



Australia-Cuba Friendship Society
Melbourne NEWSLETTER
April 2019

Next Meeting
Monday 1st
April
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

24 March, 2019

Bad, worse, worst. That's our sicko nation in a sicko world, with sicko 'leaders' pretending to know what they're doing. Our man calls himself Scom and is a total dill, leaving me wondering why anyone in their right mind would want to vote for him. But it's fascinating watching the dill and his right-wing cronies doing triple somersaults since the Christchurch tragedy pretending they support Islam, when they don't. You can bet London to a brick their new-found sympathy will not extend to Palestinians or apologising for their wars against the people of Iraq and Libya and Syria. As Leunig's Mr Curley laments: *'Little flower let us pray; The world gets madder every day; There's little I can understand; The anxious hearts, the broken land.'* At least we can take heart from the calm and compassionate words and behaviour of NZ leader, Jacinda Ardern.

We're living in a time of growing fascism, where power, culture, politics, finance and everyday life are merging in ways that are unprecedented, posing a genuine threat to everyone on this planet. Fascism begins with language and then spreads outwards affecting everything. It shapes cultures and legitimises indiscriminate violence against entire groups and anyone considered 'undesirable'. All the things that matter are ignored and the unthinkable becomes 'normal'.

I'd much rather not talk about Trump, and although he's half-cracked we can't ignore him. In a recent interview, he made it clear that if moves were made to 'impeach' or 'unelect' him, they would be met with 'white police and military violence and carnage' from his army of right-wing thugs. You could ignore this latest rant, but more than 50% of Americans who identify with Republicanism support postponing the next election, the mindset of a wannabe fascist. In a further worry, we have Space Directive-4. Back in 1997, the US Space Command announced its commitment to 'full spectrum dominance' which meant US military control over land, sea, air and space (the so-called fourth dimension of warfare) to protect its interests and investments. And as America continues to expand its space operations, the race towards 'full spectrum dominance' has accelerated, with the new doctrine seeking to weaponise space by blurring the boundaries between high altitude military aircraft and space itself. Peace is definitely not on Mr Trump's agenda.

In late February, the entire world ran with the story that Venezuelan President Maduro was responsible for burning humanitarian trucks trying to bring food and medicines into the besieged country. **A lie. The New York Times reported the trucks were set**

on fire by anti-Maduro protestors who threw a Molotov cocktail. But the US war on Venezuela continues to escalate with the sabotage of its electricity grid, an act of terrorism against the entire population. It's called **Hybrid Warfare** and stops at nothing to hurt and damage the targeted nation. There are no rules and no boundaries. Nothing is forbidden.

Washington has Cuba back in its sights. Title 111 of the Helms Burton Act that's been on hold since 1966 changed last January when the US State Department announced the delay was over and the act would be implemented from 13 April. This opens the door for former owners and heirs of properties nationalised by Cuba to initiate actions in US courts to gain compensation for what they lost. It could be a huge problem for Cuba and affect just about everything. Cuban journalist Lazaro Barredo, formerly editor of Granma, said: ***'Helms Burton has no precedent in the legal history of the US...and constitutes an attack on sovereignty within the international community and represents political terrorism. Helms Burton would extent US jurisdiction to other countries...with the perverse intention of frightening, blackmailing and dissuading persons from investing in Cuba...a decision to 'repossess the island, annex it, and move it toward total subordination to the United States.'***

St Patrick's Day has come and gone almost without a trace. Back in its heyday there were huge marches through the centre of Melbourne and celebrations throughout the city with non-stop talk about Ireland and the potato famine that triggered off a massive wave of immigration that brought many Irish to our shores, including my g.g.grandparents Elizabeth Muldoon from County Tyrone and Thomas Gordon from Dublin. If it's mentioned at all, the famine is called a 'natural' disaster, which it wasn't. The crop failure affected only the potato. During the worst famine years, other food production was robust. In the first winter of the famine, 1846-47, as many as 400,000 peasants starved, and yet landlords exported huge amounts of grain, cattle, pigs, flour, eggs and poultry that could have prevented those deaths. After all that misery, I'll let Leunig come to the rescue, again: ***God give me a quiet week, Nothing too amazing, Nothing too far up the creek, I need to do some grazing. God please let me simply plod A path that's not too rough. Being me is very odd And that is quite enough.*** Viva!

Joan Coxsedge

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

Subtle Reminder – Subs are due...please help keep the flags flying

[Working collectively with a national vision](#)

President Miguel Díaz-Canel leads second governmental tour of the capital



[History preserved in our national symbols](#)

The proposed National Symbols Bill would establish more flexible use of these items with a view toward promoting their greater presence in society, within a legally defined, respectful framework

[Truth or a visa: The New York Times spreads lies about Cuba and Venezuela](#)

The **Times** is not above participating in the fake news campaign being waged against the Bolivarian Revolution by the United States

[Díaz-Canel receives former President of Argentina](#)

Prior to this meeting, Yesterday March 18, the distinguished guest was received by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, first secretary of the Community Party of Cuba Central Committee

[The country we build, the country we defend](#)

Beginning this year we must begin to reach several milestones in the construction of housing, President Díaz-Canel said, upon summarizing a meeting to analyze the work of the Ministry of Construction (Micons) in 2018 and its short-term projections.



