

Viva Cuba! Viva Pride!

JOIN US IN THE VANCOUVER PRIDE PARADE!

Join Vancouver
Communities in
Solidarity with Cuba
(VCSC) as we march

with Vancouver Pride! We will have a contingent in the Vancouver Pride Parade on Sunday August 4, where we will demand an end to the cruel U.S. blockade on Cuba and explain the important gains of Cuba's LGBTQAI+ community.

If you you like to march, ride, or table with us, get in touch vancubasolidarity@gmail.com or call 778-882-5223.



Parliamentary Petition to the Government of Canada Against the U.S. Blockade on Cuba!



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90 miles & a world apart: A trans person reflects on Cuba & Florida

By Melinda Butterfield

An excerpt

Returning from 12 days in Cuba in mid-May, I spent an uncomfortably long six-hour layover at the Miami airport, waiting for my connecting flight to New York.

It wasn't uncomfortable just because of the usual inconveniences like overpriced food and crappy seats but because I was a trans woman existing in the state of Florida, where the far-right anti-trans crusade has been centered this year.

As I sat in Miami, I was keenly aware that Gov. Ron DeSantis was preparing to sign several laws aimed at banning trans people from public life and getting the health care they need to live.

(DeSantis did sign these laws just a few days later, not by coincidence, on May 17 – the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia.)

One of those state laws bans trans people from using public restrooms that match their gender expression – including those in airports. When that law takes effect on July 1, trans women like me will be faced with the choice of risking arrest using the women's room or risking humiliation and violence using the other option.

Waiting in Miami, I had plenty of time to reflect on the stark contrast between Cuba, where queer rights are advancing by leaps and bounds, and the United States, where they are being dragged backward by state-sanctioned violence.

That violence comes in the “official” form carried out by bigoted politicians like DeSantis and the off-the-books sort used by fascists coast-to-coast, who get a wink and a nod from the cops and big bucks and lavish media attention from the capitalists.



International T r a n s Colloquium

In May, I was part of the L G B T Q+ delegation to

socialist Cuba organized by Women in Struggle-Mujeres en Lucha in cooperation with the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) and the National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX).



We went to learn about Cuba's revolutionary new Families Code, adopted by referendum last year. This document, described as the most advanced of its kind in the world, elevates the legal status of queer and other nontraditional families. It expands the rights of LGBTQ+ family members, children and youth, elders, people with disabilities, and more.

We also went to learn about the effects of the six-decade-long U.S. blockade on LGBTQ+ Cubans and all Cuban people. Our mission was to bring back information to help educate our communities, encourage them to oppose the blockade, and understand that another world is possible.

This annual event, organized by CENESEX, brings together experts, medical professionals, and academics from several countries to discuss the latest research on gender-affirming care and the social challenges facing trans communities. This year there were participants from Mexico, Italy, Argentina, the U.S., and other countries, as well as Cuba.

Trans voices heard and respected

A lot of valuable information and views were shared

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throughout the colloquium. It was especially enlightening to hear how U.S. anti-trans propaganda is rippling throughout Latin America and Europe.

A panel of doctors and researchers had just spoken about the medical challenges of gender-affirming care, from hormone therapy to surgery to mental health and treatment for trans youth. A group of trans women from Cuba, Uruguay, and Mexico had been sitting in the front row, listening intently to the presenters.

After the final panelist spoke, the women consulted among themselves, then demanded the floor. They objected to the tone and perspectives of some of the experts, who focused entirely on clinical research and standards of care divorced from the actual lived experiences and needs of trans people.

Mariela Castro Espín, CENESEX director and convener of the colloquium took the floor to support the trans activists, emphasizing how Cuba's approach to all kinds of health care, and trans health in particular, can never be divorced from the social conditions of the people it serves.

I couldn't help but imagine what would happen if a group of trans activists demanded the floor at a medical or academic conference in the U.S. to object to statements by official presenters. In all likelihood, they would be dragged out by security, perhaps even arrested.

