



Australia-Cuba Friendship Society
Melbourne NEWSLETTER
September 2018

Next Meeting
Monday 3rd
September
7.30pm
Unitarian Church
110 Grey St,
East Melbourne

Melbourne	Sydney	Perth	Brisbane	Canberra	Hobart	Adelaide	Central Coast	NSW/Vic Sthn Border	New Zealand
PO Box 1051 Collingwood Vic. 3066	PO Box k364 Haymarket NSW 1240	PO Box 1455 South Perth WA 6951	PO Box 5683 West End Qld 4101	PO Box 6139 Kingston ACT 2604	GPO Box 323 Hobart Tas. 7001	Box 381 N. Adelaide SA 5006	PO Box 1082 Gosford NSW 2250	PO Box 854 Albury NSW 2640	220a Adelaide Rd Newtown Wellington New Zealand

Dear Comrades

August 26, 2018

I'm not usually lost for words, but I am this time. Where does one start? You couldn't invent the last few days, with hatreds, petulance, madness and viciousness all on public display. I began writing this last Thursday when the Liberal Freak Show hit the road and Turnbull was still nominally PM. One day later Morrison narrowly won the ballot to wide acclaim as if he's different from Peter Dutton, when they've both crawled out from under the same reactionary religious rock. In the meantime who's really running the Canberra circus? The phantom of the opera or hoot the flute? Could be anyone. **Turnbull's gone to the knackers, but the neo-fascist Institute of Public Affairs still sits centre-stage** and it's no coincidence that Rupert Murdoch recently popped in to town to stir things along, up to his eyebrows in this latest nonsense. Once a progressive nation leading the world in workers' rights, we're now going down, down, down into the depths of neoliberalism and authoritarianism. A robust democracy? In a pig's ring. More like a script for the Goon Show. John Clarke would have loved it, but we're an international embarrassment when it comes to crucial issues like climate change.

While Australians turn their backs on the nongs in Canberra, a more dangerous game is being played out in Washington. Trump's former lawyer Cohen (a convicted crook) and campaign manager Manafort (another convicted crook) are being grilled and threatened with long gaol sentences unless they incriminate the president which has nothing to do with good governance but everything to do with impeachment because Trump's not part of the Washington Establishment. American politics is rotten to the core where assassinating foreign leaders, overthrowing governments, subverting and rigging elections, brainwashing gullible citizens using think tanks and right-wing media, and militarising 'friendly' societies like ours in the name of 'protection' is par for the course. It's common knowledge that John F. Kennedy's election was secured by Chicago crime boss Sam Giancana, his presidential life cut short when he tried normalising relations with the Soviet Union. The Mafia and CIA organised the killing with 'shooter' Lee Harvey Oswald the unwitting patsy.

The US military/industrial establishment hates outsiders and Donald Trump is another outsider who will never be accepted, even though he's just as rotten and crooked as they are. Like his right-hand man John Bolton, an unhinged thug and serial bully who totally rejects diplomacy in favour of war, repeatedly calling for the obliteration of Iran and now in the box seat to influence policy. So it seems perfectly reasonable to detest everything about them, their racism, their sexism, their pathological lying and as agents for 'creeping fascism'. Not that they invented the

growing right-wing menace, but they've certainly given it a nudge. Western capitalism cloaks itself in terms like 'parliamentary democracy', 'equal opportunity', 'checks and balances', 'multi-culturism' to mask the ugly reality. As Normal Mailer wrote: ***'One can have Fascism in any form at all, through the Church, through sex, through social welfare, through state conservatism...the FBI, the Pentagon. Fascism is not a philosophy but a murderous mode of deadening reality by smothering it with lies.'***

One of the prime movers in America's anti-democratic meddling machine is the government-funded National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Founded in 1983 by President Reagan and run by Cold War extremists and other reactionaries it foments chaos around the world. NED's first 'success' was defeating Nicaragua's Sandinista government in the 1990 elections and replacing it with right-wing Viola Chamorro; it helped swing the election for drunken Boris Yeltsin in 1996 and in 2002 was the driving force behind a failed coup attempt in Venezuela; NED buggered up Ukraine in 2014 which paved the way for neo-Nazis to move into the mainstream. And is still active, everywhere.

Talk to your friends and neighbours about Cuba, Venezuela, Russia, North Korea, China and Iran and be appalled at their ignorance. Tell them about Iraq and Libya and why they were destroyed and about Iran's capital, Tehran, which overflows with history and culture, with museums and beautiful parks and a warm and friendly people enjoying a progressive social system. Cuba is also beautiful and progressive and looks after its people, and has dared to stand up to its un-neighbourly northern neighbour. And been severely punished by six decades of brutal sanctions, sanctions intensified after Trump signed a presidential memorandum in 2017: 'Strengthening the Policy of the United States Toward Cuba'. On top of that, his Department of Commerce, Treasury and State has issued new tougher regulations impacting on 179 different Cuban institutions.

The blockade was initiated by President Kennedy in 1962, followed in 1963 by the freezing of all Cuban assets and so it has gone on every few years getting more and more vicious. Imports of life-saving medicines, essential spare parts and food, all stopped. One hell of a hurdle for Cuba to climb over, affecting all its financial arrangements with the rest of the world. A violation of human rights and act of genocide that breaches the UN Charter and international law and costs lives and a great deal of money, more than \$134,499,800,000. Talk to your neighbours about that. And how isolated the US has become over its atrocious behaviour towards Cuba. Its sole supporter? Israel. Viva!

Joan Coxsedg, Commentator-in-Chief, Melbourne ACFS (03) 9857 9249

The AGM is coming...November 12th, 2018.

