It is a physical reminder to their mail room about this ongoing campaign and this injustice by the U.S. government against Cuba. But also, as folks are mailing their postcard they can take selfies and share them on social media – making this also a public education campaign. Furthermore, these postcards could be used to hand out at events and protests as a way to engage with people and encourage them to take action in support of Cuba – something they can do monthly or weekly!

Thousands of postcards are ready to be shipped to friends of Cuba across the United States and Canada. We would be glad to mail any amount of postcards you wish to join this campaign and help distribute them in your area.

We hope that you will join us in this exciting new campaign in solidarity with Cuba. If you would like more information or to order postcards please email: nobloqueovancouver@gmail.com



Announcement

The Canadian Network on Cuba launches the latest campaign “Reg’s Wish” to help Cuban’s

There are currently 30,000 Cubans registered with the Cuban Blind Association. That includes almost 1,000 children. We asked the Association, “what is their greatest need?”. The answer was surprising, white canes. Something as simple as a cane can help someone with little or no sight navigate in a very challenging world. Especially a young child. It was even more surprising to learn that the immediate need is for 7,000 canes. So that is our goal.

Initial estimates suggest that a cane will cost approximately \$10. For every \$10 donated we will place a cane in the hand of an adult or child in Cuba.

How can you help?

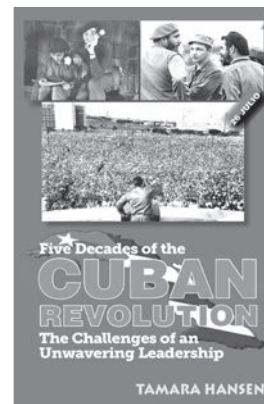
Please go to cubacan.org. You will read who Reg was, and what he wished. You will find how you can donate.

**Hey President Biden,
CUBA IS NOT A
‘SPONSOR OF
TERRORISM’!
REMOVE
CUBA FROM
YOUR LIST!**



Battle of Ideas Press

5 Decades of the Cuban Revolution The Challenges of an Unwavering Leadership



By Tamara Hansen

Coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC). She is also an editorial board member of The Fire This Time newspaper. She has travelled to Cuba over a dozen times and has written extensively on Cuban politics since 2003.

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Cuba’s New Families Code & the Dynamism of the Cuban Revolution!

By Azza Rojbi

The new Cuba Families Code should be seen within history and the reality of the Cuban popular democracy and its popular mass institutions. Since the beginning of the revolution, Cuba has always encouraged the Cuban people to mass mobilize for a better change. The Families Code is another example that shows us firmly how Cuba is a revolution in motion.

In this specific case, I would say that this motion started in 2019 when 86% of the Cuban population approved a new constitution. The new constitution stands for human rights and the protection of the Cuban people. This families code is the continuity of the constitution and expands the protection of all Cuban families.

The new code is another step in the revolutionary process of Cuba. It further consolidates the human rights that the Cuban people and families achieved since the revolution. This new families code does not limit the existing code, but it expands it. It does not restrict the rights of anyone but again expands and extends them. This is a very important point to reiterate.

LGBTQ2S+ Rights and the Families Code

I now want to speak a little bit as a queer activist here in Canada. I want to speak about the point of LGBTQ2S+ rights. LGBTQ2S+ people in Cuba are protected from discrimination under

the country’s current constitution.

Trans people in Cuba have had access to free, gender-affirming surgery and health care since 2008. Additionally, in Cuba, trans people can

correct their legal names and gender on official documents without having undergone surgery since 2013. Cuba also has a national network of trans people and supporters called TransCuba, designed to provide support and family counselling and build social awareness about trans issues across the country. This is more than we can say about the United States or Canada, where many trans



people are constantly under attack, their rights threatened, and access to gender-affirming care is difficult, very expensive and even inexistent in parts of the U.S. and Canada.