This has happened in several U.S. state capitols recently when people dared to speak out against anti-trans legislation in those supposed "houses of the people."

But at this international event in Cuba, hosted by an official body of the Ministry of Health and in the presence of representatives of the country's media, trans people were not only free to take the floor and voice their concerns; their opinions were treated with respect and, in my view, helped change the tone of the rest of the conference.

Conga and the future

Following the conclusion of the International Trans Colloquium, on the evening of May 6, we were invited to attend the Gala Against Homophobia and Transphobia at the National Theater near Revolution Square. The fantastic, colorful annual event featured well-known Cuban musicians, live theater and dance, and incredible drag performances.

Unlike the recent invitation-only Pride event at the White House in Washington, D.C., the gala was open to everyone, and the 3,500-capacity hall was packed with happy, cheering queer couples and families. Tickets cost the equivalent of 35 U.S. cents.

Over the next week, we attended several sessions at CENESEX to learn about different aspects of the Families Code and the development of queer rights; we visited a polyclinic to learn more about Cuba's primary health care system and how the recommendations made by CENESEX for trans health care are integrated into the system from top to bottom; toured the Denunciation Memorial, a museum that exposes the history of U.S. terrorism against the Cuban Revolution; and received a briefing at the biotechnology center about Cuba's development of groundbreaking vaccines.

We also met with the Federation of Cuban Women and learned about its long history of elevating LGBTQ+ issues (going back to the early 1970s); spoke with district representatives about their responsibilities as elected



community leaders; received a guided tour of the new Fidel Castro Center, documenting the life of the Cuban revolutionary leader; and finally, visited the national capitol to learn about Cuba's electoral and legislative process from a member of the National Assembly of People's Power.

On our final full day in Havana, we joined the Conga Against Homophobia and Transphobia, marching through the streets shoulder to shoulder with our Cuban siblings, chanting, "¡Socialismo, sí! ¡Homophobia, transphobia no!"

In Cuba, I was never misgendered, never worried about using a restroom, and never felt unsafe for being openly and unabashedly myself. I want that for myself and all my trans siblings, everywhere, every day.

As I boarded my flight home, I felt more determined to build a National March to Protect Trans Youth and Speakout for Trans Lives in Florida this autumn – to give hope to our trans community there, to other communities under attack, to all of us. And more convinced of the need to show the LGBTQ+ movement that the Cuban path – the path of revolutionary socialism – is the way forward to trans and queer liberation.

Source: *Struggle-La Lucha.org*

FRIENDS OF CUBA

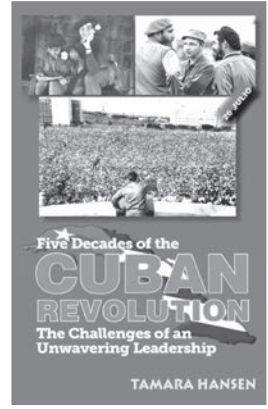
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Battle of Ideas Press

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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Join the New Postcard Campaign in defense of Cuba

Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade – Vancouver and the NY-NJ Cuba Si Coalition launched a 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!

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

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

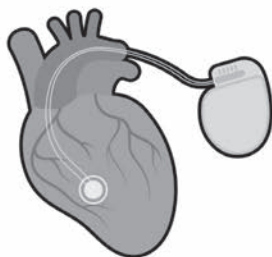
PLEASE JOIN US TO RAISE \$150,000 TO PROVIDE CUBA WITH 300 PACEMAKERS

Every \$500 donation will buy 1 lifesaving pacemaker. Cuban surgeons will then implant it at no cost to the patient.

Please make a donation today and reach out to your networks to urge them to do the same.

Make checks payable to Global Health Partners with the memo "pacemakers" and mail to: Global Health Partners, 39 Broadway, Suite 1540 New York, NY 10006.

For debit & credit card payments, visit the GHP website <https://ghpartners.org> or scan the QR code



FROM OUR HEARTS TO CUBA

- Send Pacemakers to Cuba
- Campaign with us to remove Cuba from the "State Sponsors of Terrorism" List

savinglives.us-cubanormalization.org

Cuba Stands with Palestine!

