

CubaTimes

Published by the Cuba Resource Center, Inc. ■ Two Dollars ■ January-February 1985

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U.S.-Cuba Migration Treaty

by Karen Wald

On December 14, 1984, Cuba and the United States signed an historic agreement permitting the return to Cuba of several thousand Cuban emigres whom the U.S. considers undesirable, while providing that emigration visas to the United States be issued for 20,000 Cubans a year. This is only the third treaty signed between the two countries since the beginning of the Cuban Revolution 26 years ago. The other two re-established low-level diplomatic relations during the Carter Administration, and provided for punishment of hijackers.

On the surface, the treaty is simply a way of "normalizing" migration of Cubans between the two countries. The United States will be allowed to send back to Cuba 2,746 named Cubans who entered the U.S. from the Cuban port of Mariel in 1980. These Cuban citizens—mostly young males who have come to be known as "Marielitos"—are considered "excludable" under U.S. immigration law, and undesirable in general by the U.S. government and large sectors of the American population. Most of them have spent most or all of their four years in the United States behind prison bars or detention camp barbed wire. Getting rid of them has been a major focus of Washington's dealings with Cuba in both the Carter and Reagan Administrations.

In exchange, the U.S. agreed to set an annual quota of 20,000 Cubans a year who will be granted preferential visas to migrate to the United States. This would be in addition to the number of those who would normally be eligible because
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PAUL NESHAMKIN/SEVEN LEAGUE PRODUCTIONS, INC.

Cubans arriving in Florida in 1980.

TO OUR READERS

The editorial Committee of CUBATIMES expresses its deepest sympathy to the family of Sandy Pollack, who was recently killed in a Cubana Airlines crash in Havana. Sandy was a friend of CUBATIMES and worked diligently in the peace movement. She could always be counted on when it came to aiding those who were struggling. She will be missed by her family and many friends.

There have been some developments recently which have caused some speculation in Cuba, as well as in the U.S.: a historic treaty, the visit to Cuba by three Congressmen without Reagan's blessings, and the very real possibility of Pope John visiting Cuba.

The treaty is only the third signed between the two countries since the beginning of the Revolution. Ronald Reagan has succeeded where President Carter failed, in negotiating with President Castro to take back several thousand "undesirable" Cubans who came to the U.S. in the 1980 Mariel boatlift, and in return to issue 20,000 emigration visas a year to Cubans wanting to come to the U.S. The Reagan Administration views this as a victory; some others outside the Administration hope that further talks will develop between the two countries which might lead to normalization on other

levels. The mood in Cuba is guarded and there are signs of a relaxation of fears of an imminent invasion. A CUBATIMES reporter who recently returned has reported there is less talk of an invasion, while there was no real sign of optimism among Cubans. Our report in this issue is an account from Havana of the talks held and the concerns of the Cubans on this recent development.

The three Congressmen who visited Cuba and held extensive dialogues with Fidel Castro are sending out signals that other improvements might be possible with Cuba. However, Ronald Reagan went into office in 1981 expressing a hard line against Cuba, and still shows no sign of change in strategy.

Pope Paul has taken his message of human rights to Latin America, rejecting theologians who espouse what he calls Marxist ideas on social change while at the same time admitting there must be a change. He too expressed an interest in visiting Cuba, and from reports CUBATIMES has received, Fidel Castro has extended an invitation to the Pope.

We will continue to keep you up-to-date on these developments and other issues of interests. Our next issue will include an article on Jewish life in Cuba and a report on the CRC sponsored women's trip to Cuba.

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CUBATIMES is published six times a year by the Cuba Resource Center,



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of direct family ties to U.S. citizens. Such a quota would help serve as a pressure valve to keep the small but volatile segment of the Cuban population that wants to leave from periodically erupting in Mariel-type outbursts, or resorting to stealing boats and small planes, as they have done over the years.

No mention was made in the treaty, and as far as is known, no discussion took place, about the possibility of setting immigration quotas for Americans who might want to migrate to Cuba, to take advantage of that country's full employment, free health care and education, or just its mild climate. President Castro did mention that any reunification of families—a topic not dealt with specifically in the agreement—would have to take place in the United States, because of Cuba's ongoing housing shortage, and presumably this would be a discouraging factor regarding admission of other U.S. citizens to Cuba. The Cuban president did specify, however, that American citizens who came to Cuba for medical attention or required it while here would be cared for, free, with the same quality medical care available to Cuban citizens.

For the United States, the signing of this treaty represents a major achievement of the Reagan Administration, which has persistently tried to get Cuba to take back the unwanted emigres, and has succeeded where the Carter Administration had

Washington sent Cuba a note asking the country to accept the return of those considered "excludable" under U.S. immigration law. Cuba's response was that this had to be discussed in the overall context of talks on migration problems between the two countries. In March 1984 the Reagan Administration agreed to those conditions, but wanted the talks to start immediately.

At that point, Fidel Castro explained, Cuba was concerned that the talks would become a political football in an election year, so Cuba responded that it would prefer to begin the talks after the elections. When Democratic candidate-hopeful Jesse Jackson asked Castro in June to begin the talks sooner for humanitarian reasons, the Cuban president agreed to do so under the condition that both parties expressed their desire for the talks to take place, and promised not to make it a campaign issue. On this basis, the talks began on July 12, going through four sessions that finally ended with the agreement on December 14.

Cuba has some concerns over the current health problems and the actual identity of the returnees, and wanted them sent back at a slow enough rate that would give the Cuban government and society time to absorb them. The agreement calls for the return of up to 100 "Marielitos" a month until all of the 2,746 on the list have done so. John Ferch, the head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, stated that the return of these "undesirables" was the sole importance of the agreement. He did not in any way appear to share President Castro's hopefulness—expressed in a speech the night the treaty was signed—that these talks might lead to others on related issues separating the two countries. Most foreign observers and some diplomatic sources inside Cuba, however, voiced their expectation that this would in fact be the case. There is some indication that talks are still going on.

No Mental Patients Released

While keeping the door open for further "constructive" talks, Fidel Castro made clear that Cuba could not in the meantime let its guard down. And he took the opportunity to sharply criticize the U.S. propaganda campaign charging Cuba with having "emptied out its prisons and mental hospitals" during the Mariel exodus. The Cuban president insisted that no mental hospital had knowingly discharged a patient to go to the U.S. via Mariel. He said this would go against Cuban principles and medical ethics, and would be completely out of keeping for a country which provides comprehensive, free and high quality medical care for all its citizens and anyone else who came here seeking it. He did not rule out the possibility that some family member may have obtained the release of some patient to take that person along to Miami, but stated that if this had occurred, it would have been without the knowledge of the hospital staff.