The new families code expands on the rights of the LGBTQ2S+ community and families by expanding the definition of family. It protects the rights of same-sex parents to construct a family, whether that is through marriage, adoption, or assisted reproduction.

Mass Popular Consultation

The mass majority of the Cuban people are deeply involved in their

popular democratic practices and are responding positively to exercise their rights to advance and build a socialist society for all. The fact that 6.4 million people participated in 79,000 meetings to discuss this new families code indicates the broad participation of people in shaping their destiny and the progress of society as a whole in Cuba.

I would say that this is not something new for Cuba. The Cuban socialist revolution, from the beginning, was not only a popular revolution supported by the Cuban people, but it also brought with it democracy from below. A democracy that is for working and oppressed people. A democracy that is based on the interest of the Cuban people. A democracy that is based on the human rights of all Cubans. No wonder the Cuban revolution, Cuban democracy, the Cuban government, and its leadership have always enjoyed the support of the overwhelming majority of the Cuban people.

This new families code is again the best proof showing how dynamic and alive the Cuban socialist project is. It also demonstrates the close relationship between the people and the leadership of the revolution, including the government, state, and the popular mass revolutionary institutions such as the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC), the Cuban National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX), the University Student Federation (FEU) and others.

I want to highlight for a bit the importance of the work of CENESEX in advancing LGBTQ2S+ rights in Cuba. I believe it was in 2016 that Janine Solanki, national coordinator

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Lift the Blockade of Cuba!

By Janine Solanki

For 61 years, the Cuban people have endured a vicious blockade by the United States, intended to bring down the Cuban Revolution and to bring Cuba back under the domination of U.S. imperialism. The U.S. government didn't anticipate that the Cuban people are prepared to defend their revolution and advance it, despite the enormous challenges imposed by the blockade. One of Cuba's many achievements is developing one of the best healthcare systems in the world that has resulted in the Cuban people having one of the highest life expectancies in the world!

Former U.S. President Trump took a

Car Caravans demand Lift the U.S. Blockade of Cuba!

Around the world, Cuba solidarity activists are campaigning in defense of Cuba for an end to the U.S. blockade. While Trump took advantage of the already difficult situation of the pandemic to tighten the blockade on Cuba, solidarity activists found new ways to continue protesting the blockade. During the first year of the Covid-19 pandemic, Cuban American Carlos Lazo and his group



drove through the streets of Vancouver. The caravan of cars was decorated with Cuban flags and banners denouncing the U.S. blockade on the people of Cuba and received many honks of support from other drivers and thumbs-ups from pedestrians!

Twitter Storms take Cuba solidarity online!

February 23 marked the International Day of Action Against Foreign Military Bases, and to mark this day, the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) called for a Twitter Storm and social media campaign, promoting the hashtags #ReturnGuantanamoToCubaNow and #DevuelvanGuantanamoYa! While today the U.S. has over 800 foreign military bases worldwide, their first and oldest foreign military base is in Guantánamo, Cuba, which has been occupied by the U.S. against the will of the Cuban people for 120 years. Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) and Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade – Vancouver took on the campaign with a virtual storm of posts demanding the U.S. return Guantánamo to Cuba now!

On February 26, a snowstorm prevented

Puentes de Amor (Bridges of Love) began Car Caravans against the U.S. blockade on Cuba in Miami, U.S. The idea quickly spread throughout the U.S., Canada, Cuba and the world, and now on the last Sunday of every month, caravans worldwide join in unity to call for an immediate end to the U.S. blockade on Cuba.

In Vancouver, Canada, Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade – Vancouver and other sponsoring organizations come together for the monthly Car Caravan. On January 29th, Vancouver Cuba solidarity activists joined the first Car Caravan of 2023, with 12 vehicles and 25 participants that



"maximum pressure" stance on Cuba and imposed 243 new sanctions on Cuba, making the blockade the most restrictive it has ever been. In a move that Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez characterized as "lethal", just nine days before leaving office and in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, Trump placed Cuba on the U.S. State Department's List of State Sponsors of Terrorism. Two years into his presidency, U.S. President Biden has failed to reverse this illegitimate and immoral designation. Being on this list means that many banks and financial institutions won't process Cuban transactions, which makes international trade even more difficult and expensive, and denies Cuba access to vital food, medicine and other countless other essentials.