[Cuban solidarity in Venezuela wears a white coat](#)

Since the beginning of Cuban medical solidarity in Venezuela, more than 140,000 health care professionals have participated, a large portion of the 220,000 total collaborating in various arenas



[New ways of linking government with the people](#)

E-government is summarized as the use of technologies to provide services and information to citizens, increase the effectiveness and efficiency of public administration, and boost citizen participation



[Banking services to support all important economic processes](#)

The Cuban President attended the Banking and Financial System annual report

[You are all Cuban women and love the land where you were born, this must be the compass that guides the FMC](#)

Full text of speech by José Ramón Machado Ventura, second secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba, during the closing session of the Federation of Cuban Women's 10th Congress



[Economic development is a priority for the country](#)

Concluded yesterday, with the presence of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee's first secretary, Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, and Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, President of the Councils of State and Ministers, was a two-day work meeting in Havana attended by Party first secretaries from all the country's provinces and municipalities, as well as presidents of Provincial and Municipal Assemblies of People's Power

[“Not neglecting the gaps that remain, nor the challenges that lie ahead”](#)

Granma International speaks with Teresa Amarelle Boué, secretary general of the Federation of Cuban Women, about the challenges facing the first mass organization created by the Revolution, which held its 10th Congress March 6-8



REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT STATEMENT

[Cuba condemns terrorist sabotage of Venezuelan electrical power system](#)

The Revolutionary Government strongly condemns the sabotage perpetrated against the Venezuelan electrical power system, which is a terrorist act intended to harm the defenseless population of an entire nation, and taking it hostage in the non-conventional war launched by the government of the United States against the legitimate government headed by comrade Nicolás Maduro Moros and the civic and military union of the Bolivarian, Chavista people.



MARIEL CONTAINER TERMINAL

A gateway to Cuba's foreign trade

Located in the center of the main maritime routes that require a transshipment port in the region, the Terminal has an advantageous location for trade with the East Coast of the United States

Why do Cuban women support the Revolution so firmly?

Cuban women support the Revolution so firmly, so enthusiastically, so loyally... because it is a revolution that means double liberation for women. Women are a part of the country's most humble sectors... women face discrimination not only as workers, but as women, as well

D-Day, V-Day, and beyond

Cuba and Venezuela continue to resist imperialist attacks and advance their national projects



Dear Comrades,

The process of buying a tractor for the International Camp Julio Antonio Mella (CIJAM) began some time ago. During the wet season during electrical storms the power lines or a transformer to the pump at the water bore were quite often damaged, as they cross the fields for some distance from the road to the head of the bore.

When power is lost, CIJAM runs out of water, having experienced this intolerable situation during my frequent visits several times, I spoke with Raul Abreu, CIJAM Director about a solution to this problem, and offered to buy a portable generator to provide power to the pump.

A couple of weeks later he spoke to me and suggested that a tractor would provide a solution to this, and a number of other problems as the generator from the old emergency power plant at the camp was still serviceable, though the motor was worn out.

After locating an old Soviet built tractor that was for sale, and in excellent condition, permission was obtained and paperwork prepared for the purchase, quite a lengthy process.

A tractor needs implements and a farmer who had retired and sold his land was selling his implements, a large trailer, two different types of ploughs, a planter and a large rotary slasher were purchased from him.

Since then, in a good example of Cuban improvisation, a large water tank has been made using an old truck chassis and wheels for watering the plants that are to be planted.



The tractor has opened up huge possibilities for CIJAM.

The fields that previously had orange trees, that had a disease and have now been cleared after a decision was made by the Provincial Communist Party organization to better utilize the available land in the area. In an agreement with a co-operative the agricultural land belonging to CIJAM is being ploughed and prepared for planting about 450 different types of fruit trees, mainly mango and avocado. In the interim until the trees are mature vegetables will be grown in between the rows, including corn, cabbage, yuca (a root vegetable), sweet potato, pumpkin and beans.

Work is being carried out in the CIJAM workshop repairing and painting these implements, and making others.

All of this will make a huge difference to the experiences provided to the 16 or 17 brigades each year to CIJAM. Keith Headland.

Unique features of Cuba's wind farms

Defining the characteristics of the terrain, finding the most suitable wind turbine models, and ensuring hurricane resistance are just some of the challenges the island faces in generating wind energy

Author: [Leidys Maria Labrador Herrera](#) | internet@granma.cu - march 6, 2019 15:03:06



The wind turbine components began arriving in Cuba in December 2018. **Photo:** Leidys María Labrador Herrera

Well into the 21st century, many dangers threaten the stability of our planet as we know it. Beyond wars, epidemics or political instability, there is a disaster that also stems from the irrational attitudes of our species, and whose main consequence is the destruction of the environment and, with it, possibly that of humanity itself.

The excessive exploitation of natural resources, without awarding the concept of sustainable development its place within the great strides of the modern era, is an underlying concern expressed in the most diverse international scenarios. This has yielded results such as joint agreements that point to a greater awareness of states regarding such a sensitive issue, although there are those who irresponsibly refuse to cooperate.

Undoubtedly, one of the most important steps toward this goal is the use of renewable energy sources, which allow for a gradual reduction in dependence on fossil fuels. Logically, such

moves are not only environmentally motivated, but also include a strong economic component, since while most of these alternatives require large initial investments, their efficiency and stability result in swift cost recovery.

Given the potential of the island, in addition to its various solar parks scattered throughout the country, the use of wind as an energy source is also gaining ground among planned investment projects.

Harnessing wind energy is nothing new; humans have been using it for a long time. However, with the passage of time and scientific and technological advances this use has been consolidated, given its efficiency.