He similarly ruled out the possibility that Cuba had intentionally sent individuals convicted of violent crimes to the U.S. Among other things, he pointed out, it would be endangering Cuba's own security to let a person found guilty of a violent crime to go free and travel to a country like the United States. He spoke extensively of the hostile acts committed against Cuba by such individuals. Cubans, he indicated, believe those guilty of violent crimes should be punished, not given a free ride to Miami.



Cubans demonstrate in support of their government upon the departure of the "Marielitos" in 1980.

failed. The lame-duck Democratic Administration began talks with Cuba on this point in December 1980 and January 1981, but when Reagan came into office the talks were suspended. They were not renewed until May of 1983, when

The Cuban president suggested that it was not at all unlikely that a number of individuals became mentally ill and/or violent under the conditions they were kept in after reaching the United States. He also pointed out that Cuba had said from the beginning that while those who left were not serious criminals or insane, they were for the most part antisocial characters, social misfits who couldn't relate to work, discipline or study. He scoffed at those around the world—especially in Peru, Costa Rica and Spain—who had welcomed the Marielitos with open arms as political dissidents. "We told them at the time," Castro said, "that these weren't political dissidents. They didn't leave for political or ideological reasons. All they wanted to do was get to their dreamland in the United States." And in fact, he noted, history had proven him right: Marielitos confined to camps or parks in Peru and Costa Rica engaged in angry, sometimes violent demonstrations against their host countries, demanding better conditions and visas to the U.S.

After insisting that those who left via Mariel were petty criminals, at worst, and not those convicted of violent crimes, Castro went on to compare them to some of the real criminals the U.S. has freely accepted over the years, with little apparent concern that their status violated U.S. immigration laws. "This all began on January 1, 1959," he stated, referring to the date the Cuban Revolution came to power. At that time, he said, dozens of known torturers and murderers of the Batista dictatorship fled to the United States, some of them taking millions of dollars they'd looted from the Cuban treasury (as Somoza and his men were to do two decades later when they were thrown out of Nicaragua). Some of these men had virtually committed genocide against the Cuban population; many were the owners of Mafia-run gambling syndicates, casinos, drug and prostitution rings. But all of these were welcomed with open arms. No one considered them excludable.

History of Violence

The Cuban leader also took the opportunity to list some of the many violent acts committed against the Cuban Revolution and its leaders over the last 26 years, inside Cuba, in the U.S. and in other countries of the world, openly or secretly financed by the Pentagon and C.I.A. He talked of the many acts of sabotage, bombings, assassinations and assassination attempts, including those against Castro himself, and the bombing of the Cuban airliner that killed 76 passengers and crew members, which was master-minded by C.I.A.-trained and financed Cuban exiles.

However, the overall tone of Castro's talk was conciliatory rather than hostile. He described the Cuban people as calm, firm, strong and ready for any attack, but open and willing to engage in dialogue and negotiations. He refused to place undue importance on these talks, describing them as less vital than similar ones being held by the Contadora Group concerning peace in Central America, those going on inside El Salvador, the talks between the U.S. and Nicaragua in Manzanillo, and the upcoming Geneva talks between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. But he was complimentary to the delegates who worked out the agreement on both sides, describing them as having worked in a serious and responsible spirit and expressed hope that other talks going on around the world

would be carried out in the same spirit.

Reintegration of several thousand social misfits into Cuban society—many of whom have certainly become physically or mentally ill during their four years of confinement and mistreatment, no matter how healthy they may have been when they left—will not be easy. Some will require medical or psychological care, and others will be imprisoned. The Cuban president expressed optimism that the society would be able to care for them and that they would adapt to life here. "Those who spent four years in maximum security prisons in the U.S., without have committed any crimes, he observed, "are probably no longer infatuated with the consumer society."

President Castro concluded by reaffirming the positive nature of the agreement. "We can't have any illusions," he stated, "or let our guard down in the slightest, but these conversations . . . constitute a constructive, positive act." ■

THE ARTS

Photographers Meet in Havana

by Steve Cagan

About 400 people gathered in Havana from November 19 to 23, 1984, to participate in the "III Coloquio de Fotografía Latinoamericana." The Coloquio is an opportunity for photographers and people involved with photography—critics, historians, curators and other visual artists—to come together for an intense period of interchange of ideas, materials and work. There were three days of panel discussions and lectures, which were the heart of the formal structure of the conference. These were followed by two days of workshops on various practical and theoretical concerns. In addition, there were a number of photography exhibits in different places throughout the city, including the large exhibit based on a competition open to all Latin American photographers.

Participants in the III Coloquio came from Cuba, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Nicaragua, the U.S., Spain, West Germany, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, the U.S.S.R. and Australia. The largest delegations were those from Cuba and Mexico. In fact, leaders of the photographic communities of Cuba and Mexico have had a warm working relationship for a number of years. The Cuban participation in the first two Coloquios, which were held in Mexico City in 1978 and 1981, had been substantial.

The Coloquio has achieved a kind of institutional life and reality for photographers, and especially progressive photographers, throughout the region. Its political meaning may be illustrated by a little incident that occurred during the II Coloquio in Mexico in 1981. A more conservative participant complained that instead of being called the "II Coloquio de Fotografía Latinoamericana Contemporánea," it should have been called the "Coloquio de Fotografía Socialista." And she was basically correct, although not all the participants could be described as socialists or even political activists.

Sandy Pollack: In Memoriam

Political activists and friends filled the chapel of New York City's Riverside Church to pay tribute to Alexandra (Sandy) Pollack on Saturday, February 2nd. Sandy, peace activist and internationalist, was one of 40 passengers killed in a plane crash outside of Havana on January 19th. The plane, a regularly scheduled flight from Havana to Managua, Nicaragua, crashed shortly after take off. There were no survivors. And, to date, there is no available information on the reason for the crash.

United Nations delegations from Cuba, Nicaragua, the German Democratic Republic, and Vietnam, as well as Palestinian Liberation Organization and African National Congress observers at the U.N. joined a wide range of American political organizers, friends and Sandy's family, to celebrate her life and work.

Raised in a politically active household in Queens, N. Y., Sandy was an activist from the age of 13. She spent her high school and college years working against the war in Vietnam and was a member of Students for a Democratic Society. Later she joined the Young Workers Liberation League and the Communist Party, USA.

She first visited Cuba in 1969 and traveled there many times over the years, becoming a leader in the U.S. movement in defense of the Cuba revolution. She served on the national committee of the Venceremos Brigade, which sent many hundreds of Americans to cut sugar cane and build housing and schools. Every year for over a decade she helped organize the coalitions commemorating July 26, Cuba's revolutionary holiday.

She co-founded Tri-Continental New Service, which broke the information black-out by distributing Cuban and Latin American political writing and art in the U.S.