Communiqué of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba

In line with the firm and sustained commitment to support and contribute as much as possible to legitimate international efforts to end the genocide committed against the Palestinian people, the Government of the Republic of Cuba has decided to intervene in the contentious proceedings initiated by the Republic of South Africa against the State of Israel before the International Court of Justice.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 63 of the Statute of the Court, and in strict observance of its obligations as a State party to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Cuba will make use of its right to present, as a Third State, its interpretation of the rules of the Convention that Israel has flagrantly violated with its actions in

the illegally occupied Palestinian territory of the Gaza Strip.

The lawsuit filed with the main judicial body of the United Nations is primarily aimed at halting atrocities against the Palestinian people as a result of Israel's disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force.

Israel, with total impunity, protected by the complicity of the United States Government, ignores its obligations as the occupying Power under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Genocide, Apartheid, forced displacement



Cuban & Palestinian flags at a protest in Cuba on November 24, 2023

and collective punishment cannot be included in today's world, nor can they be tolerated by the international community. Justice and respect for the Charter of the United Nations and international law must prevail.

Source: Cubaminrex

Join the Monthly Vancouver Cuba Car Caravans!

For over 60 years the US government has imposed a complete economic blockade on the people of Cuba in an effort to destroy Cuba's sovereignty and independence. Cuba has continued to stand up and defend itself despite these huge attempts to sabotage its day to day life.

The Car Caravan idea was initiated in 2020 in Miami, Florida by the group Puentes de Amor (Bridges of Love) and its coordinator Cuban American Carlos Lazo. During the social distancing requirements of Covid-19 traditional forms of protest were difficult, so the idea of the Car Caravan was an excellent action to safely continue to protest the immoral and unjust US blockade on Cuba.

The necessity to end the blockade has become even more important since January 2021 when the US government relisted Cuba as a "State Sponsor of Terrorism." This meant a further restriction on imports to Cuba such as fuel, agricultural products, food, medicine, and much more. The blockade also blocks Cuba from trading in the globally dominant US dollar, forcing it to pay more for items than if it were not on this list of state sponsors of terrorism. These extreme coercive measures of the blockade have continued under current US President Joe Biden.

It has become as important as ever for the international solidarity to continue to defend Cuba and call for an immediate end to the blockade. We hope you can join us Sunday June 30, 2024 where we will be protesting the US blockade through a peaceful Car Caravan for Cuba!

Lift the blockade on Cuba now! Cuba si, bloqueo no!



@NoBloqueoVan

Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade - Vancouver

www.vancouverblockade.org

★ ★ ★

VANCOUVER MONTHLY CAR CARAVAN

WE CUBA

IN SOLIDARITY WITH

#OffTheList
#MejorSinBloqueo
#UnBlockCuba
#CubaVsBloqueo
#PuentesDeAmor
#BridgesOfLove
#LetCubaLive

Lift the U.S. Blockade on Cuba!

President Biden take Cuba off the "State Sponsors of Terrorism" List!

SUNDAY JUNE 30 @ 12PM

FOR LOCATION CALL 604.780.4029

Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade - Vancouver
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Families Code: The results of unity between the people & the government of Cuba

By **Natalia Marques**

An excerpt

Cuba passed one of the world's most progressive codes on families on September 25, 2022. All in one go, the small island nation legalised same-sex marriage, defined and upheld the rights of children, the disabled, caregivers, the elderly, and redefined "family" along ties of affinity rather than blood. This opens the concept of "family" to include non-traditional forms of familial relations, which exist outside the model of the heterosexual nuclear family.

Hailed as revolutionary by many in Cuba, the code will help provide protections to people who would have otherwise faced discrimination in society while ensuring that Cubans in same-sex relationships who wish to marry now have the legal right to do so.

