



Saturday, October 26, 2024

October 20, Day of Cuban Culture
Celebrations of Cuban Culture Across the Island
and Around the World



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All Out to End the Blockade of Cuba!

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October 20, Day of Cuban Culture
Celebrations of Cuban Culture Across the Island and
Around the World

In Cuba, since 1980, October 20 has been celebrated as the Day of Cuban Culture. This year, many events were held to honour Cuban culture across the country. Activities were also held around the world, including in Canada.



The Cuban Embassy in Canada celebrates the Day of Culture October 23, 2024.

The activities organized to mark the Day of Cuban Culture included film presentations, musical concerts, folkloric dance performances, plays and readings. "The Day is an opportunity to draw attention to efforts for the protection of heritage, while showing school as a place of cultural integration and to emphasize the role of Cuban culture as a symbol of resilience and diversity," the Cuban Ministry of Culture stated.

Radio Havana Cuba noted on October 12 that the Day of Cuban Culture "is an opportunity to pay tribute to those who, through the ages, have defended our identity [...] It is a tribute to the artists, creators, historians and intellectuals who have brought Cuban culture to every corner of the country, to inaccessible mountain communities or to prisons, making a right guaranteed by the Revolution a reality."

"From the outset, the Revolution's cultural policy was designed to encourage popular participation in cultural processes and to make the best of Cuban and world art available to the people," *Radio Havana Cuba* added.

In Cuba, festivities were interrupted by cross-country power outages that began October 17, caused by a breakdown at the Antonio Guiteras thermoelectric plant in Matanzas. The U.S. illegal blockade against Cuba has led to fuel shortages and difficulty in getting spare parts for the electrical grid.

Nonetheless, in Bayamo on October 20, the day's main event took place. It paid tribute to Perucho Figueredo, a lawyer, poet, and musician who was part of the forces fighting against Spain during Cuba's first war of independence. In 1867 Figueredo composed *La Bayamesa* -- the *Hymn of Bayamo* -- about that struggle. The song was first heard on October 20, 1868 at the Battle of Bayamo where the independence fighters, which included Figueredo, prevailed over the Spanish. The Day of Cuban Culture commemorates this historic date.



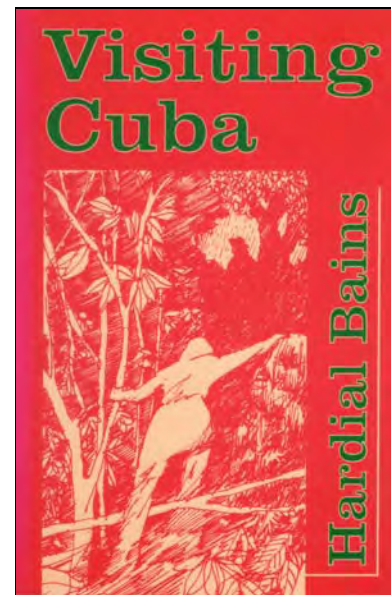
In 1902, *La Bayamesa* became Cuba's national anthem. A translation of the lyrics of the National Anthem follows:

*Hasten to combat, people of Bayamo!
Because the homeland looks proudly upon you;
Do not fear a glorious death,
To die for the homeland is to live.
To live in shackles is to live
Mired in shame and disgrace.
Now hear the sound of the bugle;
To arms, brave ones, hasten!*

Also celebrated on this occasion was the 120th anniversary of the birth of the great Cuban writer Alejo Carpentier (1904-1980), and the role of community art instructors trained to teach arts and culture in the schools and community-based projects across Cuba.

Bayamo, which is today the capital of Granma province, was the site of many key battles in Cuba's independence wars against Spain. It was also pivotal in the armed struggle led by Fidel Castro, that finally succeeded in freeing Cuba from foreign dictate with the overthrow of the U.S.-sponsored dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista on January 1, 1959.

In his book *Visiting Cuba*, Hardial Bains, founder and leader of the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist) wrote about the visit of a Party delegation to Bayamo in 1995. During that trip, the delegation also visited La Comandancia, also in Granma province to the south of Bayamo, which was the command post of the Rebel Army in the Sierra Maestra mountains. This visit took place during the Special Period when the Cuban people were facing great economic challenges as a result of the collapse of their trading relations with the former Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries, which intensified the hardships caused by the U.S. blockade.