[A successful summer, but with room for improvement](#)

During a working meeting with government authorities, President Díaz-Canel recognized the varied summer program organized for the population this year, while noting the persistence of some problems



[Cuban women of the 21st century \(+Photos\)](#)

The Federation of Cuban Women reaches its 58th anniversary facing new challenges

[Why is there a single party in Cuba?](#)

Excerpt from speech by Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz closing the National Assembly of People's Power Third Legislature's 10th period of ordinary sessions,

RAÚL ON FIDEL

[He taught us nothing was impossible](#)

In almost every speech Raúl Castro Ruz makes, the same name is repeated - that of Fidel. On the 92nd anniversary of the Comandante en Jefe's birth, Granma shares some of the ideas his brother, in life and in struggle, expressed



[New Constitution reflects economic updates](#)

Clearly evident in the proposed constitutional reform is the updating of Cuba's economic model, based on documents approved during the Seventh Party Congress which point toward a more just society

[Popular discussion begins, from our roots to the future](#)

In Birán, birthplace of heroes, the national consultation on constitutional reform began yesterday, August 13



CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

[Counting on all Cubans](#)

In an unprecedented move, Cuban citizens living abroad will be provided the opportunity to participate in discussion of the proposed new Constitution



[Fidel's Cuba takes on the impossible](#)



A reflection on the occasion of Fidel's birthday – August 13, the 92nd anniversary of his birth – and a life well lived

[May every citizen be a constituent](#)

The goal is a broad democratic exercise in which the majority of citizens may participate and express their opinions, with no limitations of any kind, to construct the constitutional text together, among ourselves

CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

[Socialism in Cuba is deeply rooted](#)

Our socialism is not an arbitrary imposition, accepted by a docile people, but rather the result of a conscious, popular decision, upheld for generations, and reaffirmed forcefully in 2002 when more than nine million people signed a petition to include its irrevocable nature in the Constitution



[Revolutionary Armed Forces and Interior Ministry prepare for constitutional reform debate](#)

Videoconferences; training for consultation facilitators; timelines for meetings; gathering materials, and study of Council of State Secretary Homero Acosta's presentation to the National Assembly of People's Power are among the tasks underway within these institutions



New Constitution reflects economic updates

Clearly evident in the proposed constitutional reform is the updating of Cuba's economic model, based on documents approved during the Seventh Party Congress which point toward a more just society

Author: [Yudy Castro Morales](#) | internet@granma.cu, august 15, 2018 10:08:33

Since the beginning of the constitutional reform process, much has been written about the reasons change is needed, and foremost among these is the need to adjust the country's fundamental law to our current reality, especially the transformations underway as the Policy Guidelines from the Seventh Party Congress are implemented, in accordance with strategic projections outlined in the Conceptualization of our economic model.

Thus it is no surprise that, as the popular consultation began on Monday - to continue through November 15 - many have noted that this reform is consistent with the economic updating underway, and that there are many connections to documents approved during the Seventh Party Congress which point toward a more just, sovereign, socialist, democratic, prosperous and sustainable society.

Basic principles in the current Constitution are maintained, including the reaffirmation that our economic system is based on the socialist ownership of the means of production by the entire people, and directed with planning.

Among novel elements is the recognition of various forms of property coexisting with the economy (socialist, cooperative, private, etc), and that the state will encourage those of a more social nature, in line with the Conceptualization and the Guidelines. Likewise consistent with these programmatic documents, the proposed Constitution proscribes, "the concentration of property by individuals or non-state incorporated entities, to preserve limits that are compatible with socialist values of equity and social justice."

Within a separate title on Economic Fundamentals noted is the concept that the market is to be taken into consideration within the framework of economic planning; defined are the basic means of production that are owned by the people, as well as their inalienable nature. It is established that "the state directs, regulates, and controls national economic activity." Obligatory expropriation is maintained, although only for reasons of public necessity or social interest.

Thus, ensuring concordance between programmatic documents approved at Seventh Party Congress and our new Constitution means validating the vision of a prosperous society we have proposed for ourselves.

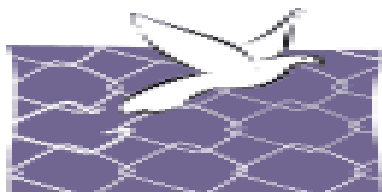


The constitutional reform consultation process began Monday, August 13, across the country, and will continue through November 15. **Photo:** Juan Pablo Carreras

Anything from the list below you can bring to the ACFS monthly meeting is greatly appreciated.

Food and Household Items

- healthy breakfast cereals
- dried fruit, nuts & seeds
- flatbread
- long life (UHT) milk
- healthy snack foods
- tomato paste
- tinned sardines and salmon
- tinned tomato, corn and peas
- tinned beans and lentils (without sauce)
- green tea, black tea & instant coffee
- spices
- honey (in small jars)
- dishwashing detergent
- shaving items
- sanitary pads
- shampoo
- soap
- toothbrushes
- washing powder



asrc Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

People Feeding People

These are some practical ways you can help support families seeking asylum, who are living below the poverty line.

1. Become a [food sponsor](#)
2. Order a Foodbank 'home delivery' through [Coles Online](#)
3. Donate toilet paper online via [Who Gives a Crap](#).

The centre in Footscray is extremely grateful for items already donated by ACFS.



Fidel's Cuba takes on the impossible

A reflection on the occasion of Fidel's birthday – August 13, the 92nd anniversary of his birth – and a life well lived

Author: [Yeilén Delgado Calvo](#) | nacionales@granma.cu, august 13, 2018 09:08:26

Life seems short to humans. We are but specks of light in the infinity of history. Death puts an end to material existence and inexorably arrives for all.

Defeating it, despite all the efforts of those have tried for centuries, can only be accomplished two ways: leaving love, sowed with kindness and devotion, or by developing ideas that surpass the personal to become shared property.

Few men and women have been able to do both and reach a sublime form of immortality. They cease to exist to become a people, and as the date of their deaths recedes in time, their presence continues to spread, like a fire.

Just saying their names is enough to feel their closeness, to sustain and encourage us in the joyful times and those of sacrifice.

Thus Fidel remains in our hearts, and as always speaks to us of what makes our country great: the unity of our people facing the impossible.

We must believe in humanity despite the dark sides, to make a Revolution, and understand that the struggle does not end with the victory, but rather truly begins at that moment. This vision is what makes Fidel so magnetic: his caliber as a leader and his unquestionable authority had as their foundation great faith in the will of human beings to grow, and the analytical ability to see beyond the evident.

Amidst our current effort to achieve a Constitution that works for us, not only putting the society we are on paper, but also the society we want to be, it is no accident that today's date marks the beginning of a time period when we are called upon to speak loud and clear, knowing that politics is the people's business – something else Fidel taught us.

August 13 does not mark the beginning of a life that lasted 90 years, but rather of a spiral that will continue upward as long as there is someone repeating what has become a moral conviction: Comandante en Jefe, at your orders!