As a natural outgrowth of her Cuba work, Ms. Pollack became deeply involved in the Chile solidarity movement following the overthrow of Allende; the movement in support of Puerto Rican independence; defense of revolutionary Grenada and, especially, the anti-interventionist movements in support of Nicaraguan and Salvadorian revolutions. In all of these struggles she served as a particularly cohesive element on executive committees, and worked with equal dedication on the hard day to day tasks that make lasting political movements.

As a leader of the U.S. Peace Council, she became one of the full-time staff organizers of the historic June 12, 1982, peace demonstration of one million people in New York City.



She was also one of the principal organizers of the U.S. delegation, which included almost 200 peace activists from all over the country, to the 1982 World Assembly for Peace in Prague, Czechoslovakia.

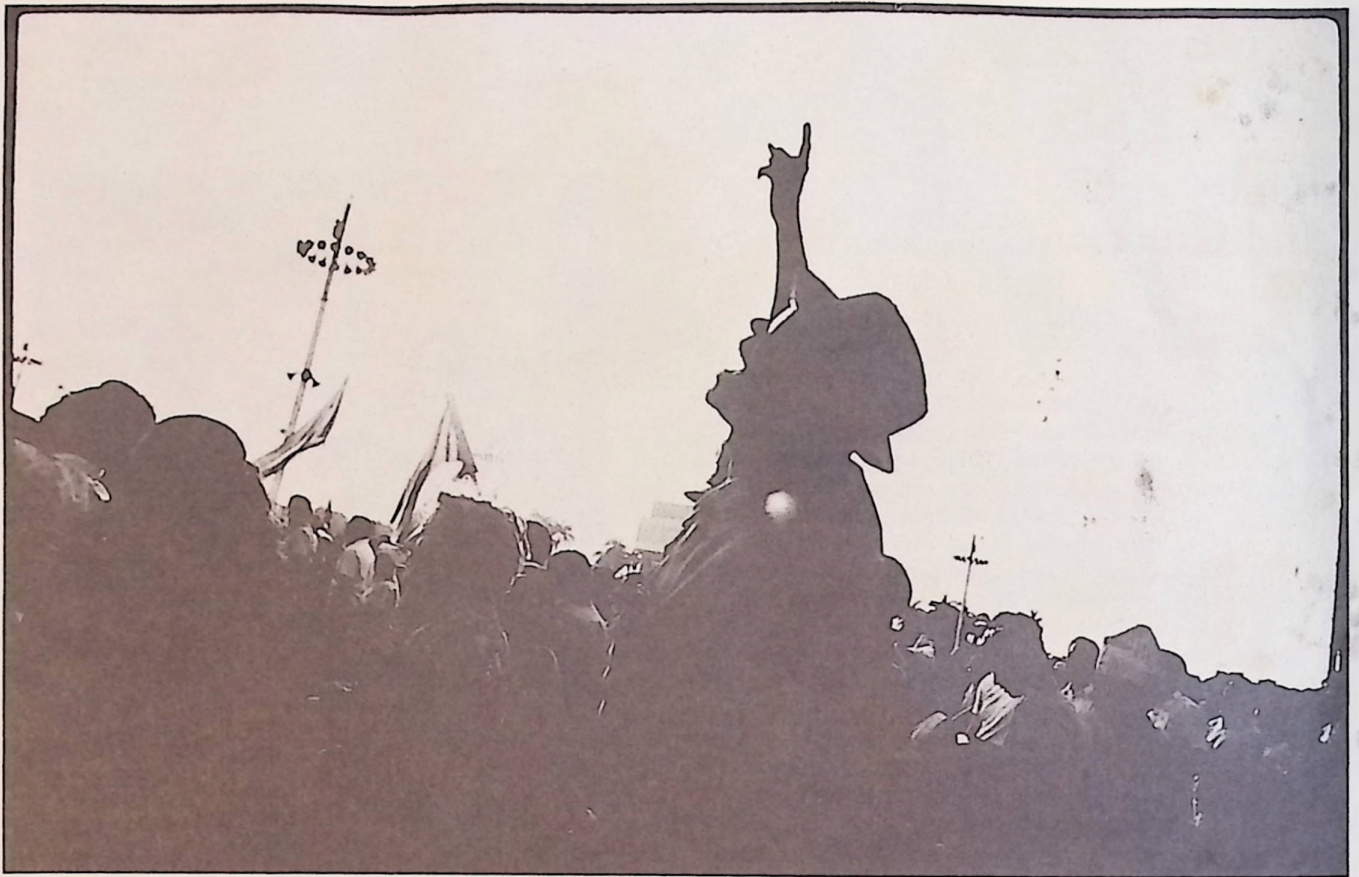
When she died she was helping organize the upcoming April 20 march in Washington that will bring together the broadest forces opposing Reaganism.

In a message to Prensa Latina, the Cuban news agency, and the Nicaraguan New Agency, Sandy's parents, Harry and Cecilia Pollack, sent condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the crash.

The message, sent the day after the crash, said: "In this hour of our terrible loss, we wish to extend an embrace of love and our condolences to the families of Cuba and Nicaragua who also lost their loved ones yesterday."

"Our lovely Sandy devoted her life and all of her energies to the defense of the Cuban and Nicaraguan revolutions." Noting that it was symbolic of her life that her last days were spent going from one of those countries to the other.

"We share your grief," the message continued, "and want to assure you that all of us will try to live up to Sandy's example in the movement for peace and for solidarity of the peoples."



"Silhouette" by Cuban photographer Mario Diaz, taken in May 1981 in Revolution Square, Havana.

People came to the Coloquio with several things on their minds. Theoretical and political concerns were reflected in the topics of some of the panels and lectures. Among these (and this is not a complete list) were:

"Expression of the Latin American character in photography": It was appropriate that this panel—with a presentation by the Mexican Raquel Tibol, and comments by Roberto Rubiano Vargas of Colombia and Mario Garcia Joya (Mayito) of Cuba—should open the conference, since the issue of whether there is something which can accurately be called "Latin American photography" in terms of aesthetics, treatment and style, and if there is, how it can be described, is one of the questions most on the minds of people working in the field.

The issue of what "Latin American" means in photography is far from resolved, but its examination produced fruitful exchanges both in formal sessions and in the ongoing informal discussion in galleries and over meals.

In a panel called "Diffusion and promotion of the photographic image" Jose Martins de Oliveira of Brazil, Orlando Hernandez of Venezuela, and the Argentine Jorge Timossi addressed the issue of who controls the distribution of photographs—and important question at a moment when control of news and information is similarly being discussed—as well as methods of bringing photographs, and thus communication, to new and broader audiences.