On the return from La Comandancia, the delegation met with musicians of Quinteto Rebelde whose cultural contributions became integral to the Rebel Army led by Fidel Castro in the mountains. In the book *Visiting Cuba*, Hardial Bains conveyed what the members of Quinteto Rebelde explained: "In due course, Fidel Castro suggested that they should join the battle with their songs and music. In this way, they would not only inspire the guerrillas in the heat of battle but also strike fear in the hearts of the enemy soldiers. The necessary equipment in the form of loud speakers and a small generator were procured and the quintet played its own important role during the revolutionary war. To this day four of its original members, along with two new young players, continue to play not only the old revolutionary songs, but new ones as well. Just as the old songs tell of the heroic exploits of the guerrilla fighters and describe the faces of the enemy troops, so too the new ones are dedicated to the current struggle of the Cuban people against the U.S. blockade [...]"



Quinteto Rebelde performing amidst other fighters of the Rebel Army in the Sierra Maestra, including Fidel Castro. Right: the group marks its 60th anniversary in May 2018.

Reflecting on the visit to La Comandancia, Hardial Bains wrote:

"What came to mind was that this world is not so orderly or so well-planned. Were everything to be organized ahead of time, taking care of the minutest detail, making sure nothing is left to the imagination, we would not be human. Even more so, what would be the need for human beings if the task of humanizing the environment were no longer there? Revolution, the mode of development of society, is not only unknown in terms of all its details, drama and splendour, but it cannot be organized to the hilt even if it were possible to know all the qualities in advance. What would a revolution bring to the world, if the sum is already known? When something new is being created, it is not possible to identify all the results beforehand. Preparations are made accordingly. We must learn as we go along, using theory and the highest achievements humankind has given rise to in the past, as our guide."

The role of culture in consolidating the Cuban Revolution brings to mind the words of Comrade Bains in summing up the Party delegation's visit in 1995: "If someone were to ask me what the word Cuba means after this visit [...] I would say that for me Cuba means the people of a new world coming of age, realizing their potential and the necessity to affirm themselves. Cuba means finding solutions to the problems facing the people under all circumstances and never giving up or succumbing to difficulties."



Cuba's Ambassador to Canada, His Excellency Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz, addresses the gathering at the Embassy of Cuba in Ottawa, which also featured musicians, poets and artists.



Cuba's Day of Culture is celebrated at the Toronto Latin American Film Festival, October 20, 2024.



Cuban education workers in Equatorial Guinea mark the Day of Culture, October 19, 2024.



Cuban embassy in Honduras celebrates the Day of Culture, October 20, 2024.



Video: "Quinteto Rebelde, the Most Powerful Weapon in the Sierra Maestra" released on the group's 60th anniversary in May 2018.

(With files from Prensa Latina, Radio Havana Cuba, Visiting Cuba)

All Out to End the Blockade of Cuba!

Worldwide Actions in Support of Vote at UN General Assembly Against U.S. Blockade -- *Join In!*



UPCOMING EVENTS

On Tuesday, October 29, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) will consider for the 32nd time the agenda item entitled *Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba*. This illegal blockade has been imposed since 1962, that is, 62 years. Member States will vote on the resolution on Wednesday, October 30.

As it has done every year since 1992, Cuba will present its *Updated Report on UNGA Resolution 75/289 on the necessity of ending the U.S. embargo against Cuba*, often referred to as the U.S. blockade and known for its brutality. The U.S. openly talks about using the blockade to starve and impose harm on the Cuban people to achieve their aim of regime change -- and have failed miserably. The Cuban people stand with their revolution as do the world's people.

Since 1992, the support of countries at the UNGA for the resolution has only increased, systematically isolating these two moribund countries that have always opposed the resolution. [1]