Generating electricity from wind, among other benefits, is non-polluting, as no toxic substances are emitted or waste produced, and reduces the use of fossil fuels therefore resulting in significant import substitution, all of which translates into sustainable development.

In Cuba there are already several wind farms in a testing phase, however, the most ambitious of investments in this area is that of the La Herradura 1 and La Herradura 2 parks, a wind generation complex located north of Las Tunas province, with a total of fifty-four 1.5 and 2.5 megawatt wind turbines.



Gibara wind park, in the eastern province of Holguín. **Photo:** Ministry of Energy and Mines

While this may seem a simple project, it has posed several challenges, as the complexity of construction works requires a high level of detail, the permanent monitoring of the processes linked to the execution of the project, and the professional development of all those involved.

Engineer Delisse Moreno García, director general of the Electrical Engineering and Projects Enterprise, spoke to Granma International about the efforts in this field: "Our enterprise began its training as soon as the renewable energy policy was conceived, especially that of our technicians, both within our country and abroad.

"This is the first time that a project of this kind has been undertaken, as while we have a series of test parks, they are of much smaller dimensions than those we are working on here. The construction process of these parks also differs. The installation of modern and such large equipment imposes new construction, assembly, ground preparation and location methods, even when installing electrical connections. All the procedures associated with these wind turbines represent significant changes, therefore, we had to study them and undertake several test projects beforehand."

But the complexities are not only related to the wind turbines themselves. As the engineer explained, coupled with the parks is the substation that receives the energy generated, a facility that is larger, more complex and modern than the rest of the national system. "I believe that the most important thing is the benefit, not only for the people of Las Tunas, but to strengthen the National Electric System," she noted.

In recent years, various models of wind turbines have positioned themselves in the market, and a quick internet search suffices to observe innovative designs that break with the traditional image we have of them.

However, the fundamental aspect in this sense is that the selection of equipment corresponds to certain parameters of the area where it will be located, logically including wind speed and prevailing weather patterns.

The selection of the equipment to be installed in the Las Tunas wind parks took into consideration these aspects, as explained by the Director of the Renewable Energies basic enterprise unit, affiliated with the Electrical Engineering and Projects Enterprise, engineer Yadiel Martínez Rodríguez.

“The first thing that is done is a study that allows us to assess the wind resource in the area and select the appropriate wind turbine, among the different types existing in the market. When the first La Herradura project was conceived, the most established turbines were 1.5 MW. When the La Herradura 2 project was being studied, the same procedure was carried out and, in that case, 2.5 MW machines were already recognized and therefore it was decided to opt for that power for the second park.

“Depending on the wind speed that is measured in each zone, different machines are used. One of the aspects that influence this is the height of the hub, or the size of the rotor. Today, 3 MW machines are being used around the world at higher altitudes, and experimentally some four and five megawatt machines, always depending on the best use. Returning to the La Herradura projects, we can say that given the average wind speed in this area, which is eight meters per second, the machines that will be installed will allow an optimum use.”

The real possibility that tropical storms and cyclones hit the country is an aspect that is constantly considered in all strategic state plans, and the construction of wind parks is no exception, as Martínez noted: “The selection process assesses the power, but within that same regulation is what is called the class of the turbine. In this case we can speak of class 1, 2, 3 and class S (special). This classification is what defines the maximum wind force that a wind turbine can withstand.

“In the case of Cuba, as it is a country frequently hit by tropical phenomena, class 2 is chosen for the eastern zone, and in the case of the west, class 1 or S is recommended. We are talking about enduring a category 4 hurricane, without the equipment suffering any damage. It is also worth noting that the machines have a guidance system and other procedures to protect themselves in the event of a hurricane.

“Once the storm has passed, if the wind turbine did not suffer any damage, all that is needed is to restore the electrical supply so that they can synchronize and start generating again. They must be connected to the power grid to be able to work, but they do not need, as thermoelectric plants do, for example, a period of time to be able to initiate generation. With the connection and the wind, they automatically initiate the process.”

A popular saying goes that the sun rises for everyone, and adapting it to the matter that concerns us here, it could be said that the wind also blows without distinction. It is an inexhaustible natural resource, not only capable of destroying, but that can also be used to generate something as valuable as electricity.

When the wind turbines’ north of Las Tunas blades begin to spin, the National Electric System will receive an injection of more than one hundred megawatts. As such, the news that other similar investments will be undertaken in the country is promising. Cuba is looking toward a future of clean energy, more economic and based on a single objective: sustainable development.

<http://en.granma.cu/cuba/2019-03-06/unique-features-of-cubas-wind-farms>

Amongst us all, we must develop a government that works for the people

This was one of the calls to action made by Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, President of Cuba’s Councils of State and Ministers, upon summarizing the first day of a working meeting with presidents of Provincial and Municipal Assemblies of People’s Power from the entire country

Author: Vivian Bustamante Molina | internet@granma.cu - march 18, 2019 17:03:33

The intense working meeting held March 11, with presidents of Provincial and Municipal Assemblies of People’s Power from the entire country, and headed by Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, President of Cuba’s Councils of State and Ministers, focused on strengthening government work at the local level, while contributing to economic development and increasing citizen participation.

Upon summarizing the day, Díaz-Canel reiterated that the meeting’s objective was to strengthen working relations between the central government and local levels, as part of a plan that includes regular visits by central authorities to the provinces.