Other panels addressed such concerns as "Photography: for whom and for what purpose" (Pedro Meyer, Mexico and Pedro Vasquez, Brazil) which dealt not only with photo-

graphers' motives, but with the possibilities for photographers to contribute to social change and "Premises for the investigation of Latin American photography" which addressed historical issues. "Latin America: another vision" (Esther Parada, Mel Rosenthal and Amy Conger, all of the U.S.) dealt with the treatment of Latin America in the U.S. media, and with the possibilities for developing a committed photographic process. Finally a theoretical panel was held on what might be called "social/aesthetic" questions, called "Aesthetics and the photographic image" (Nestor Garcia Canclini, Argentina; Jose Antonio Portuando, Cuba; Rafael Navarro, Spain).

One indication of the relevance of these presentations to the work and concerns of people attending the conference was the lively discussion which followed most of them. Often themes raised in previous panels were brought into these discussions, which spilled beyond the scheduled times into lengthy exchanges in the halls of the Palacio de Convenciones, into meals, and late into the night.

Photography and Colonialization

In addition to the panel presentations, there were seven major lectures, generally on historical topics. Among the most enthusiastically received were a talk by Keith McElroy (U.S.A.) on "Photography as an instrument of colonialization," which examined the way photographs were used to shape the popular image of Latin America in England and the U.S. during the late 19th and 20th centuries; a talk by the

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NEWS BRIEFS

Castro Greets Gandhi

In a message sent to newly-elected Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Ghandi on his taking over the chair of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, Fidel Castro expressed Cuba's willingness to continue cooperating with India to uphold the Movement's principles.

Health Statistics Update

Before the Revolution less than 20% of Cuban births took place in hospitals. Today 98.4% take place in hospitals. At the time of the triumph of the Revolution, the budget for public health was 21 million pesos a year. Now the figure is 668 million pesos a year. Cuba has 20,545 doctors. It is expected that 50,000 will graduate and add to that number in the next 15 years.

El Machaso Revives Hope

Cuban exiles in Miami have had their flagging fantasy of Cuba without Castro or communism bolstered by the re-election of Ronald Reagan. They are reported to believe that he will find a way to end communism in Central America, Europe, and in Cuba. No one is quite sure how it will be done, but the feeling is that Reagan, who is called El Machaso (the great macho of the world), will find a way.

More Timber Trees

As part of Cuba's reforestation program, 230 million timber-yielding trees, mostly hardwoods and pines, have been planted throughout the island in the last 20 months.

Silent Radio Marti

A year after Congressional approval, Radio Marti is still silent. U.S. government planners are hoping to start broadcasting soon. Problems began when the project's original director resigned and recruiting staff members proved to be difficult. A chief concern of Kenneth Tommlinson, former director of the Voice of America, is Radio Marti's credibility. He voiced concern about the difficulty of attempting to tell Cubans about what was happening in Cuba without correspondents who were actually there. "One error and we're going to be in big trouble," he cautioned.

New U.S. Citizens

United States immigration officials announced a two-step program that will allow 100,000 Mariel refugees to become permanent U.S. residents this year, and full U.S. citizens in two and a half years. Usually a person must be a permanent resident for five years before qualifying for citizenship. But under the new plan, Cubans can skip two and a half years of waiting. The legalization plan excludes all other nationalities, criminals, and Cuban refugees being held in Federal prisons.

Scientific Exchange

Two new Cuban crocodiles laze in Washington's National Zoo. They are gifts from Cuban scientists, presented to a group of scientists at the Smithsonian Institution. The crocodiles are symbols of a new phase of scientific cooperation between the U.S. and Cuba. After a meeting in Havana in 1978, scientists set up an exchange program. About 20 U.S. and Cuban scientists have exchanged visits, studying plant and animal life.

NEWS BRIEFS

Book Conference Attended

For the first time, Cuba was represented at the Congress of the International Organization for Young People's Books held in Nicosia, Cyprus. The Cuban delegate presented a paper on the production and distribution of children's books in the Third World.

Fishing Catches On

In 1983, the total catch of Cuba's fishing industry was 190,000 tons, over 1,000 tons more than the previous year. Exports increased by seven percent. Since 1959, Cuba has been expanding its fishing industry to the point where today, marine products are the country's second most important foreign exchange earner.

Rum Tanks

A few years ago, the Enrique Varona factory began to mass-produce tanks for the bulk transportation of alcoholic beverages, particularly Havana Club rum. Tanks with the capacity of 20,000 liters, made of high-quality stainless steel, which is seawater resistant and does not alter the taste, odor or consistency of its contents, have been developed. To meet the demands for rum shipped in bulk, the production enterprise will turn out over 100 tanks this year. And we happily report that large quantities of Havana Club rum will journey overseas unscathed.

Sixth Film Festival

Havana hosted its Sixth International Festival of the New Latin America Cinema. The festival included new Latin American films, retrospectives, a film market and seminars on cinematography and culture. The objectives of the festival was to present a picture of the region's past and present.

Debt Payments Delayed

An agreement rescheduling Cuba's 1984 foreign debt was signed in Paris. The provisions of the agreement stipulate a rescheduling of Cuba's mid-term debt of about 100 million dollars with 110 commercial banks over a nine year period with a five year grace period. An additional 70 banks with credit lines not directly linked to trade, agreed to maintain them until September 30, 1985.

Debt Cancelled

During his speech at the opening of a sugar mill in Malacatoya, Nicaragua, Fidel Castro announced the cancellation of Nicaragua's 45 million dollar debt to his country. Nicaragua had incurred the debt in the building of the sugar mill. Cuba, in turn, made a gift of the mill to Nicaragua in celebration of their recently held elections.

Fanjul Family Expands

Gulf and Western Industries has sold its 90,000 acres of sugar cane in Florida and its vast holdings in the Dominican Republic to the Fanjul family. The purchase has made the Cuban-American family the major sugar-growing family in Florida. The family set up the Fanjul Sugar Company in 1960 after the family fled Cuba. The Famjuls are among the few Cuban-Americans to be listed in the exclusive Social Index Directory.

COURTESY OF THE CENTER FOR CUBAN STUDIES



"Esperanza and and Chenaro" taken in 1980 at the Old Havana Lyceum, by Cuban photographer Maria E. Haya (Marucha), winner of 1982 Cuban photography prize.

"The Canecutter" by Cuban photographer Mario Garcia (Mayito), taken during the 1979 harvest.

COURTESY OF THE CENTER FOR CUBAN STUDIES



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Brazilian Pedro Vasquez on "Contemporary Brazilian photography," and one by Joan Fontcuberta on Spanish photography, both of which were of interest not only for the intriguing quality of some of the material they presented, but because they were steps toward recovery of parts of cultural history which have been ignored.

The standard treatments of photographic history and theory have been written in Europe and the U.S., and they have generally ignored developments and work not only in the Third World, but as one participant pointed out, in "peripheral"

European countries, "like Spain, Greece or Finland." Recapturing the history of photography in such countries thus means in a rather direct sense escaping one area of ideological imperial domination. Whatever one may ultimately think about the meaning or existence of "truly Latin American photography," it is clear that this field, like any other area of cultural or artistic work, must escape the current domination from the imperial centers if it is to contribute to the development of independent national cultures in the various countries of the region.