Year	Date	For	Against	Abstention	Voting Against
1992	November 24	59	2	71	U.S., Israel
1993	November 3	88	4	57	U.S., Israel, Albania, Paraguay
1994	October 26	101	2	48	Etats-Unis, Israel
1995	November 2	117	3	38	U.S., Israel, Uzbekistan
1996	November 12	138	3	25	U.S., Israel, Uzbekistan
1997	October	143	3	17	U.S., Israel, Uzbekistan
1998	October	157	2	12	U.S., Israel
1999	November	155	2	8	U.S., Israel
2000	November	167	3	4	U.S., Israel, Marshall Islands
2001	November	167	3	3	U.S., Israel, Marshall Islands
2002	November	173	3	4	U.S., Israel, Marshall Islands
2003	November	179	3	2	U.S., Israel, Marshall Islands
2004	October	179	4	1	U.S., Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau
2005	November	182	4	1	U.S., Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau
2007	October	184	4	1	U.S., Israel, Marshall Islands, Palau
2009	October	187	3	2	U.S., Israel, Palau
2011	October	186	2	3	U.S., Israel
2012	November	188	3	2	U.S., Israel, Palau
2013	October	188	2	5	U.S., Israel
2015	October	191	2	0	U.S., Israel
2018	October	191	0	2	
2017	November	191	2	0	U.S., Israel
2018	November	189	2	0	U.S., Israel
2019	November	187	3	2	U.S., Israel, Brazil
2021	June	184	2	3	U.S., Israel
2023	November	187	2	1	U.S., Israel

On Thursday, September 12, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla, presented to the national and foreign press the update of the national report on the effects of the economic, commercial and financial blockade of the United States against our country, corresponding to the period March 2023-February 2024.

The cost of the blockade is evident in the shortages of all kinds that Cubans face, including food, medicine, fuel, means of transportation, as well as in the deterioration of other basic services.

Here are some comparative data published in the newspaper *Granma* on September 13 of what the blockade means:[2]

- 25 days of blockade equals the financing required to cover the needs of the country's Basic Drug List for one year (approximately U.S.\$339 million).
- nine days equals the amount required to import medical consumables (cotton, gauze, syringes, needles, sutures, catheters, equipment for serum, among other supplies) and reagents necessary for the national health system for one year (U.S. \$129 million).
- 21 hours of embargo is equal to the cost of acquiring the insulin needed to cover the country's demand for one year (U.S.\$12 million).
- 18 days is equal to the annual cost of maintenance (excluding fuel and investments) of the National Electric Power System (U.S.\$250 million).



- four months correspond to the amount to guarantee, for one year, the delivery of the standardized family basket of products to the population (U.S.\$1.6 billion).
- 38 hours are equivalent to the cost of producing/acquiring the study material base needed to cover the needs of the country's education system for one year (\$21.789 million).
- If the blockade were to cease for eight hours, Cuba would be able to acquire the toys and teaching aids for all the kindergartens in the country (U.S.\$4.5 million).
- Half an hour is equivalent to the cost of the electric and conventional wheelchairs required to meet the needs of the country's special education system (U.S.\$256,363).

- 44 hours are equivalent to the funding needed to guarantee computers in the country's educational centres (U.S.\$25.2 million).
- 15 minutes corresponds to the funding needed to cover the demand for hearing aids for children and adolescents with disabilities in special education in the country (U.S.\$144,000).
- Three days are synonymous with the cost of annual maintenance of public transportation in the country (U.S.\$40 million).
- Nine months is equivalent to the estimated financing needed to cover the country's new housing construction needs (U.S.\$3.893 million).

International actions are being organized before, during and after the UNGA vote to condemn the criminal U.S. blockade against Cuba, demand its end and to remove Cuba from the list of so-called "State Sponsors of Terrorism." *Join In!*

Notes

1. "United States embargo against Cuba," *Wikipedia*
2. "In figures, the siege against Cuba," *Granma*, September 13, 2024

Petition to End the U.S. Blockade Tabled in House of Commons

On October 23 in the House of Commons, Bloc Québécois MP Gabriel St-Marie tabled petition e-5014 calling on the Canadian government to act to end the U.S. blockade against Cuba.[1] It was launched on June 18 by Pierre Hivon of Ste-Marcelline, sponsored by the aforementioned MP and closed on October 16. The government must now provide a response to the petition within 45 calendar days.

When tabling the petition, St-Marie said:

"Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to present petition e-5014, which was signed by a large number of people.

"These petitioners are calling on the government to ask United States representatives, through the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to: lift the blockade against Cuba as well as to remove Cuba from the list of state sponsors of terrorism; reaffirm the importance of denouncing the blockade against Cuba as one of the key barriers to the Cuban people's full enjoyment of their human rights; act immediately to preserve the sovereignty of Quebec and Canada, ensuring that Quebec and Canadian corporations and other entities, particularly governmental ones, do not participate in the American economic sanctions against Cuba; and ensure that Quebec and Canadian relations with Cuba continue to be based on equality and respect for sovereignty, independence and the right to self-determination.