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Cuba solidarity activists from safely holding a planned Car Caravan in Vancouver, so Cuba supporters turned to social media platforms for another world-wide Twitter Storm in protest of the U.S. blockade on Cuba! This Twitter Storm was called by the Latin American and Caribbean Continental Network of Solidarity with Cuba, which was joined by Vancouver through posts, tweets and stories in support of Cuba.

Another online platform to support Cuba is webinars, such as the January 28 webinar titled "To Dream with Open Eyes," commemorating the 170th anniversary of the birth of José Martí, Cuban independence leader, poet, writer and visionary. The event was organized by the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) and member groups Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba and Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade – Vancouver joined to participate and share greetings from Vancouver to the network.

Cuba solidarity in the belly of the beast

For Vancouver activists in the Cuba solidarity movement, supporting U.S. initiatives against the U.S. blockade is vital, taking the fight to what José Martí called the "belly of the beast". Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba and Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade – Vancouver have been active organizers in the International U.S.-Cuba Normalization Committee Coalition. The committee has held many online webinars and three conferences, and the next conference is coming up in New York City on March 11-12, 2023. See how you can join the conference online or in person at <http://us-cubanormalizationconference.org>

Vancouver Cuba solidarity activists will be launching a new postcard campaign at the U.S.-Cuba Normalization Conference, addressed to U.S. President Biden and demanding that he remove Cuba from the U.S. State Department's "State Sponsors of Terrorism" list.

There is always an upcoming event in solidarity with Cuba to join in Vancouver! Find out about the next event at www.vancubasolidarity.com or follow Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba on Twitter and Facebook @VanCubaSolidarity, and on Instagram @vancuba_vcsc

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of the Che Guevara Brigade, a volunteer work brigade from Canada that travels Cuba, was in Cuba and had the opportunity to attend the Annual National Days Against Homophobia and Transphobia organized by CENESEX. Basically, these are days of action that include cultural and educational events. What we call here a Pride Parade, in Cuba they call it a Conga against homophobia and transphobia. It's a beautiful march full of music, full of colours, full of dancing, really a day full of Cuban diversity taking over the beautiful streets of Havana. The new families code builds on all this colourful dynamism of Cuban society to further expands the rights of all Cuban people and families.

Always Forward

The new families code is a great victory for the Cuban revolution. It advances not only the human rights of the Cuban people but also advances Cuba in its socialist path to advance and progress its revolution to a higher stage of human and social development.

This article is based on a talk given by Azza Rojbi at the May 2022 Webinar "Cuba's New Families Code," organized by Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC)

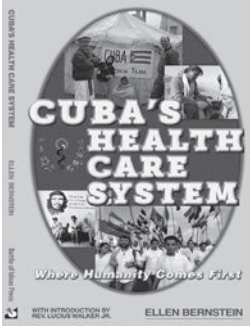
Battle of Ideas Press

**CUBA'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
WHERE HUMANITY COMES FIRST**

BY ELLEN BERNSTEIN

"The unflinching dedication of Cuban health care professionals has led to dramatic improvements in quality of life, for millions of people who previously had no other hope of receiving decent medical care. IFCO/Pastors for Peace is pleased to honor the diligent health care professionals of the Cuban health care system. We especially pay tribute to Cuba's national leadership, whose vision of universal health care as a right of every citizen sets an example for the world."

Ellen Bernstein has served as Associate Director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) since 2003. She has been a key staff member of IFCO's project Pastors for Peace, and has been deeply and integrally involved in IFCO's historic work with Cuba.



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