He emphasized that conditions must be created for more efficient public administration, which implies not only the availability of material resources, but also adequate work styles and organization; a cadre policy that promotes sensitivity and revolutionary concern, without bureaucratism, with collective spirit, and close ties with the grassroots.

“Amongst us all, we must develop a government that works for the people,” he reiterated.

Cadres who are not sensitive, do not take action, are bothered when people come to them with problems, the President said, calling for fewer obstacles and less bureaucracy, for continuing to prioritize attention to the population.

We must seek government action that is more transparent for the population, so they know what we’re doing, what the priorities are, what is directed toward development, or toward meeting their needs. This guarantees the people’s participation in decision making, he added.

In his comments, the President also emphasized aspects of the international situation, with a neoliberal, colonizing offensive underway, media manipulation, the proliferation of fake news, increasing confrontation, and U.S. persecution of the region’s nations, among them Cuba, now facing the potential implementation of Title III of the Helms-Burton Act.



Summarizing the day’s work, Díaz-Canel said that the objective of the meeting was to strengthen working relations between the central government and the local level.
Photo: Estudios Revolución

Given this environment, the focus remains on the three priorities for government efforts expressed several months ago by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, who placed preparation for defense and the economy at this level.

The other priority was the constitutional referendum, which was conducted and led to a victory, a reaffirmation of commitment to the Revolution by a majority of Cubans, the President noted, indicating that the economic battle continues to be the fundamental task at hand, the most complex, and that in which the people place the most hopes. To rise to the occasion, structures and management must be reinforced and support sought from the economic sciences.

MUNICIPAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Minister of Agriculture Gustavo Rodríguez Rolero presented an update on the municipal self-sufficiency program, generating a number of remarks on the issue, described as key to the country's food security and sovereignty. The goal of producing 30 pounds of produce per inhabitant and five kilograms of animal protein, every month, has seen different levels of development, and is in need of greater yields and the diversification of crops.

Ricardo Cabrisas, a Council of Ministers vice president, pointed out that the substitution of imports with domestic products is also decisive, since Cuba annually devotes some 1.8 billion dollars to buy food on the international market, 30% of which is for animal feed.

Also raised during the discussion were intentionally trying out-of-season plantings; considering traditional crops; focusing on the needs of each province; specialization of cooperatives and individual producers; with particular attention to contracting, an issue emphasized by First Vice President Salvador Valdés Mesa.

Additionally reported during the meeting were results of large scale studies on high-protein plants begun by Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro Ruz, which include research, development, innovation, production, and distribution of high impact products for the food, pharmaceutical, and cosmetic industries, and others that could become sources of income.



The economic battle continues to be the fundamental task at hand, that in which the people place the most hopes, the President stated.
Photo: Miguel Febles Hernández

In this regard, Díaz-Canel referred to the need to promote this program, first, in honor of Fidel, who dedicated the last years of his life to demonstrate the viability, under our conditions, of these crops and productions, which are linked to various activities and sectors.

An exhaustive explanation of how to achieve adequate budget execution at the local level was presented by Meisi Bolaños, minister of Finances and Prices, who insisted on tighter control of financial resources; the importance of complying with tax law; and proper management, to eliminate deficits in revenues, which have been gradually reduced, but still affect 19 municipalities in four provinces.

She specified that, within local budgets, we must give better use to territorial tax collections, given what these funds mean to development at that level, not only in production and services, but also in the generation of jobs and their sustainability. When dealing with the subject of outstanding accounts receivable and payable, she emphasized the urgent need to transform the current situation in the chain of defaults, synonymous with lack of control and disorganization.

ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

Several ongoing projects regarding electronic commerce, and others being planned, were reported by Minister of Domestic Commerce Betsy Díaz, who said that the main objective is to facilitate service and reduce the handling of cash in transactions, by both legal persons and individuals. Regarding the use of point-of-sale (POS) terminals (debit card readers), she spoke of the short-term extension of this modality in outlets selling construction materials, and in the retail network, with priority in Havana and Santiago de Cuba. Irma Martínez Castellón, minister-president of the Central Bank of Cuba, said that the functioning of POS must be demanded at sales points. Alejandro Gil, Minister of Economy and Planning, referred to local development programs, since, he said, given the current economic situation, solutions must be found as close as possible to the site of a problem. As of the end of December, 290 local development projects were underway across the country, mainly in commerce and gastronomy, the food industry, culture, local industry, tourism, and community services. Practically giving a methodological class on management of these types of projects, he stressed that those which have financing will always be immediately approved, calling on local authorities not to request resources from the national level and seek ways to self-finance. As has been emphasized on other occasions, he said local governments must involve universities and research centers in the conception and implementation of local development programs, a valid course of action for all activities that promote economic and social progress in the country, according to those in attendance.