"I commend these petitioners, and I am honoured to present this petition."

In the days leading up to this year's vote at the UN General Assembly on Cuba's resolution calling to end the blockade imposed on Cuba for 62 years, the petition is one of many actions being carried out in Quebec, Canada and around the world - pickets, rallies, virtual meetings, public assemblies, car caravans - to demand an end to the U.S. criminal blockade against Cuba, to defend Cuba's sovereignty and the Cuban people's right to be.

***End the U.S. Blockade Against Cuba!
Remove Cuba from the U.S. List of State Sponsors of Terrorism!***

Note

1. The petition e-5014 collected 1433 signatures. To read the petition, [click here](#).

Responsibility for Energy Crisis in Cuba Lies Squarely with U.S.

White House spokesperson Karine Jean Pierre made outrageous comments during an October 21 press briefing, in which she denied the responsibility of the United States for the energy crisis in Cuba, feigned concern for the suffering of the Cuban people, and continued U.S. attempts to get the Cuban people to rise up against their government for "mismanagement."

Jean Pierre said that the U.S. is "closely monitoring the blackouts on the island. And so, we are concerned about the potential humanitarian impacts on the Cuban people. [...] And like we have seen over the past few years, Cuba's economic condition stemming from long-term mismanagement of its economic policy and resources has certainly increased the hardship of the people in Cuba. [...] We] just want to make clear that [...] the U.S. is not to blame for the blackouts on the island or the overall energy situation in Cuba."

A recent opinion letter published in the *Journal de Montréal* on October 22, sets the record straight on U.S. and monopoly media disinformation that blames the Cuban people, their leadership and chosen system of governance for the recent massive power outages affecting Cuba.

The letter, written by Manuel Johnson, treasurer of the Quebec-Cuba Solidarity Roundtable, points out that to the contrary, responsibility for the power outages and many other shortages that have violated the human rights of the Cuban people by depriving them of the



necessities of life for the past 62 years, lies squarely with the U.S. and its illegal blockade.

The blockade, whose aim is regime change in Cuba, clearly violates international law, which is based on the principles of respect for the sovereignty and the right to self-determination of peoples and nations, and non-interference in their internal affairs.

The letter points out that on October 17, Cuba's electrical grid "collapsed under the increased demand caused by overwhelming heat. While Cuban energy workers and engineers were heroically trying to get the energy system back on its feet, the Cuban people were suffering terribly from the effects of the prolonged and total power outage.

"The mainstream media reported on the suffering of Cubans and the energy crisis, without explaining to the public, with a few exceptions, the cause of this crisis: the cruel blockade by the United States that has lasted for more than 62 years."

Due to the U.S. blockade, which does some U.S.\$14 million in damage to Cuba's economy per day, the letter explains that Cuba has great difficulty importing fuel to power its thermoelectric power plants. Furthermore, the blockade also prevents Cuba from importing the equipment and parts needed for the regular maintenance of these plants. Thus, the five-year maintenance cycle for 13 of 15 energy production units has not been completed.

The letter decries the U.S. aim "to punish the Cuban government because Cuba insists on deciding its own future, rather than following Washington's dictates. They hope that by creating misery and suffering for the entire population, the people will revolt against their government."

The letter points out that the U.S. is almost totally isolated in the international community for its inhumane and hostile policy toward Cuba: "Last year, 187 countries voted in the United Nations General Assembly to lift the blockade, for a 32nd consecutive year. Two countries voted against the motion: the United States and Israel."

The letter also decries the spurious designation of Cuba by the U.S. as a state sponsor of terrorism, when, "In reality, it is not Cuba that sends bombs to the four corners of the world, every time a country dares to stand up and claim its right to self-determination; it is the United States. On the contrary, what Cuba sends to the four corners of the world are doctors and nurses, thus demonstrating exemplary internationalist solidarity."

The letter concludes by calling "on our governments, at all levels, to demand an immediate end to the unjust and illegal U.S. blockade, to put an end to the atrocious suffering of the Cuban people caused by this cruel and inhuman policy."

(Quotations from letter translated from original French by TML.)