This is not to say that European or U.S. photographers, critics or scholars have nothing to offer our colleagues in Latin America. The recognition of the possibility of collaboration in these efforts is demonstrated by the very fact that people from outside the region are consistently invited to participate in these programs.

Because of the important role which these kinds of questions play at the sessions, and because of the number of participants and the enthusiastic level of involvement in discussion, the Coloquio itself is becoming an important focus for the development of theoretical and critical foundations for a more self-conscious "Latin American photography."

In addition to this role, like many such gatherings, the Coloquio provides a source of inspiration for the participants and, I think, for other people who hear reports or read the collections of photography and papers which are published after each one. This function is carried out, of course, as a product of the informal exchanges, of looking at each others' work, and so on—but most of these exchanges would not take place without the formal structure of the Coloquio to bring so many people together.

Castro Speaks

Of course, in addition to the inherent interest of the Coloquio, this particular session was fascinating for many of those attending because it was held in Cuba. Many participants took advantage of the opportunity to wander in Havana, to interview people on the streets, or to produce photographs. We were all conscious of the preparations for a possible U.S. intervention, as well as the general feeling in the city that an invasion or attack wasn't likely, but that the preparations were good common sense. Since there was some local coverage of the Coloquio in the press, some people on the streets were also curious about us and our reactions. And on the last night of the Conference, we had the experience of participating in a black-out of the areas of the city where we were all staying, part of the preparations for the possible eventual defense of the city.

Perhaps the single moment of greatest excitement came near the end of the third day of meetings, when word ran through the conference that Fidel Castro had arrived at the Palacio de Convenciones. The proceedings were interrupted as dozens of photographers rushed into the hallway to take pictures of Castro. It turned out that he had come to address a U.N. Women's Conference which was going on in the same building. After order was restored, we were told that it was likely he would address our meeting as well, and to the delight of everyone at the gathering, that turned out to be true. During the course of an improvised discourse which touched

on such widely diverse topics as the difficulty of explaining baseball to foreigners and his wish that there would be more underwater photography in Cuba, he discussed some issues of direct concern to the Coloquio. Examples of these were: the difficulty of using photography to document the social gains of the Cuban Revolution (how, e.g., does one photograph the fact that health care is free and universally available?), and the need to preserve historically important photographic work, such as that done in the Sierra Maestra or in the early days after the triumph of the Revolution.

During the final session of the Coloquio, the Brazilian delegation offered to host the next one. When they assured everyone that facilities and institutional support would be adequate, there was general approval of the idea. Meanwhile, the Cuban photographers announced that there will be another photographic gathering in Cuba, possibly as early as next summer.

The people who attended the Coloquio were diverse in occupation, age, experience, and the needs they brought to the event. Some felt more satisfied than others. What is perhaps the most important quality of the meeting is that it functions as a place where relationships based on work and politics are created and nurtured, where theoretical and critical issues can be explored in public ways (and go way beyond those physically present), and where enthusiasm can be transferred. It is, in fact, a place where the very Latin American photography it discusses can be encouraged and developed. ■

CUBAN-AMERICANS

Cuban-American Voters Surveyed

by Bob Greenberg

Preliminary analysis of nearly 600 questionnaires collected in Miami during a national Hispanic voters poll sheds light on the reasons and extent of Cuban-American support for President Reagan. The study confirmed the widely reported fact that Cubans in Miami voted overwhelmingly for the President's re-election, by a margin of greater than 9 to 1, with the strongest support showing in foreign policy issues; but it also revealed that Cubans have basic disagreements with the President on a number of key domestic issues. The survey also found signs of a trend toward moderation on the Cuba issue among young voters.

Cuban voters were found to support increased defense expenses (86 percent in favor), aid to El Salvador (76 percent in favor), and aid to the Nicaraguan "contras" (76 percent in favor). In each of these areas, Cubans are at least twice as likely to support Administration policy as other Hispanics surveyed in the national poll. Surprisingly, however, three out of four Cuban voters also strongly favored a verifiable nuclear freeze, in sharp contrast to the Reagan Administration's position.

Nearly 20 percent of the Cubans surveyed favored "normalization of relations with Cuba," and 26 percent favored

"talks with Cuba about agreements for travel, visits and emigration." These surprisingly liberal positions were much more prevalent among the young (18-25 years of age), who favored them by 42 and 51 percent respectively.

The poll also found a number of surprises with regard to Cuban-American opinions on domestic policy. While a solid 87 percent of Cubans favored "the economic program of the current administration," 52 percent were opposed to "cuts in social programs to reduce the federal deficit," nearly 59 percent favored the ERA, and a whopping 91 percent supported "increased spending on bilingual programs." These contradictory findings suggest strongly that on several key social and economic domestic issues, a majority of Cubans don't see eye to eye with the Administration. A slight but reverse gender gap was found, with more of the men identifying as Democrats and voting for Mondale than the women. The majority of Cuban-Americans reported drugs and crime to be the most important problem in their neighborhoods, while data from other Hispanics, as least in the Southwest, suggest that other Hispanics consider unemployment their worst

problems.

The national poll was a collaborative effort by three organizations, each representing one of the three major Hispanic subgroups. The first detailed results were released in November by the Cuban-American Committee Research and Education Fund of Washington D.C., the Southwest Voter Research and Education Project of San Antonio, and the Hispanic Women's Center of New York City. A questionnaire with 29 questions was used to survey voters as they left the polls on November 6th. Better than 6,000 questionnaires were completed in Florida, New Jersey, New York, Texas, and California. Since the survey also collected a wealth of demographic data, more detailed analysis of the results in the coming months should yield extremely valuable insights regarding opinions among Hispanics across different subgroups, geographic locations, ages, incomes and other variables. In the near future, for example, the Committee Fund will be analyzing the vote and opinions of Cubans outside Miami, as well as the contrasts between Cuban-Americans and other Hispanics. ■

FEATURE

Changes Expected In Cuba's Economy

by Elaine Fuller

Some changes in Cuba's economic structure are likely, due to a shift in policy according to certain Cuban officials interviewed in January. In late November of 1984, as the Economic Plan for the coming year was near completion, a meeting of top government ministers resulted in sudden modifications. Ten days later, President Castro's speech at the First Energy Forum signaled long-range policy changes. Highest priority will now be given to investments which result in fewer imports from the capitalist area or which generate more exports to that area, particularly non-sugar exports.