The difference between socialism and reformism

August 20, 2018 1:17 PM CDT By [Rick Nagin](#)

The fact that capitalism arose within the framework of feudalism has caused many to search for ways to establish socialism within the framework of capitalism. But historical experience and scientific theory has shown this is not possible. Socialism involves a radical restructuring of the whole of society and requires that the new ruling class of working people have control of the government, all of its coercive apparatus as well as all the main features of the economy and the main civil institutions affecting health, education, culture, etc.

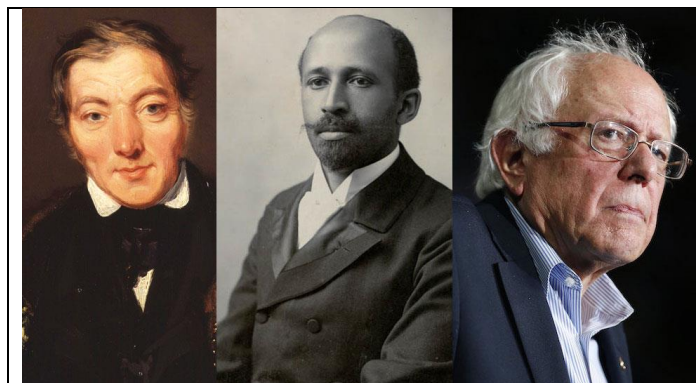
Such a change cannot come about in a gradual, spontaneous way, but requires a fundamental break with the prevailing capitalist society and the formation of a revolutionary working-class state. This state must first suppress any effort of the capitalists to regain power, then govern on behalf of the interests of the working class, while actively rooting out the vestiges, values and practices of the old society and preparing the way for the classless society of communism.

By arising in the cities under feudalism the capitalists developed their own government structures and armed forces that were eventually able to overcome those of the landowning aristocracy, but this is not possible under capitalism, especially in its imperialist stage where the police and military forces are so massive.

The fact that socialism cannot arise within the framework of capitalism has not prevented countless attempts to do this anyway. These have fallen into three broad social, economic and political categories that persist to the present day. They include:

1. Utopian socialism. As the horrors of the industrial revolution and the factory system became obvious in the early 19th century, many philanthropists and social reformers thought they could establish socialist or communist communities in capitalist countries and use moral arguments to persuade the rest of society, including the ruling classes to abandon the capitalist system of exploitation and oppression. One such person was the Welsh textile manufacturer, Robert Owen, who drew up and publicized a blueprint for a cooperative society. In 1825, Owen was actually invited to present this proposal to the U.S. Congress where he gave two lengthy addresses to the assembled representatives of the ruling class of slave owners, bankers and other businessmen and professionals tied to the slavery-based economy. After listening politely, the legislators tabled the proposal and no vote was ever taken, so the issue is still unresolved!

Owen purchased land in Indiana and began building a community based on his blueprint and inspired the formation of sixteen other similar communities around the country. All of these, together with hundreds of other socialistic utopian communities based on various religious sects and the ideas of other reformers, eventually disintegrated or were absorbed by the surrounding capitalist society.



Left to right: Robert Owens, utopian socialist; W.E.B. Dubois, scientific socialist; Bernie Sanders, "democratic" socialist | composite image, credited in order from left to right: Wikipedia; Patheos blog; Michael Dwyer/AP

In more recent times, numerous attempts, especially in West Coast states in the 1960's by young people alienated by the profit-driven, militarist, racist, male supremacist values of U.S. imperialism met the same fate. Friedrich Engels demonstrated the theoretical reasons for the inevitable failure of this approach in "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific," (1892)

2. Economism. The idea here is that socialism can be achieved by continually raising wages, expanding health care, pensions and other benefits as well as lobbying for pro-labor legislation to secure adequate living standards and social and economic equality. A similar idea underlies movements to establish model worker-owned cooperatives that would presumably outperform privately owned enterprises and come to dominate the economy. Despite powerful mass trade union movements in all capitalist countries and even successful cooperatives in Spain, these efforts, important as they are in defending workers' rights, limiting their level of exploitation, and teaching them how to organize and fight, have never established socialism in any country. The problem is the capitalists continue to own the means of production and hold state power so whatever concessions are made in one area can be taken away in another. Wages can rise, but then these gains can be taxed and returned to the capitalists. Karl Marx and Engels exposed the fallacies of such ideas in their criticism of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon ("Poverty of Philosophy," 1847 and "Value, Price and Profit," 1865) and the powerful labor leader Ferdinand Lasalle ("Critique of the Gotha Program," 1875) as well as in polemics against Eduard Bernstein and the reformist British Fabians.

In 1902, Vladimir Lenin subjected economism to a thorough-going critique ("What is To Be Done?") showing that trade unionism by itself can only lead to trade union consciousness and that class and socialist consciousness and organization must be brought to workers by revolutionaries with an understanding of scientific socialism. He showed that economism is essentially a ruse driving the working-class movement into accepting the leadership of bourgeois liberals, who may agree to temporary reforms, but whose fundamental aim is to preserve the capitalist system.

3. Social Democracy. Here, at least is an understanding that socialism is a political movement that requires winning state power. This is the ideology of the labor and social democratic parties that won national elections in many western European countries after the defeat of fascism in World War II. Governments led by these parties enacted many reforms including progressive taxation, improvement of working conditions, public education and national health care. However, none of these governments, even after being in power for decades, established socialism. Private individuals retained ownership of key means of production, had the allegiance of the coercive arms of the state and controlled political parties and much of the media. They continually worked to weaken and reverse the reforms that had been won.

This is also the outlook of Sen. Bernie Sanders. Sanders ran for President in 2016 as a "democratic socialist" and even called for some kind of grassroots "political revolution." Barbara Walters interviewed him to find out just how far he meant to take this. "What did he mean by 'socialism,'" she asked. Sanders answered it meant Medicare for all and free higher education. But, Walters persisted, "Are you against capitalism?" Oh no, Sanders replied, he was just for the kind of programs that exist in Scandinavia.

In breaking with the Second "Socialist" Internationale, in his powerful theoretical work, "State and Revolution," (1917) and his scathing polemic, "The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky," (1918) Lenin demonstrated that social democracy amounts to reformism and that its aim is not socialism at all, but democratic capitalism. He showed that Communists must actively work for the maximum democracy and living standards under capitalism as a "minimum program," but must never rely on bourgeois liberals or weaken or abandon their independent organization and their maximum program of socialist revolution. Socialism, he said, means total working-class power, the dispersal of the capitalist state and its organs of coercion. It means the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production and the suppression of any attempt by the capitalists to regain power using whatever force is necessary and an unrelenting struggle against the oppressive values and practices of the capitalist class so as to prepare humanity for a communist society free of classes, coercion and want.