More details

[Cuba condemns all terrorist acts, methods, and practices](#)

More details

[FBI finds no evidence of “sonic attacks” in Cuba](#)

[Dolphinariums restored \(Photos\)](#)

[A present based on memory](#)

<http://en.granma.cu/cuba/2019-03-18/amongst-us-all-we-must-develop-a-government-that-works-for-the-people>

A tornado of solidarity and humanism

Five weeks after the tornado that seriously damaged several municipalities in Havana, Dr. Flora Vila Vaillant, director of the Hijas de Galicia Maternity Hospital, commented on reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts

Author: [Yenia Silva Correa](#) | informacion@granma.cu - march 21, 2019 11:03:02

The effort made that was lost at Hospital during example of abandoned – but

The images that shocking, but institution (some and their

“During the collaboration of was protected,” Neonatology suffered any type



The Hijas de Galicia Hospital, in the municipality of Diez de Octubre, suffered extensive damage during the tornado that hit the Cuban capital on January 27. **Photo:** Juvenal Balán

by the government and people of Havana to recuperate all the Diez de Octubre Gynecology and Obstetrics University the tornado that hit Havana on January 27, is not only an humanism – following the Cuban principle that no one is also of solidarity and organization in medical institutions.

flooded the media a few hours after the catastrophe were even at the most difficult moment, doctors and nurses at the injured) never wavered in prioritizing the health of patients companions.

tornado, 196 patients were hospitalized here and thanks to the the emergency team working at the time, every one of them says Dr. Flora Vila Vaillant, director of the hospital. In the ward there were 17 infants, two in critical condition. None of injury.

They were protected by the medical and nursing staff on duty that night, she adds. “In the wards, none of our women were injured. Some companions suffered minor injuries, which were sutured and attended by the staff present.” Thanks to the preparation of several entities, always ready to face disaster situations, and the coordinated work to save lives, other health care centers in the capital welcomed patients from the Hijas de Galicia, the name with which the Diez de Octubre Maternal Hospital is best known.

This was the first step that allowed the recovery work to begin immediately. “In order to continue assisting the significant number of women this hospital admits, adjustments were made in the National Health System: clinical specialties at the Enrique Cabrera National Hospital were transferred to other institutions and a strictly maternity center was set up there. Our patients were moved there, and for a month, general services were not offered; it functioned only as a maternity hospital.



In less than four hours all patients and their companions were evacuated. **Photo:** Yamil Lage

“To accomplish this, our medical and nursing personnel were mobilized, plus diagnostic means, including equipment. This allowed us to focus on the recovery.”

Regarding the speed with which patients were transferred, Dr. Vila commented:

“The hospital was evacuated in less than four hours, thanks to the participation of several entities. Without them, it would not have been possible: the firefighters’ rescue team, the medical emergencies unified system, the search and rescue team, the Red Cross. Patients were transferred to several obstetrics-gynecology hospitals in the country, without having to lament any loss of life or complication.”

Fortunately, there were no deaths when the tornado hit the hospital with all its force, but the facilities suffered considerable damage.

“The main damage we had was the loss of all the aluminum trim. Practically 90% of the glass windows were lost. Roofing was affected, the plumbing system was lost. Of our 74 water tanks, 80% were damaged, including the piping. The Human Milk Bank – the only one in the province – didn’t suffer any damage, but, yes, everything around it,” Dr Vila explains.

A national reference institution

With more than 100 years of experience since its founding in 1917, the Diez de Octubre Gynecology and Obstetrics University Hospital, while simultaneously attending to the population, trains undergraduate and postgraduate medical students, Cuban and from abroad. It has the capacity to admit 284 patients and some 5,000 births take place here every year. “There are six provinces that have that number of births. This is the second largest maternity hospital in the country, after the (Vladimir Ilich) Lenin (General University Hospital). We have a total of 284 budgeted beds, 37 non-budgeted, 10 rooms and five operating rooms.

“We serve a large portion of the population in the capital and are a reference center for low birth weight babies, so patients with pathologies related to very low birth rate from the provinces of Mayabeque and Artemisa come here,” Dr. Vila explains.



The institution’s recovery has required an intense effort. **Photo:** Endrys Correa Vaillant

The hospital that is recovering, with the support of different state bodies and its 80% female staff, is also a reference center for the treatment of utero-cervical cancer, and houses the National Breastfeeding Training Center.

The hospital concluded 2018 with an infant mortality rate of 2.4 per 1,000 live births, and in January of 2019, according to statistics gathered before the tornado, 354 births were recorded, 261 of which were natural.

The government response

The first 72 hours after the tornado were decisive for the recovery: urgent tasks included assisting the injured; clearing debris and fallen trees; restoring electrical and telephone services; evaluating damage to homes and buildings; while guaranteeing food and shelter for those who lost everything. A call was made by the country's highest leadership to ensure that everything repaired or reconstructed would be in better condition than before the tornado, and this has been done, not only in terms of housing, but also in facilities serving the population. "The Blas Roca and Julio Antonio Mella contingents were the main forces participating in repairing the hospital.

The joint work of all these enterprises meant that in less than a month we could re-open the hospital with 10% of the services. "Although the work is not 100% complete, we have already repaired what was damaged by the tornado, but we were given the opportunity to rehabilitate other areas that we had included in the hospital's repair and maintenance program, and in this way we are reaching many more areas.

As such, the hospital is going to be almost completely renovated, a new hospital." Dr. Vila recognizes that an effort of such magnitude, with the goal of having the institution operating at 100% in the shortest time possible, is doable only with the cooperation of the hospital's staff, the political will of the country, the disinterested collaboration of other entities.

The hospital director offered "our gratitude to all the enterprises that participated in the recovery of our hospital, but if there had been no intention on the part of the state, the government, and the Ministry of Public Health to accompany us, it would not have been possible.

"I would also like to highlight the dedication of our workers, not only those who participated here onsite with the builders, but also those who were assigned to go to the National Hospital, in different conditions because it is farther away, to provide the same services, with the same quality, so we did not have to lament any death, any complication among our patients; to all the personnel who were on vacation or off duty that day, who heard the news and came straight here.