Over 100 products are targeted, from the traditional ones of tobaccos, rum, nickel, citrus, sea products and tourism, to new ones such as textiles, clothing, shoes, cosmetics, toys, cement, bathroom fixtures, steel products, and other construction materials. It is not expected that Cuba would become a major exporter of any of these products; rather, that production capacity exists or will exist for enough exports to earn significant amounts of convertible currency. Nor does this mean that the government is about to cut back on sugar production. The Cubans hope to utilize their considerable expertise in this area by exporting sugar derivatives, their technical skills, and cane cutting combines. In a contract with Mexico, for example, they have undertaken the enlargement, organization and repair of mills in that country.

The new policy is in part a response to the realization that the world sugar market will never again be what it once was. Though Cuba trades only about 15 percent of its sugar for hard currency, it is the primary source of foreign exchange earnings. At this level of sales, a one cent drop in price means a loss of about \$70 million. Prices on the world sugar market

have always fluctuated, but two developments of the 1970's have insured that they will likely remain in a low range — the emergence of the European Common Market as a major exporter, and the increasing use of high-fructose corn sweeteners. World market prices are now lower than those of the Great Depression. Cuban representatives to the International Sugar Agreement worked long and hard to achieve a new agreement that would establish a floor price. By mid-1984 hopes had faded.

The new export policy does mean that other types of investments and administrative expenditures will have to be reduced. This policy is not totally new; indeed, after Cuba asked for debt renegotiations in August 1982, it cut back on many planned investments. What is new is the increased weight being given to trade in convertible currency and its portent for the future.

The new direction is not unlike an International Monetary Fund(IMF) prescription for a poor country struggling to cope with a world crisis in which their imports are ever more expensive, export prices are often falling, and interest rates remain high. Two major differences: first, the burden does not fall on masses of already desperately poor people while others continue a life of luxury. No one is living in misery, nor is there any luxury. This is a country where, except for a few special salaries, the highest income is only five times that of the lowest. In contrast, Argentina, perhaps the wealthiest nation in Latin America, just reported that one-third of its 27 million people are undernourished and live in acute poverty. Secondly, it is government policy not to cut back on consumer goods and social programs, nor to raise prices. While still a scarcity economy, everyone is assured the basic necessities. In fact, the 1985 Plan calls for increases in fish, vegetables, dairy products, and beverages at subsidized prices. Availability of cloth and clothing will remain unchanged. Education and all health care remain free and all retired workers receive a pension. Rents are very low. A recent law con-

verts them into purchase payments so that eventually every family will own its own home. While the housing shortage continues, there is more private and state construction than ever before and greater availability of construction materials to the average consumer.

Some Economic Problems

Offering such comprehensive social programs does not mean there are no overall economic problems. In his energy speech, Fidel Castro criticized what he called Cuba's import mentality: "We have really grown accustomed to requesting imports. Every time we see a problem, we want to solve it with imports. . . . Sometimes we even create needs that generate imports and almost never is the opposite considered. . . ." In many Third World countries such thinking is a cultural legacy of colonialism and underdevelopment, often sustained by educational traditions which cannot meet the technical requirements of large-scale complex production.

The Catch 22 to import substitution for a post-colonial agricultural economy is that it takes greater imports of capital goods to first develop the industries which will eventually produce the substitutes. Of Cuba's total imports, 13 to 15 percent now come from the capitalist area — mostly raw materials, spare parts and capital goods vital to production. These are products which because of specifications or quality are only available from capitalist countries. For this reason, Fidel spoke of increasing Western imports at the same time he emphasized import substitution.

Cuba is, of course, a member of COMECON, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance among socialist countries. COMECON has always had a policy of preferential trade relations for its underdeveloped members. Without question this support has underwritten the tremendous amount of economic development seen in Cuba since the 1960's. But Cuba has not always been able to live up to its trade commitments to COMECON members. For instance, in a year of poor crops and low world sugar prices, sugar destined for the Soviet Union would be diverted to the convertible currency market to maintain a certain level of income. Now, a second economic priority is to be investments that will generate more exports to the socialist area. Fidel Castro spoke of these trade commitments in terms of internationalism and in the context of a struggle to overcome inefficient and costly production processes: "We have had the privilege of being able to develop our Revolution at a time in history and under circumstances that have allowed us to have broad international cooperation. The question we should ask ourselves and the answer that history demands of us is whether or not we have made the most of those opportunities, of whether or not we are aware of this historic privilege, or whether the fact that our way has been easier has made us a little careless, unconcerned and forgetful of our elementary duties."

One purpose of the Energy Forum, in fact, was to create an awareness of the high degree of fuel waste prevalent in many production processes. Inefficient, costly production and poor quality control are the major stumbling blocks to increasing exports. A primary cause is the general lack of management skills along with the low level of technical education and a bureaucratic structure which often inhibits innovation. There is now an incentive against waste in oil contracts with the

Soviet Union covering commitments to the year 2000. They stipulate the amount of oil to be delivered each year. Whatever is not used through greater efficiency can be resold for hard currency. Port conditions are an example of poor management. Incoming ships have had to wait long periods of time to unload. Merchandise sometimes sits in warehouses for years. Not all storage is protected, so much is damaged. Ship containers are sometimes used for storage or simply lost, all of which has cost millions of pesos. In mid-January, Guillermo Garcia, Minister of Transport declared a state of alert at all national ports. Transport and lifting equipment from many other enterprises are now unloading and clearing the ports. Work continues 24 hours a day, 7 days a week both at the docks and delivery points.

Neglect of Infrastructure

This neglect of infrastructure often affects production. One economist explained a common situation, using a clothing factory as an example. Supplies of cloth were no problem; they came from a Cuban textile mill. Supplies of buttons came from the Soviet Union. But the manufacture of zippers is more specialized and the best ones come from western Europe. U.S. pressure on companies trading with Cuba is such that contracts for even such mundane items are sometimes difficult to arrange or fall through at the last minute. This means a whole production line will close down for a time for lack of one small necessary item. But it also means the warehouse and distribution network has not taken account of this problem and has no provision for a worst case scenario. There is not an adequate stockpiling of zippers to allow for continuous distribution to clothing manufacturers.

If Cuba becomes a clothing exporter this situation will have to change. In fact, some see the emphasis on exports itself being the stimulus for changes that will improve the whole production process as well as quality and new design. Not only will deliveries have to be made on time but the products will be competing with the best in the external market.

While traditional Cuban products are of high quality, new exports such as textiles, clothing and shoes will have to achieve a marked improvement to be competitive. There are small workshops which do produce very high quality but it will have to be done on a large scale with continuous production and regular distribution. Two new textile complexes now have enormous capacity to produce both synthetics and cotton.

As an incentive, enterprises earning convertible currency may, in the future, be able to keep a greater share of it in their own accounts, turning over a smaller percent to the national bank. Also under consideration is a change that might eventually allow certain enterprises to make direct contracts with foreign companies rather than going through the import-export houses of the Ministry of Foreign Trade. The new banking law sets up the legal apparatus for more specialized banking and for more transactions in convertible currencies. It also permits foreign capitalist banks to have representatives in Havana.