The Communist Party USA was formed in 1919 out of the struggle within the old Socialist Party of America, which was tied to the Second Internationale. A similar development occurred in many other countries leading to the establishment of revolutionary working-class Communist parties in each nation and the formation of the Third Communist Internationale. This organization was disbanded during World War II as a concession to maintain the anti-fascist alliance with capitalist democracies. In the aftermath of World War II Communist parties won power in China, North Korea, Mongolia, Eastern Europe and later in Cuba (1959), as well as Vietnam and Laos (1975).

Ideological weakening of Communist Parties by the influence of bourgeois liberalism allowed counter-revolutions to take place in the Soviet Union, Mongolia and Eastern Europe beginning in 1991. But, in the remaining countries, Communists retained power and continue to lead the struggle to build prosperous, socialist societies. These countries are all still in the process of accumulating the capital, technology and skills needed to make this possible. Thus, all still allow different forms of capitalist property and foreign investment, in ways that advance the interests of working people under the leadership of the ruling Communist parties. In the most advanced case, the Communist Party of China, seeks to achieve "a moderately prosperous society by 2021 and a modern socialist society that is strong, democratic, cultured and harmonious by 2049," according to Chinese President Xi Jinping.

In highly developed capitalist countries, the economic basis for full socialism already exists and socialism could be essentially established by a revolutionary working-class government that nationalized economic sectors under private corporate control and suppressed the forces of counter-revolution. This would still allow for small business and family farming. The problem for such a government would be to overcome deeply rooted capitalist ideological baggage including racism, male supremacy and nationalism as well as win over the residual small enterprise owners to accept and take part in the building of socialism and, ultimately, communism. This could take a very long time and require much experimentation.

But, as the great African-America scholar-activist, W.E.B. DuBois, wrote in his 1961 application to join the Communist Party:

"Capitalism cannot reform itself; it is doomed to self-destruction. No universal selfishness can bring good to all. Communism – the effort to give all men what they need and to ask of each the best they can contribute — this is the only way of human life. It is a difficult and hard end to reach. it has and will make mistakes, but today it marches triumphantly on in education and science, in home and food, with increased freedom of thought and deliverance from dogma. In the end communism will triumph. I want to help bring that day."

Fundamental to the national economy

President Díaz-Canel insisted that a greater effort must be made attend to the needs of sector workers and develop more awareness of this prioritized area of the economy

Author: [Ventura de Jesús](#) | informacion@granma.cu, august 23, 2018 13:08:27



The distributor based in Matanzas sells 80% of the fuel consumed in the country, including aviation gasoline delivered to all the nation's airports. **Photo:** Estudio Revolución

MATANZAS.— Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, President of Cuba's Councils of State and Ministers, examined the program underway here to repair storage tanks for fuel, and discussed the organization of distribution, which he described as fundamental to the national economy.

This is a prioritized project, he said, since we must continue expanding capacity to sustain other sectors and support future development.

At the Fuel Distribution Enterprise, located in the city's industrial zone on the northern shore of Matanzas Bay, Díaz-Canel received a detailed report on the goals of the company in charge of distributing different types of hydrocarbon fuel via sea, pipelines, and tanker truck, both to clients in the province and around the country.

Lidia Rodríguez Suárez, company director, explained that the distributor sells 80% of the fuel consumed in the country, including aviation gasoline delivered to all the nation's airports, and operates five docks on the bay to handle imports, exports, and domestic maritime deliveries.

She stated that over the last few years the volume of fuel sold had remained fairly stable, but rose 34% in 2017, and that sales are brisk this year.

Rodríguez noted that a strategy is being implemented to increase storage capacity beyond the 44 tanks currently available, the largest number in one location within the country, with others to be added.

She explained that the deep water docks, on which construction began in 1990, were raised on steel pilings with anti-corrosive glazing, and receive ships up to 150,000 tons, adding that the docks are occupied on average 52% of the time.

In her detailed report, Rodríguez noted that the company also has terminals for truck and railway distribution; a super-tanker base for crude oil and supplies; and a liquefied petroleum gas plant.

During a brief meeting, the director described the company's financial performance, reporting that most indicators are positive. She did note instability in the workforce, especially in key positions, as problematic. In this regard, the President suggested that this is largely a reflection of dissatisfaction among workers, based on low wages, poor quality of food services, and other inadequate working conditions.

He emphasized the importance of addressing these issues, since work at the facility is hard, very demanding, and insisted that even though it may not be possible to resolve the salary question immediately, attending to the needs of employees is key.

Díaz-Canel insisted that the company's program is a strategic one, and workers must be conscious of this, aware of the priority, and that an effort must be made to attend to their concerns.

In terms of the storage tank repair program, being carried out by the Oil Industry Maintenance Enterprise (Empet), which has fallen behind in its annual plan, the President stressed the importance of conducting careful diagnostics and planning accordingly, to avoid last-minute marathons and their negative consequences.

He also emphasized to the need to reinforce supervision to eliminate misuse and theft of fuel, insisting that the country cannot continue allowing these resources to be stolen. This is demoralizing, he said, indicative of incompetence on the part of state entities. He noted that recent estimates show that the situation has not been turned around.

After the meeting, Díaz-Canel and provincial authorities from the Party and government, as well as Raúl García Barreiro, minister of Energy and Mining, inspected two 50,000 cubic meter tanks currently being repaired.

The visit included an indispensable exchange with staff, allowing Díaz-Canel to confirm that the work here is not easy. The always amiable President recognized the audacity of operators and asked about working conditions, taking note of the little things that interfere with their efforts.

One people, one party

The Communist Party of Cuba's 93 years of history

Author: [Alejandra García](#) | internet@granma.cu, august 20, 2018 15:08:24

Sunday morning, August 16, 1925, the Communist Party of Cuba was founded in a house at 81 Calzada in Havana. Thirteen men who represented about 100 in all, working entirely underground, met for two consecutive days to discuss the country's problems and organize a vanguard that would fight for radical change.

Present was Carlos Baliño, who long before had founded the Cuban Revolutionary Party with José Martí, and knew well that the road ahead was a hard one.