"We had workers affected, (their homes damaged). We have also assisted them, we have visited them, with donations, with support of all kinds and this is an expression of solidarity. "The tornado does not know what it did to this people. It awoke all our solidarity, all the spirit of humanism that this people has, all that spirit of responsibility and desire to act."

<http://en.granma.cu/cuba/2019-03-21/a-tornado-of-solidarity-and-humanism>

Traces of the CIA in Venezuela's nationwide power outage

A CIA has had its eyes on the country's vulnerability for years, looking to use an electrical failure to promote destabilization and put an end to the Bolivarian Revolution

Author: [Granma](#) | internet@granma.cu - march 20, 2019 16:03:25



Photo: Wikimedia

A memo leaked by WikiLeaks in September of 2010 points to the actions of the CIA in the recent nationwide power failure in Venezuela. The author is Srdja Popovic, founding member of the well-known subversive organization, Center for Applied Nonviolent Action and Strategies (CANVAS), based in Belgrade that declares the promotion of "democracy" among its purposes, and trains activists and politicians in "nonviolent struggle" in the search for regime change.

This is the same organization that trained Juan Guaidó, and has been linked to sectors of the Venezuelan opposition since 2006. Popovic writes in his 2010 memo: "A key to Chávez's current weakness is the decline in the electricity sector" in Venezuela. Likewise, he notes that the Guri hydroelectric plant would be one of the important objectives in the case of power failure.

The memorandum identifies the potential collapse of the Venezuelan electricity grid as a "watershed event" that "would likely have the impact of galvanizing public unrest in a way that no opposition group could ever hope to generate." It also specifies that there is a "grave possibility that some 70 percent of the country's electricity grid could go dark," and suggests that a well-trained opposition group could serve the purpose of destabilizing the then Chávez government.

As U.S. journalist Max Blumenthal pointed out: "Flash forward to March 2019, and the scenario outlined by Popovic is playing out almost exactly as he had imagined."

Guaidó, trained by CANVAS, is taking advantage of the consequences of the national blackout, due to what the Maduro government described as "cybernetic and electromagnetic attacks," as a political issue to call people onto the streets.

Venezuela lost at least 875 million dollars in four days as a result of the power outage, the equivalent of one percentage point of its gross domestic product.

It cannot have been purely coincidental that three figures tweeted just moments after power failed across the country, thus implicating themselves in the sabotage:

- U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo threatened: "No food. No medicine. Now, no power. Next, no Maduro."

- Florida Senator Marco Rubio tweeted just three minutes after the power failure, with precise information that no other media had access to.

- Juan Guaidó tweeted that the light would return when Maduro was gone, in a message reminiscent of that of a kidnapper.

<http://en.granma.cu/mundo/2019-03-20/traces-of-the-cia-in-venezuelas-nationwide-power-outage>

Brexit: The Irrationality and State of Denial of the Withdrawal Agreement Shambles

With less than four weeks to go before Britain is due to leave the European Union at 11pm on Friday, March 29, the House of Commons is very little nearer to agreeing what the Withdrawal Agreement should be. The Deal agreed between the government negotiating team and the EU leaders, an agreement which has been endorsed by the other 27 EU member countries, has been rejected by MPs. Changes to the Deal have been ruled out by the EU negotiators. Theresa May has attempted to negotiate changes with them without success, while being unable to convince MPs to accept the Deal that has been negotiated.

This situation has been described as a shambles. A shambles dates back to the blood and gore of butchery and the slaughterhouse, a state of total disorder. The more the House of Commons has attempted rational debate on the question of leaving the European Union, the more irrational the situation has become.

Theresa May continues to be in denial that this is the case. She is pinning her hopes on convincing the EU negotiators that the "back-stop" can be replaced by "alternative arrangements" and therefore placating the "rebels" in the Conservative Party who are angling for a No-Deal Brexit. This is not an acceptable course of action, even if it were possible. It flies in the face of the movement towards Irish unity, and would be contrary to the Good Friday, or "Belfast", Agreement, which is an internationally-binding peace treaty.

Parliament has shown its dysfunctionality, in that it is incapable of finding any solution to the issue of Brexit. Furthermore, it can bear being repeated that whether to Remain in or Leave the EU was neither the problem to be solved for the people when the Referendum was called, nor did the ruling elite call the Referendum to ascertain the will of the people on that question. It has served only to cloud the issue of what should be the direction for the economy and for society, and to divert the people from taking this orientation and discussing the way forward. The stark reality is that the neo-liberal agenda of the ruling elite in this country has been consistent with the neo-liberal agenda of the European Union. The concentration of wealth and power is certainly a characteristic of the EU, but the call to "take back control" does nothing to empower working people, and has both spread illusions about the nature of Westminster democracy and been used to foment racism.



There have been many and inconclusive debates at Westminster, as the House of Commons has endeavoured to square the circle between those that demand Brexit at any cost and those that see Britain's remaining in the EU as a matter of principle. Whether by accident or design, the United Kingdom of England, Scotland, Wales and the north of Ireland appears to be heading towards the worst of all possible worlds. A "meaningful vote" has been postponed until March 12, and who is to say that it will not be postponed once more, or what it will resolve when it does take place. Michel Barnier, the EU's chief negotiator, has commented that a delay to the March 29 Brexit date seems unavoidable. But, as the ball is in Britain's court, and the prospect of a clear outcome in the "meaningful vote" seems itself unlikely, chaos is the most likely result.