Further changes are apparently in store. At the National Assembly in late December, Humberto Perez, who heads the central economic planning agency, reported on a ministerial-level task force. One of its duties is to give life to appropriate

methods leading to structural changes necessary for future economic development. ■

U.S.-CUBA

U.S. Congressmen Visit Cuba

by Karen Wald

Amidst wide speculation whether the recent migration treaty signed by the United States and Cuba would lead to further negotiations and a lessening of tensions between the two countries, two U.S. Congressmen have taken the initiative to enter into discussions with Cuban President Fidel Castro, albeit without the official blessings of the Reagan Administration.

The visit, which included several American businessmen and marine biologists, was aimed at exploring areas of potential cooperation between Cuba and the United States. Congressman Bill Alexander (D., Arkansas), who has had a long-time personal interest in marine ecology, proposed this field as one that could be of mutual concern to both countries. His main interest in his conversations with President Fidel Castro, however, was to clarify Cuba's position regarding the Contadora proposal for negotiated peace in Central America.

Congressman James Leache (R., Iowa), who was invited on this trip by Alexander, also expressed interest in finding ways to lessen tensions between the two countries. This position is at odds with some segments of his own party and with the official statements of the Reagan administration following the signing of the treaty on migration, which denied that this first step was in any way designed to improve relations in other fields. Leache, too, considered marine biology a "classic area of mutual self-interest" which could be pursued "regardless of political differences."

In a breakfast interview with the two congressmen and members of their delegation, Representative Alexander emphasized his concern with the question of finding political solutions to the problems of Central America and southern Africa. He said that their first full day of talks with Dr. Castro covered a whole range of subjects from capitalism and communism to spear-fishing and famous people like Churchill, Roosevelt and Averill Harriman. On the second day they focused in on the key issues of the Contadora proposals and Castro's recent speech in Managua. The highlight of these talks was Castro's agreement that verification was and should be an essential feature of any peace plan—as long as Nicaragua's sovereignty was in no way violated. The Cuban President indicated his country's willingness to go along with any proposal agreed to by all parties involved, especially the Nicaraguan government.

Marine Ecology: Shared Interest

Alexander at times waxed eloquent when he spoke of the prospects for uniting the two countries around tasks relating to marine ecology. "There is no doubt in my mind that marine conservation and development is an area that is of

such fundamental need and mutual benefit that great progress could be made with very little dissent and criticism," he stated. "The ocean knows no boundaries," he observed. "Humankind looks at it as a boundary, but nature doesn't. Americans and Cubans would benefit from a bilateral agreement to preserve the ecology of the ocean we both share."

Describing his impressions of Castro, Alexander remarked: "Castro is an excellent spear-fisherman. His knowledge of the oceans is unusual in heads of state. I've not met a head of state who was so knowledgeable about the ocean and its inhabitants."

Alexander pointed out that it is in the U.S.' best interests to lessen tensions between Cuba and the United States, saying that confrontation leads to conflict, which is not in the best interests of the American people. He also expressed his belief that most Cubans want peace.

Asked to comment on remarks by Reagan Administration sources that are opposed to the improvement of relations with Cuba, the Arkansas Democrat insisted that it "is of no value to the American people to ignore the existence of Cuba and its government." He went on to explain that "Some people in the American business community feel threatened by ideology. The concept of Communism frightens them. Castro is a person who represents that concept, in both an articulate and what many see as a belligerent way. Many people can't look beyond the personality and ideology involved to see the benefits our country would gain."

One of those who does see the benefits is Grover Connell, a Southerner in the agricultural import-export business. He expressed the belief shared by most of the delegation that if relations were restored between Washington and Havana, many people in the American business sector would stand to profit.

Leache was less willing to admit that the U.S. would benefit economically from renewed trade with Cuba, although he did not oppose such a move. The Iowa Republican, in explaining why the Administration felt it could demand basic changes in Cuban foreign policy—including specifically the withdrawal of Cuban troops "from Africa and Central America"—without any reciprocal changes or withdrawals by the United States, commented that the United States "could go on indefinitely without economic relations with Cuba. Cuba, on the other hand, wants and needs better relations with the United States," he observed.

Cuban officials disagreed with Leache's contention that Cuba needs economic relations with the United States. A high government official stressed that while Cuba is quite willing to have better relations in general with its northern neighbor, and is interested in developing concrete steps towards this end, it is not begging for such relations—a position Fidel Castro has reaffirmed on numerous occasions.

Leache himself acknowledged this when he commented that any change in the U.S. position toward Cuba would be based on Cuba changing its foreign policy in a number of areas, which he admitted was unlikely to happen.

Representative Leland Also Present

Micky Leland, (D., Texas), who was recently elected head of the Congressional Black Caucus, was in Cuba at the same time, and took part in some of these discussions. He em-

phasized the importance of lessening tensions by developing relations based on mutual respect. When questioned whether the vast differences in size, power and wealth made such relations improbable, Leland contended that there are members of Congress who feel there can and must be mutual respect between the two countries. He described the U.S. policy of hostility toward neighboring countries as ridiculous: "We're not at war with any of these countries," he remarked. "It's not our right to determine for other nations their means of governing themselves. We're talking about sovereign nations, and if we get in the business of trying to dictate to other countries, at some point we're going to be smacked with retribution. Some other power may decide to determine what our government should be like."

When pressed on the question of how many Congressmen share these views, Leland described Congress as divided into three sectors. One sector totally and openly shares his view that the U.S. should lift the embargo, stop hostilities and create a friendly atmosphere, including full diplomatic relations, with Cuba. Another group, he says, believes the same thing, but won't vote that way because they fear political reprisal in their districts. If this second group would speak out, "we could win," he asserted, because the two groups combined greatly outweigh the third sector that is completely opposed to any improvement in relations with Cuba. That middle group that holds the balance of power could be moved by increased education of the people in their districts to their personal stake in a lessening of tensions. Leland said poor and working people are becoming more aware that the money being eaten up by the Pentagon is at the expense of goods and services they need. Once they become a voting power, the Congressmen who now know that U.S. policy is hypocritical and wrong, but are unwilling to take the political risk of saying so, may speak out.

On the question of Contadora, Leland said: "President Castro told us he is willing to accept the Contadora principle, but in the case of Nicaragua, not at the Nicaraguans' expense. . . . He recognizes Nicaragua as a sovereign nation and feels that they should have the right to choose their own path in regards to how they are to resolve their internal problems. But in general he agreed to the Contadora process. He also talked extensively about verification. He agreed in principle that verification is the right way to go, because it not only serves the interests of those who are the adversaries in

the region, but also those of the Nicaraguans. He felt it was a two-way sword that cut both ways, but he would not violate the sovereign decision of an independent country." (Nicaragua has already publicly stated its support for the Contadora proposals.)