"He learned first hand of the Apostle's preoccupation with escaping the dark designs of imperialism, and now he was surrounded by men as genuine and committed as he was, with a long track record as rebels, revolutionaries," wrote journalist Andrés García Suárez,



The Party is based on firm revolutionary ideals that sustain the nation's unity. **Photo:** Liborio Noval

in the newspaper 5 de Septiembre.

The youngest, Julio Antonio Mella, had founded the Federation of University Students earlier, and both knew that the group founded at this small congress would respond to Martí's call to resist imperialism.

Despite the dangers, during these first meetings in the Havana house, the party's founders proposed organizing campesinos and struggling for the rights of women and youth.

Only a few days after its founding, the Communist Party of Cuba was brutally attacked by Gerardo Machado dictatorship, many were killed or forced into exile. But this year would not be the end, but rather only the beginning of a long history.

MORE RECENTLY...

After the triumph of the Revolution, achieving unity was absolutely necessary, and a broad unification effort took place in 1961, the most recent antecedent to the Party we know today.

Created at that time were the Integrated Revolutionary Organizations (ORI), which included members of the July 26th Movement led by Fidel; the People's Socialist Party with Blas Roca as its principal leader; and the March 13 Revolutionary Directorate, headed by Comandante Faure Chomón.

"An effort was urgently needed to pull together revolutionaries who used different methods but shared a common objective; consolidating the Cuban Revolution. Following the victory, the independent action of these three political forces had created obstacles to the coordination of activities and the joining of forces," stated José Ramón Machado Ventura, Party second secretary, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Central Committee's creation and the founding of Granma.

Sectarianism was difficult to overcome and just a few months after the ORI were established, the United Party of the Cuban Revolution was founded in an attempt to achieve the unity of revolutionary forces in one organization.

It was not until October 3, 1965, that the Party took its definitive name: the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC), the same used by Baliño and Mella, with the ideas of Martí in mind.

"To fully understand the significance of these events," Machado Ventura commented, "it is essential to recall that the Party is a legitimate product of the Revolution. Its roots lie in the party founded by Martí in 1892 to organize the Necessary War, and its most immediate antecedent is that organized by Mella, Baliño, and Rubén."

A SINGLE PARTY

This is a vanguard party that demands that all members think independently, express themselves freely, and act collectively; educate themselves in permanent contact with the people; adopt as a work style being aware of the people's difficulties, opinions, and proposals. This is the party that has educated several generations of Cubans; led the people's resistance with resolve and intelligence; that has as its ideology the teachings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin; Martí's thinking; the creative ideas and examples of Fidel and Raúl.

As he noted the Party's strengths, José Ramón Machado Ventura emphasized that it is but one, as Martí insisted, "Because faced with the dreams of imperialism to split our society, divide it in a thousand pieces, our principal shield is unity." That is why, every day, our party grows, is strengthened, and endures.

THE PEOPLE WILL ALWAYS HAVE THE PARTY

In the proposed new Constitution, being discussed in every community, workplace, and school at this time, the strategic objective of maintaining the Party's role is unchanged.

Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the PCC, stated on April 19, this year, that the Cuban people would undoubtedly support the proposal, as they did decades ago, in 1976, with 98% approval in the referendum.

He explained during the Constituent Session of the National Assembly of People's Power Ninth Legislature, "We do not intend to modify the irrevocable nature of socialism in our political and social system, or the leading role of the Communist Party of Cuba as the organized vanguard and highest leading force in society and the state, as established in Article 5 of the current Constitution, which we intend to advocate maintaining in the next one."

He added that it was up to the Party, the state, and government, to ensure implementation of the policy of purposefully and gradually promoting youth, women, Blacks, and those of mixed race to decision-making positions, to guarantee in a timely fashion the creation of a pool of potential leaders, without repeating the costly mistakes that were committed in this regard in the past.

Given the difficult international panorama today, with attempts to divide Latin America and increased aggressiveness in U.S. policy toward Cuba and progressive governments in the region, maintaining our unity is the only option. Building consensus is our best bet.

Thus, what Fidel said in 1975 is more relevant than ever:

"As long as imperialism exists, the Party, the state, and the people will pay maximum attention to our defense. Our revolutionary guard will never be lowered. History teaches with much eloquence that those who forget this principle do not survive the mistake."

FROM THE PROPOSED NEW CONSTITUTION

- In the construction of socialism, the leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba, born of the unitary intentions of organizations that contributed decisively to the triumph of the Revolution and national unity, constitutes a fundamental pillar and guarantor of our political, economic, and social order.

(Preamble)

- The Communist Party of Cuba, the single organized vanguard of the Cuban nation based on the ideas of Martí, Fidel, Marx, and Lenin, sustained in its democratic nature and permanent link with the people, is the leading force in society and the state. It organizes and guides common efforts directed toward the construction of socialism. It works to preserve and strengthen the patriotic unity of Cubans and to develop ethical, moral, and civic values. (Article 5)

A tribute to the activism of Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin

Posted in [Racism & Oppression](#)

By Monica Moorehead - August 23, 2018

When the great Aretha Franklin was alive, what became lost was how her music, and herself as a person, were influenced by the social movements of her times, starting with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. With her death, her impact on and support for various movements have become more public, adding to her already astounding legacy.

The Rev. C.L. Franklin, Aretha's father, was an organizer for the historic 1963 Detroit Walk to Freedom, the largest Civil Rights march in the U.S. until the March on Washington drew 250,000 people a few months later.

An up-and-coming singer, Aretha Franklin signed a contract saying that she would never perform in front of segregated audiences. Civil Rights activist Jesse Jackson Sr. spoke to the Detroit Free Press about Franklin's activism: "When Dr. King was alive, several times she helped us make payroll. On one occasion, we took an eleven-city tour with her, as Aretha Franklin and Harry Belafonte. ... And they put gas in the vans. She did eleven concerts for free and hosted us at her home and did a fundraiser for my campaign. Aretha has always been a very socially conscious artist, an inspiration, not just an entertainer." (Aug. 15)

When the legendary singer, Otis Redding, wrote and first sang "Respect" in 1965, the lyrics mainly focused on personal relations. But when the song became a mega hit for Aretha Franklin in 1967, she gave it a whole new meaning as a political anthem for Civil Rights and then for empowering women. Just a year later, she sang at the funeral of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

When activist Angela Davis was placed on the Federal Bureau of Investigation's 10 most-wanted fugitive list — on charges of conspiracy, kidnapping and murder, for an alleged attempt in 1970 to help Jonathan Jackson free his brother, political prisoner George Jackson — Aretha Franklin publicly stated that she would be willing to pay Davis' bond if she were captured.