Which trade rules is Britain going to follow? What on earth is the meaning of a "sovereign economy" when multinationals rule the roost, and can decide at a whim whether their vested interests are to be served by manufacturing in Britain or not, Brexit or no Brexit? How racist and xenophobic is the ruling elite going to be, using the pretext of "taking back control"? A rules-based international order and the rule of law which the government promote mask a reality which is the polar opposite. Something new is required, recognising that solutions based on an archaic and obsolescent outlook cannot be found. That something new has to be the human factor, bringing to bear the power and initiative of the working class and people. But the weight of the past blocking the future is depriving people of this power and initiative.

Furthermore, looming large is the threat of "hard power" which the ruling elite puts above everything, as embodied in the present pro-war government. In this situation, even whatever trade deals emerge from the chaos are bound to be part of the pro-war outlook and used as such.

In this situation, it is true that Jeremy Corbyn is manoeuvring to give some opening to his slogan of "For the Many, Not the Few", which goes beyond the division of the polity into "left" and "right", or into Leavers and Remainers. Although the amendment in his name was defeated [[see For Your Information article](#)] given the impasse, would Theresa May eventually settle on something close to what Jeremy Corbyn proposed? Jeremy Corbyn has recognised that Parliament has "been pushed to the edge". However, it seems that the government is hell bent on defeating itself and deepening the crisis of credibility of Parliament. It cannot resolve the contradictions among the ruling elite in society.

What does this indicate for the people's movement? A meaningful discussion has to be worked for with a view to working out what is in the people's interests. Any solution is to be found, not along chauvinist lines, that Britain has to be "independent", but by ending the ruling elite's relations of exploitation internationally and at home. Let us take a stand for our own interests, based on proletarian internationalism and the politics of empowerment!

As *Workers' Weekly* concluded in its January 26 issue: "In our view, this is what Brexit is calling on us, the working people, to do. We should fight for the New. In the face of the all-round crisis, we should organise for the alternative. What this means is to recognise how Parliament has become completely dysfunctional, not even recognising what its own norms are and certainly not capable of sorting out a way out of the impasse, and instead to take a stand in defence of the rights of all. It is to take a stand in favour of the people's empowerment."

Maduro meets U.S. anti-war delegation, says, 'Humanity's battle is between socialism and capitalism'

Posted in [Latin America & The Caribbean](#), [Venezuela](#) - March 19, 2019

Workers World online editor John Steffin interviewed Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center, on March 17. Flounders is in Caracas, Venezuela, as part of a solidarity delegation of a dozen anti-war leaders from all over North America, organized and sponsored by the U.S. Peace Council. Members of the delegation arrived in Caracas on March 9 and 10. As of March 18, the delegates have finally begun returning home after American Airlines canceled their flights. A full list of the participants is at the end of this article.

Workers World: We saw pictures posted on social media of Peace Council delegates meeting with President Nicolás Maduro. What was the purpose of the meeting?

Sara Flounders: The U.S. Peace Council delegates, Comité de Solidaridad Internacional Venezuela (COSI) and President Maduro met to discuss strengthening cooperation and communication. Suggestions were for sending more delegations to Venezuela and more social media exchanges. When Maduro heard from Sarah Martin that there was a demonstration for Venezuela in Minneapolis happening that day, he immediately sent a twitter message to them.

The Venezuelans are very supportive of the upcoming action on March 30 in support of the Bolivarian Revolution in Washington, D.C. They see it as a next step in solidarity in response to the crisis. We told Maduro that the Boston Bus Drivers Union (Steelworkers Local 8751) were driving a bus to D.C. and Maduro said he was ready to join them!

WW: That's great to hear. I'm sure they would be happy to have him. What is Maduro's perspective on the current situation?

SF: Maduro said that for the last 200 years it has always been a struggle between Latin American liberator Simón Bolívar and U.S. President James Monroe — sovereignty or colonialism. But in a larger way the battle of all humanity today is a struggle between socialism and capitalism.

He said they face right now the heaviest sanctions ever imposed! Even for essential medicines. All their accounts are stolen. The situation is so severe that they are preparing for the U.S. to attack. Through Community Councils, the organizing units are being told to start storing food, water, batteries.

While we met, Maduro received a threatening tweet from Marco Rubio and one from Elliott Abrams. He read them to us with great laughter. He said his government always has to be ready to talk, of course. But Venezuela's path is determined by all the people, not by a government Washington appoints.

The U.S. Peace Council delegation consists of Bahman Azad, the organizational secretary of the U.S. Peace Council; Ajamu Baraka, national coordinator of Black Alliance for Peace; progressive journalist Eva Bartlett; Gerry Condon, president of Veterans For Peace; Darien De Lu, president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom-U.S.; Miguel Figueroa, president of the Canadian Peace Congress; Sara Flounders, co-coordinator of the International Action Center; Margaret Flowers of Popular Resistance; Joe Lombardo, co-coordinator of the United National Antiwar Coalition; Sarah Martin of Women Against Military Madness; Daniel Shea, board of directors, Veterans For Peace; and Kevin Zeese of Popular Resistance.

WW: And what is the determination of the Venezuelan people?

SF: After our meeting, we could see the level of determination first hand. We went to the People's Encampment guarding the Presidential Palace. Thousands are rotating on security 24 hours a day in anticipation of an imperialist attack on the president.