Leland said verification—which has been the main objection voiced by the Reagan Administration to implementation of the Contadora proposals, was really one of the problems. "I think that they have been very reluctant to support the Contadora process because they are not the leaders in the process. And it doesn't serve our interests to the extent that the Reagan Administration doesn't want it to. They're very supportive of the *contra* movement in Nicaragua. Thus the cessation of the interventionism by the *contras* who have been trained by the C.I.A. is contrary to the interests of the Reagan Administration at this point."

Leland claimed there is tremendous opposition in Congress to the Administration's support for the *contras* in Nicaragua. "We have passed laws that prohibit the President's actions in Nicaragua, it's just that the President happens to have certain latitudes that the Congress doesn't have, as the chief administrator of our country." He said liberals and conservatives, Democrats and Republicans, have raised their voices time after time, and must continue to do so. . . . "The problem is President Reagan has a better forum than most of us in Congress and those of us who are against intervention and in favor of improving relations with other countries with whom we may disagree ideologically. The President tends to avail himself of that forum and sells his program. But the people are slowly but surely learning that the President is not acting in their best interests domestically and internationally."

Leland believes that constituents' ignorance of what is really going on is what makes them support whatever the President does, including his adventurism in Grenada, El Salvador, Nicaragua. "That's the real problem."

Leland said of the talks just concluded, "I feel hopeful that at least on the part of Cuba and President Castro, we have moved a lot closer in terms of easing tensions between the two nations. I feel encouraged in that, if in fact President Reagan was willing, we could sit down and talk, administration to administration, and we could negotiate a treaty of good will that would establish much better relations and possibly even full-blown diplomatic relations between the two countries." ■



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HEALTH

Twisting Statistics to Attack Cuba

by Andrew Zimbalist

There are, of course, many legitimate ways to criticize the Cuban economy, the Cuban political system, and Cuban statistics. By levying false criticisms, however, one undermines the legitimacy of valid criticisms. Nick Eberstadt's article of December 10, 1984 on the Op Ed page of the *Wall Street Journal* on Cuban literacy and health is an example of false criticisms, based on inaccurate and manipulated information.

Kenneth Hill, whose study appeared to be Eberstadt's principal source, has already sent a separate letter to the *WSJ* disavowing the Eberstadt piece as a misrepresentation of his argument. The Eberstadt piece can be criticized on many levels, but, due to space limitation, I shall concentrate on a few exemplary distortions pertaining to Cuban health statistics.

On a methodological level, Eberstadt confuses rates of decline in infant mortality with levels of infant mortality as a success indicator and overlooks the issue of data reliability for pre-1959 Cuba as well as for the other Latin American countries he cites. He also fails to note two crucial facts, regarding the increase in infant mortality during the late 1960s, and its comparison to the pre-1959 period. First, up to 1965 Cuba used the Spanish definition, counting infant deaths only for infants who had been alive for 24 hours. Since 1965, Cuba counts all infant deaths from the first breath. Second, prior to 1959 there was only one rural hospital in all of Cuba. This fact raises serious questions about underregistration of infant deaths in a country where over 40 percent of the population lived in rural areas. With the proliferation of rural clinics and hospitals during the 1960's, however, the extent of registration rose markedly. These two facts account for



MEL ROSENTHAL

Improved access of Cuban women to health care has had an impact on lowering infant mortality statistics.

most, if not all, of the increase in infant mortality rates in the late 1960's.

On a factual level, Eberstadt claims that until the early 1970's the State Statistical Committee checked on the accuracy of health statistics reported by the Ministry of Health and since that time there has been no check. It will come as a surprise to Mr. Eberstadt that the State Statistical Committee was first created in 1976. It could not have overseen anything prior to the date. Before 1976, statistics were gathered at an office of JUCEPLAN, the State Planning Committee. The only change in the statistical procedures in the early seventies was to create two new provincial branches for statistics in Matanzas and Oriente. Since 1976 the State Statistical Committee has compiled health statistics from figures supplied by its branch offices, not by the Ministry of Health. Presently, Columbia University has a joint project on infant mortality in Cuba with the Ministry of Health in Havana. The principal investigator from Columbia University told me on December 20 in Havana that she had found no irregularities or inconsistencies in Cuban infant death data and she has been studying precisely this question for the past 12 months.



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Eberstadt asserts that Cuban infant mortality is inconsistent with Cuba's morbidity statistics, e.g., infant mortality rates dropped 45 percent between 1969 and 1977, yet diarrhea rose 15 percent over the same period. In fact, the standard morbidity-mortality correlations do not hold strictly for Cuba due to improved infant nutrition. Nonetheless, there is no inconsistency here as diarrhea and enteritis in Cuba have accounted for only 5 to 7 percent of infant deaths over the last five years.

Eberstadt claims that Cuba fudges and juggles its data. Example one: the 1973 infant mortality rate for the Isle of Youth was lowered between the 1977 and 1982 yearbooks. In fact, had Eberstadt read the yearbooks he would have noted that the figure for infant deaths was actually adjusted upward by six deaths. The percentage figure he alludes to was the result of either a calculation or printing error, but the underlying data was also reported. In any case, the change was upward and amounted to only six deaths out of more than five thousand total infant deaths. If this is Eberstadt's best example of a statistical anomaly or distortion, he may also wish to repudiate the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*.

Example two: Eberstadt says that the life table data, which can be employed to indirectly confirm or refute official infant mortality estimates, in the 1981 census has been "strangely garbled . . . (as it) lumps all people under 16 into a single un-

differentiated category." Cuban authorities are thus implicated to be engaged in a deliberate cover-up. But had Eberstadt read the published 1981 Cuban census, pages 7-12, he would have seen a complete population breakdown by age groups both above and below 16.

Eberstadt also suggests the Cubans may keep two sets of books. Apart from the fact that some information is classified (although less and less in recent years), this claim is ridiculous. If Eberstadt knew the amount of effort it was to keep one set of books and how vital statistical accuracy is to central planners, he would conclude, as do U.S. economists studying centrally planned economies, that one set of books is all they can handle.

In 1983, the Cuban infant mortality rate was 16.8 per thousand, compared to anywhere from 38 to 78 per thousand in Cuba in the 1950's and to 73 per thousand in Brazil in 1982, 53 per thousand in Mexico in 1982, and 39 per thousand in Venezuela in 1982. In 1984, the preliminary estimates are that the Cuban infant mortality rate will fall further to approximately 15.0.

Balanced and informed studies by the World Health Organization and U.S. Congressional committees have recognized Cuba's sterling accomplishments in the health field. Nick Eberstadt should in the future follow his own advice more faithfully: "The Cuban health record should be examined with greater care." ■

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