In a Jet magazine article in August 1970, Franklin stated: "Black people will be free. I've been locked up (for disturbing the peace in Detroit) and I know you got to disturb the peace when you can't get no peace. Jail is hell to be in. I'm going to see her free if there is any justice in our courts, not because I believe in communism, but because she's a Black woman and she wants freedom for Black people."

I have the money; I got it from Black people — they've made me financially able to have it — and I want to use it in ways that will help our people."

Angela Davis stated in an Aug. 17 Democracy Now! interview: "When Aretha decided to hold a press conference announcing that she would pay up to \$250,000, which in today's currency would be probably about a million-and-a-half dollars, it was really a high point in the campaign. And I believe that many people who may have been reluctant to associate themselves with me because of my communist affiliations probably joined the campaign as a result of Aretha's statement."

"When I actually became eligible for bail, unfortunately Aretha was out of the country. She was in the Caribbean. And during those days, prior to the emergence of global capitalism, money did not flow so easily across national borders, and therefore, a white farmer from Central California agreed to put up his farm."

"But that was such a moving moment. It was a moment in which the campaign for my freedom achieved a really populist status among people in this country, and probably throughout the world, as well. I will be forever grateful to Aretha, because I think she played such an integral role in the success of the campaign."

Aretha Franklin also supported same-sex marriage. In 2011, she surprised a gay couple at their wedding reception by performing for an hour.

Aretha Franklin was voted by Rolling Stone magazine in 2008 as the greatest singer of all time. To put it bluntly, every singer is measured in terms of coming before or coming after Aretha ever since "Respect" was released.

In one of her most recent interviews, Aretha Franklin stated she wanted most to be remembered for being a good mother toward her children.

But she should especially be remembered for using her once-in-a-lifetime artistry to help fight for social equality for all humanity. To take her moving "Amazing Grace" rendition one step further, she was simply amazing Aretha. Aretha Franklin, ¡presente!



Aretha Franklin in the 1960s.

By Shelley Ettinger

The beloved, sublime, musical genius Aretha Franklin emerged from, reflected and gave voice to the oppressed Black nation, especially of Detroit, where her father, the Rev. C.L. Franklin, was an important Civil Rights leader. You can hear the freedom cry in so many of her songs, and nowhere more so than in the great anthem "Respect," which was the #1 song on the Billboard charts in the summer of 1967 — the very summer when the Black community of Detroit rose up in a historic rebellion against racism and police brutality.

I was a white kid in Oak Park, just across the 8 Mile Road line dividing Detroit and its suburbs. I was 10 years old in 1964 when I first found Aretha Franklin's music, 13 at the time of "Respect" and the Black rebellion. Those two related things — the Black uprising and Aretha's defiant, soul-stirring music — played a big part in raising my consciousness, giving rise to my anti-racist solidarity and starting me along the revolutionary road.

She is deeply loved in the LGBTQ community, where, upon news of her death, there was an outpouring from so many who said her music and her fierce, unapologetic persona sustained them through suffering and oppression.

Aretha Franklin's music has been very important to me personally at many junctures in my life. I included scenes involving her music in my novel that was published a few years ago — because how could I not? She is woven into the story of any character who came of age and came to political awareness during her times.

I mourn and honor her with all my heart.



Aretha Franklin, 2014

In the wake of coup attempts in Nicaragua

Ongoing violence meant to destabilize the country and oust President Ortega, has cost the lives of 198 persons and severely damaged the economy

Author: [Granma](#) | internet@granma.cu : august 24, 2018 09:08:47

Since last April 18, the right wing has subjected the Nicaraguan people to a wave of violence in an attempt to overthrow President Daniel Ortega.

The most recent of these acts occurred August 15 during a demonstration called by the Nicaraguan opposition, when an armed group attacked the national water and sewer company (Enacal), teleSUR reported.

According to a local police communiqué, the suspected terrorists opened gunfire and launched home-made grenades onto Enacal wells which supply the population of Managua.

Such attacks are part of an ongoing coup attempt against President Ortega, that has cost the lives of 198 persons, numerous human rights violations, and severe damage to the national economy, National Assembly sources stated.

During the last three months of violence, 252 public and private buildings have been destroyed, as well as 209 kilometers of streets and highways. Some 278 pieces of industrial and construction equipment have been burned, along with 389 vehicles, reported José Santos Figueroa, vice president of the National Assembly standing committee for Production, Economy, and Budget.

"This coup plan is characterized by efforts to interrupt and severely damage peace, security, tranquility, and the right to life of Nicaraguans," stated Santos, a Sandinista National Liberation Front deputy.

Added to this are export losses valued at 270 million dollars, he pointed out, noting that the economy suffered a 7% deceleration in the rate of deposits and 10.7% in credit awarded to the productive sector. Through July 31, an estimated 68,000 jobs held by Nicaraguans affiliated with the Social Security system were affected.

As a result of the damage, on August 14 the National Assembly approved changes to the national budget for the year, with projected income and expenditures reduced.

Nonetheless, the amended budget guarantees continued funding for efforts to combat poverty, public investment programs, citizen security, and wages for public sector workers, according to Treasury and Public Credit Minister Iván Acosta.



Photo: La Voz del Sandinismo

TIMELINE OF A COUP ATTEMPT

- April 18

Some 60 government opponents protest a social security reform implemented by President Daniel Ortega. Three deaths and 37 injuries are reported.

- May 22

Some 76 deaths occur during conflicts. The Government denounces the plot as financed from abroad.

- April 22

Daniel Ortega expresses his willingness to hold talks to resolve the crisis and announces that the social security reform will be revoked. Looting occurs.

- May 23

The dialogue is suspended due to lack of consensus on the agenda: the opposition demands the resignation of Ortega and early elections; while the legitimate Ortega government rejects these demands and denounces the attempted "soft coup."

- July 7th

Before a demonstration of supporters, Daniel Ortega refuses to hold the 2021 elections early, saying that elections will be conducted as mandated by law.

- May 16

The national dialogue is established, mediated by five bishops from the Episcopal Conference of Nicaragua (CEN).

- June 16

The Ortega government opens the door to visits by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in order to demonstrate the intentions of those who promote instability from abroad.

- July 13

The opposition calls a second national strike.