According to young Cubans and social movement leaders, whom I spoke to about the Family Code while attending a conference titled "Building Our Future" in Havana in November, the code is a reflection of a dialogue between the Cuban people and their government.

In the time since the code was passed,

the Cuban government remains in dialogue with the people. The Ministry of Justice is still holding seminars in provinces throughout Cuba for people seeking answers to questions that have come up during the implementation process. The Family Code has been influencing everything from sports to property relations. Notably, in just the first two months of the law being passed, 112 same-sex marriages were registered.

A revolutionary Code



Couple Liuba and Lisset are married in October 2022, soon after the passage of the Family Code. photo: Belly of the Beast Cuba

"It's a revolutionary code that will change the thinking and the vision that Cubans have regarding ... discriminations that can happen in society," said Jose Luiz, a third-year international relations student at the Higher Institute of International Relations Raul Roa García. The Family

Code legalises and broadens the definition of a "family" far beyond the traditional definition. The code "will bring new protections to people who have, in one way or another, been discriminated against," Luiz told me.

Popular consultation

In order to overcome social conservatism to pass one of the most progressive Family Codes in the world, Cuba underwent a meticulous process of popular consultation,

from February 1 to April 30, 2022. The National Assembly of People's Power stressed the importance of Cubans familiarising themselves with the code, in order to prevent feelings of uncertainty. Through this process, the Cuban people made more than 400,000 proposals, many of which

were included in the finalised code. Minister of Justice, Oscar Manuel Silvera Martínez, said that the 25th version of the code, presented to and approved by the National Assembly, "was more solid because it was imbued with the wisdom of the people".

Young people played a central role in the process leading up to the approval of the Family Code. "Cuban youth ... are involved in all tasks that are deployed by the Cuban revolution," said Luiz. "We also participated in our referendum for our constitution in 2019. We were in popular committees, discussing the constitution and we contributed to that."

In 2019, Cuba held a referendum on a new constitution. The referendum passed with a majority vote of 87%, which is about 73.3% of the total electorate. The referendum was preceded by a popular consultation process, in which a draft constitution was discussed in 133,000 public meetings nationwide, where people submitted 783,000 proposals for changes. Officials stated that almost 60% of the draft constitution was modified based on the proposals submitted by the public during the popular consultation process.

The results of this popular process speak for themselves: With 74% of eligible voters participating, the Family Code passed in a landslide victory with 67% percent of votes in favour.

Gretel Marante Roset, international relations officer for the Federation of Cuban Women, told me that the women played a special role in the process of creating the Family Code. "Our commander in chief [Fidel Castro] said that the Federation of



Cuban Women is a revolution within another revolution. Women in Cuba are beneficiaries and protagonists of our own development." Women hold half of all national parliamentary seats in Cuba.

"The Federation of Cuban Women was part of the commission writing the draft of the Family Code to propose the text and interpretation of gender equality," Marante Roset told me.

"About the Family Code, I think that the document is for the future. It is based on love... recognizing other types of families, joint human rights... I think that this is the future for Cuba," Marante Roset said.

Source: resumen-english.org

For more information about Cuba's challenges and gains related to Queer rights, scan this QR Code to watch the June 29, 2023 webinar: Celebrate Cuba's International Days Against Homophobia & Transphobia

SCAN ME



"For all Families, Love is the Law" organized by the U.S.-Cuba Normalization Conference Coalition

AZZA ROJBI – North African queer activist and board member of Fierté Canada Pride. Azza is also the Coordinator of Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade - Vancouver. Azza participated in the Cuban Days against Homophobia and Transphobia in 2016. Azza is a member of the Editorial Board of the Fire This Time Newspaper. She is the author of "U.S. & Saudi War on the People of Yemen" (Battle of Ideas Press).

TAMARA HANSEN - Coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC). She is also a founding organizer with the US-Cuba Normalization Conference Coalition, member of the Editorial Board of the Fire This Time Newspaper, and the author of the book, "5 Decades of the Cuban Revolution the Challenges of an Unwavering leadership" (Battle of Ideas Press).

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