We saw people's militias and mass outpourings of organized community groups, housing groups, student groups, etc. That day (March 15) the Oil Workers Union had a big rally. They said: We are armed and ready to defend what belongs to all of us.

Madeline Arias, head of the Ministry of Urban Agriculture, introduced us to the union that day, and the union let us each give a short revolutionary greeting to the demonstration. The petroleum union's women's caucus told us they want to meet with women from the United States.

Since we were unable to return home as expected, we also attended a massive demonstration in support of the Bolivarian Revolution on Saturday, March 17. There were tens of thousands of people out in the streets. Hundreds of buses brought people into the city from surrounding areas. These kinds of demonstrations have been taking place every Saturday since the coup.

WW: The corporate media in the U.S. say that the people do not support Maduro. Based on what you've told us, that is another imperialist lie.

SF: Absolutely. These massive rallies really confirm that the people are mobilized, determined, very enthusiastic and combative. They come with their unions, housing or community groups, schools. They know the right wing is mobilizing. So they are determined to far outnumber them. It is a political battle in every sense.

<https://iacenter.org/2019/03/19/maduro-meets-u-s-anti-war-delegation-says-humanitys-battle-is-between-socialism-and-capitalism/>

MAY DAY 2019: 125th MAY DAY IN MELBOURNE

May Day is worker's day. It is Workers' day in Australia and throughout the world. This has been so internationally since 1890.

Many other events are celebrated each year in Australia: royal birthdays, cup day, military exploits, religious beliefs, etc, but May Day is one of the few days in the calendar where workers struggles are celebrated and workers' demands are publicised.

In recent times, the Melbourne May Day has organised for the focus to be on workers' rights – the right to strike, to picket, to assemble, to take solidarity action. Rights which are largely denied, to workers in Australia. We must continue to build a movement to win those rights.

As well as these fundamental rights we are focusing on other issues impacting on the working class in Australia, which obviously includes precarious work (Sham contracting, casualisation, etc), unequal pay for women, the off-shoring of jobs to low wage, super-exploited labour in other countries, poor occupational health and safety standards, poor workers compensation laws and systems and so on.

Part of the work of the May Day movement in Victoria and Australia now, is to help defeat the anti-worker programme of the Federal Liberal/National Party Government.

In addition workers at May Day will be demanding an independent foreign policy, proper civilised, humane and welcoming treatment of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, and support for Aboriginal peoples struggles for sovereignty, land rights, jobs and dignified community conditions.

COME AND SUPPORT MAY DAY EVENTS AND THE MAY DAY MARCH ON THE 5TH OF MAY.

Fight for the removal of the Federal Government and its anti-worker programme.

Demand a workers' programme from Labor.

Let us make May Day 2019 another major demonstration against the Morrison anti-worker programme.

- ★ If you are a unionist make the May Day events a major demonstration against the attacks on workers' rights, pay and conditions.

If you are a struggling community organisation make the May Day events a major demonstration against the attacks on social conditions, democratic rights and living conditions.

- ★ If you are a migrant and asylum seeker-based organisation or an otherwise ethnic based organisation, make the May Day events a major demonstration against the inhumane and anti-people policies of the Australia Government and other governments around the globe

MAY DAY EVENTS 2019:

WREATH LAYING AT THE 8HR MONUMENT: on **Thursday 2 May at 5pm.** Victoria Street, opposite Trades Hall

MAY DAY INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY EVENT: **Thursday 2 May at 6pm.** Venue TBA, Trades Hall

MAY DAY MARCH: **Sunday 5 May, assembling at 1pm.** Corner Victoria & Russell Streets, opposite Trades Hall.

FAMILY DAY: **Sunday 5 May, beginning at 11am.** Before and after the march: Rides and games for children, breakfast, and other activities

Information on other May Day activities will be added as they come to hand.

Melbourne May Day Committee **W.** <http://maydayvictoria.com> **E.** mayday@maydayvictoria.com

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Account Number: 00900817

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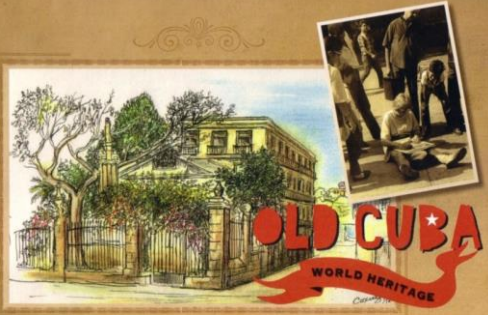
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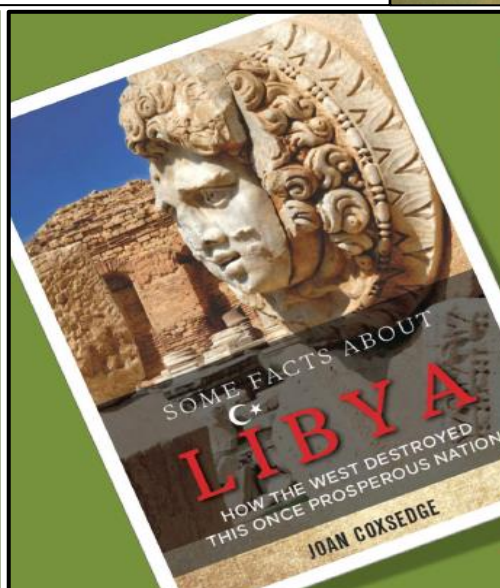
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