- August 15th

The Government of Nicaragua declares unacceptable the presence in the country of a commission from the Organization of American States (OAS) considering it interventionist.

(Information from teleSUR & Prensa Latina)

Trump, the Pentagon and the establishment

Posted in [Anti-war](#), [Asia](#), [Class struggle](#), [Korea](#), [Spotlight](#) . By Fred Goldstein - August 15, 2018

According to Marx, the capitalist government is the executive committee of the ruling class. That truth still holds. But that executive committee is by no means politically homogeneous or unified. In fact, the greater the crisis in imperialism and capitalism, the greater the divisions within the government and within the state itself.

Aug. 11 — The latest round of U.S. sanctions on Russia illustrates how the Pentagon and its allies in the capitalist government are moving independently of the U.S. president to undermine his personal diplomacy when it conflicts with the military's goals.

For reasons that are a matter of much speculation, Trump has tried to realign U.S. imperialist foreign policy to include a rapprochement with Russia. He has done this since he began his election campaign. This attempt at realignment was expressed dramatically at the Trump-Putin Helsinki summit in July.

Make no mistake, Donald Trump is no partisan of peace. He is bellicose, belligerent and an impulsive warmonger when it suits him. He is a bully in international relations as well as an authoritarian promoter of racism, sexism and bigotry at home.

Trump feeds war machine

Trump has done much to feed the Pentagon war machine. He has given the brass record budget increases, with the 2019 military budget officially topping \$716 billion. He has authorized modernization of nuclear weapons. He has funded increases in jet fighters, ships and troops. In short, he has done everything to keep the military-industrial complex satisfied and on board with his administration.

"The increase in military spending is one of the largest in modern U.S. history, jumping by 9.3 percent from 2017 to 2019," according to Todd Harrison, director of defense budget analysis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think tank." (Washington Post, June 10)

This marks an increase of \$136 billion just from 2017 to 2019.

Meanwhile, the masses of people are losing their health care, their child care, their food stamps and their housing while suffering from poverty, joblessness and underemployment. But Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, United Technologies, Northrop Grumman and other merchants of death are bingeing on profits.

Pentagon still dominates U.S. politics

Perhaps Trump thought his generosity to the generals and admirals would keep the Pentagon and the high command in sync with his personalized diplomacy. Not so.



US military bases abroad in 2015

As for softening toward Russia, the Pentagon is having none of this. The military's conventional right-wing allies in the administration, National Security Adviser John Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, have subverted Trump's personal diplomacy.

For example, Pompeo and the State Department just recently notified Congress that the administration considers Russia behind the poisoning of two former Russian spies in England with a chemical agent last March — six months ago!

Washington claims that Moscow violated the Chemical and Biological Weapons Control and Warfare Elimination Act of 1991. This is the act that U.S. imperialism used against Syria and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and is now using against Russia.

The sanctions imposed on Russia involve hundreds of millions of dollars on so-called "dual-use" products that could hypothetically be used for military purposes. More draconian sanctions, denying Russian banks access to U.S. markets if Russia does not prove that it no longer uses chemical weapons — a charge that Moscow vigorously denies — will be imposed in 90 days.

DPRK-Trump agreement sabotaged

Trump has seized on the diplomatic overtures of Kim Jong Un, head of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and of the Workers' Party of Korea. Kim tried to defuse the crisis on the Korean Peninsula by offering to meet on denuclearization. Trump accepted the invitation and promoted a bilateral summit meeting held in Singapore on June 12.

Trump was trying to achieve "historic" status by bringing about an end to the crisis. When

he came back, he spoke about the Korean War being over and mentioned a possible peace treaty to finally end the war, begun way back in June 1950. The fighting ended in August 1953 with a ceasefire agreement, but the U.S. had never before agreed to even discuss a formal peace treaty.

Trump actually called off the annual war exercises carried out by the U.S. and South Korean military that exerted military pressure aimed at bringing down the DPRK.

Since the Singapore summit, however, virtually the entire U.S. ruling class, media and military have tried to undermine the process toward ending the Korean War. They call the DPRK leaders liars who can't be trusted. Lately they have clamored for increased sanctions because the North won't "denuclearize" now.

U.S. refuses to sign peace treaty

There is a simple explanation for why the denuclearization process has not begun.

Two prestigious reporters for the imperialist New York Times, David Sanger and William Broad, admitted in an Aug. 10 article that Washington has reneged on pledges made during the Singapore summit and subsequent talks:

"On Thursday [Aug. 9], North Korea's state-run newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, called the declaration of the end of the war 'the demand of our time' and that it would be the 'first process' in moving toward a fulfillment of the June 12 deal struck between Mr. Trump and Mr. Kim. Pyongyang also wants peace treaty talks to begin before detailing its arsenal."

In other words, reactionary hawks in the Trump administration and the military are deliberately sabotaging the precondition for denuclearization that must have been verbally agreed to by Trump, and perhaps by Pompeo — that talks first begin on a peace treaty to end the now 68 years of warfare by U.S. imperialism before the DPRK gives an inventory of its nuclear weapons. Thus, the right wing is now trying to reverse Trump's Korea diplomacy.

NATO and Bolton

A further example of the military going around Trump occurred when, ahead of last month's NATO meeting, Trump's national security adviser, right-wing militarist John Bolton, sent instructions to European imperialist defense ministers to work out a joint declaration before Trump got to the meeting. Its aim was to prevent Trump from blowing up the meeting with his hostility to NATO.

An Aug. 9 New York Times article detailed how Washington worked with Brussels to get in place an agreement by which Europe pledged to provide 30 battalions of troops, 30 squadrons of aircraft and 30 battle-ready ships by 2020. The goal of this deal was preparation for a NATO war with Russia.

A North Atlantic Command was to be set up in Norfolk, Va., to be ready for such a war. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg reinforced Bolton's directive during a gathering of the ambassadors on July 4. By the time Trump arrived in Brussels, all the deals had been agreed to. Usually, these deals are haggled out at the very end of such meetings.

Converging against China

The Pentagon is carrying out provocative war maneuvers against the People's Republic of China. The Navy has been sending warships to within 12 miles of Chinese islands in the South China Sea, and on Aug. 10 the U.S. sent a spy plane over them. A CNN crew was aboard the plane recording the events.

"During the flight the crew received six separate warnings from the Chinese military, telling them they were inside Chinese territory. ... 'Leave immediately and keep out to avoid any misunderstanding,' a voice said. And each time the Navy sent the same message: 'I am a sovereign immune United States naval aircraft conducting lawful military activities beyond the national airspace of any coastal state.'"

That means that some 6,000 miles away from the U.S. and less than 10 miles from China, the Pentagon claims "sovereign immunity."

The point is that this provocation comes at the same time that Trump opened up a trade war with China. In this case, his aggressive economic policy is in sync with the Pentagon's military policy, so there is no sabotage from either faction.

Trump, Marxism and the state

Marxist analysis is needed to unthread the complicated political relations inside the Trump administration and with Congress. According to Marx, the capitalist government is the executive committee of the ruling class.

That truth still holds. But that executive committee is by no means politically homogeneous or unified. In fact, the greater the crisis in imperialism and capitalism, the greater the divisions within the government and within the state itself.

Trump's presidency itself is a reflection of the crisis of capitalism. Even though he lost the popular vote by 3 million, his entire political rise was based upon the political demoralization of a section of the masses and the bankruptcy of the corporate leadership of the Democratic Party. After voting for Obama in 2012, millions fled to vote for Trump in 2016. Among those voters were many who had supported Bernie Sanders' unsuccessful bid in the primaries, but then switched to Trump.

A civil war now rages within the Democratic Party leadership over how to overcome this bankruptcy. But in any case, there is nothing the Democratic Party leaders can do to eliminate the crisis of capitalism, which is at the root of the problem.

Trump appealed to anger following years of wages being driven down and unions undermined. At the same time he attacked the setbacks for imperialism abroad, including the failed attempt to completely take over Ukraine in 2014. His election is part of a widespread racist, anti-im/migrant wave generated across the capitalist world, including Europe.

Right-wing appointments broke up Trump's coalition

Trump was a total outsider who triumphed over the Republican establishment. At first, his government was a coalition between that establishment and the right wing. Over time, Trump ousted the establishment figures who could tell him no: Rex Tillerson, former CEO of ExxonMobil, who had been his secretary of state; Gary Cohn, former CEO of Goldman Sachs, who was his chief economic adviser; and Gen. H.R. McMaster, his national security adviser.

He replaced them with anti-establishment rightists: National Security Adviser John Bolton, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Chief Economic Adviser Larry Kudlow.

Trump thought he was now free to pursue his program to revive the fortunes of imperialism. His program was to pull out of the Paris Agreement on the environment; pull out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership; bully NATO into submission; open up a racist war on im-

migrant workers; align with the anti-immigrant forces in Europe; blow up the Iran nuclear treaty; wage a trade war with China and other countries; tear down and renegotiate NAFTA, etc.

Of course, his program is at odds with the traditional ruling-class policy of keeping alliances with European imperialism, while holding these allies in subordination. The establishment is largely hostile to the People's Republic of China, to Iran and unified in its opposition to Russia. But even his right-wing advisers stepped in to save the NATO alliance from Trump.

Two false programs to revive imperialism

Obviously, Trump's policies are completely detrimental to the long-standing strategies of the U.S. capitalist establishment for world domination. In fact, however, the establishment has a totally erroneous analysis of its own crisis and could not solve it with its usual approach. Both the establishment view and Trump's view of the crisis are false.

Only a revolutionary Marxist understanding of the crisis corresponds to objective reality. And only such a view leads to a resolution of the crisis favorable to the workers and the oppressed.

The crisis of U.S. imperialism and capitalism stems from the insatiable, aggressive need of Washington and Wall Street to reconquer and recolonize the vast territories they lost during the Soviet period in the 20th century. It is a failed attempt.

They cannot turn the Pacific into an "American lake" again because China has risen up. They can do horrific damage, but they cannot recolonize the Middle East or Iran because the oppressed in the region will not let it happen. They cannot turn Latin America into a U.S. "backyard" despite their "regime change" aspirations. Their brutal treatment of Puerto Rico and of Latinx im/migrants explodes their false promises. And socialist Cuba still stands in their way.

The crisis stems further from the ruling class's insatiable thirst for profit and the resultant growing inequality and grinding poverty of the masses in the U.S. These masses are the ultimate social base of imperialism, a base that is eroded with every tax cut for the rich, every attack on social services, every act of racist police brutality and mass incarceration. The ruling-class parasites are desperate to suck every last nickel out of the masses as their system declines.

So both views of the crisis, Trump's and that of the broader capitalist ruling class, are false. Capitalism has no solution to its own systemic crisis.

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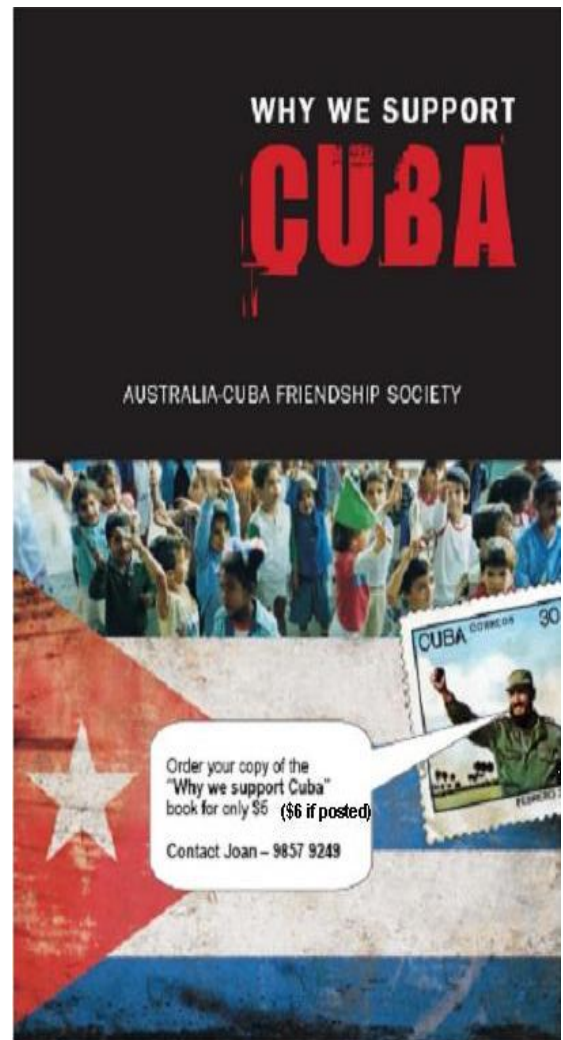
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