



Australia-Cuba Friendship Society

Melbourne NEWSLETTER

November 2018



Next Meeting
Monday 12th
November
 7.30pm
 Unitarian Church
 110 Grey St,
 East Melbourne

Melbourne	Sydney	Perth	Brisbane	Canberra	Hobart	Adelaide	Central Coast	NSW/Vic Sthn Border	New Zealand
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Vic. 3066	NSW 1240	WA 6951	Qld 4101	ACT 2604	Tas. 7001	SA 5006	NSW 2250	NSW 2640	New Zealand

Dear Comrades

6 November, 2018

A time to remember. One hundred years ago the guns of war fell silent, a war of attrition that claimed the lives of 20 million and more than 20 million injured world-wide, with 20,000 British troops killed on the first day in the Somme on 1 July, 1916. In Australia, from a population of fewer than 5 million, 415,000 men enlisted with 60,000 killed and more than 150,000 injured or taken prisoner, horrendous figures that barely rate a mention outside this country. The First World War was a charnel house where an entire generation marched and sang, only to be slaughtered. It also saw a unique flowering of poetry that captured the truth of the horror. There have been many wars since, but none where the poet was a soldier and by definition, a witness to the carnage. War poets like Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon found in the devastation of France and in the destroyed bodies a genuine voice, in contrast to the cant from politicians and generals. It is Owen's preface to a collection of his poetry that is best-remembered: *'Above all I am not concerned with poetry/My subject is War; and the pity of War/The poetry is in the pity...All a poet can do today is warn/That is why the true Poets must be truthful.'* And from Sassoon on November 11, *'The war is ended. It is impossible to realise. I got to London and found masses of people in the streets...all waving flags and making fools of themselves...an outburst of mob patriotism. It was a wretched wet night...a loathsome ending to the loathsome tragedy of the last four years.'* On 4 November, 2018, Wilfred Owen was killed in France. His mother received the news on 11 November, Armistice day, while church bells were ringing out.

Australia's sole war correspondent, Charles Bean, wrote the official, heavily censored history of the conflict and despite being surrounded by the slaughter, appeared to support it. Consistent with his views, Bean was in favour of conscription in Australia and expressed disappointment after it was rejected in two plebiscites in October 1916 and December 1917, when our soldiers overseas voted 'no'. Today, our government is shelling out half-a-million dollars to expand Canberra's War memorial to 'honour' all our wars...

The Israelis have violated Lebanese land, sea and air space in the tens of thousands and all Lebanon can do is protest to the UN, a protest that falls on deaf ears. The US and British flout sovereignty and international law in north-eastern Syria and Iraq and further south, and back the Saudi-Arabian-led coalition in its war on Yemen with no mandate and no authority. They don't need any. Might is right. US and UK military bases dot the region from Qatar and Bahrain to the UAE. US Special Operations Forces were deployed in 149 countries in 2017 - about 75%

of all nations - and in 133 nations this year. As well as boots on the ground, drones in the sky and 'hard' power, there are financial regulations and brutal sanctions.

The British Labour Party is being battered by a highly-organised campaign of smears against Jeremy Corbyn for supporting Palestinian 'terrorists' (Hamas) and is therefore, by its definition, anti-semitic. These 'examples' have been drafted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) which is seeking to silence all criticism of Israel. If British Labour accepts IHRA's diktats, the principles of free speech and critical debate about Israel will be thrown out the window and will turn a once-great party into the modern equivalent of Senator Joe McCarthy's House of Un-American Activities Committee. The mealy-mouthed Guardian, the newspaper that has done more than any other to damage Corbyn's standing, has described the incorporation of the IHRA definition as a 'compromise', as if any middle ground is possible in such a fundamental betrayal.

Fascism is on the march in Latin America. After the glory days of Hugo Chavez, Rafael Correa, Eva Morales, Lulu, the Kirchners, Joe Mujica, and Michelle Bachelet, when more than 80% of Latin Americans were living under democratically-elected, mostly leftist governments, in less than three years the wheels have turned full circle. For almost two decades, Latin America was the only part of the West detached from the fangs of empire, but has now succumbed again to the forces of money, corruption and greed. This time the trick is fraudulent election campaigns, bought elections, Washington-induced parliamentary coups which saw unelected President Temer take over Brazil with worse to come with the fascist, misogynist, racist and self-styled military man, Jair Bolsonaro. Argentina was preceded by Paraguay's 2012 coup that brought Cartes from the extreme right Colorado party to power. And in December 2017, Chile returned former Pinochet associate Sebastian Pinera, surrounded by right-wing mates in Argentina, Columbia, Brazil, Peru and even Equador, pleasing Washington's banks and their instruments, the IMF and World Bank.

But we still hope for the best. It pervades everything we do. And Cuba remains our best hope. In 1995, Cuban journalist Mirta Rodriguez Calderon said it is impossible to understand Cuba without understanding what it means to believe in Che Guevara's 'new man'. And so when people ask 'where's the hope for Cuba?', the answer is to go there, live there and stay long enough to make friends and learn the language. Viva!

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

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

[A new milestone in Cuban biotechnology](#)

Experts at the Havana International Fair emphasized the significance of the recent establishment of a joint venture enterprise by prestigious research centers in Cuba and the United States



[Cuban youth denounce U.S. blockade, defend their future](#)

Students and youth participated in activities across the island yesterday to demand an end to the U.S. blockade



[Natural therapies, a viable healthcare option](#)



Cuba's medical protocols for different ailments suggest the complementary use of therapies based on natural and traditional medicine, since patients respond well with the integration of this treatment, according to the country's experts

[Bruno Rodríguez: "We are certain that the amendments will be rejected"](#)

In statements offered to the press today, the Cuban Foreign Minister spoke about what will happen tomorrow, October 31, regarding the debate on the annual resolution presented in the UN by Cuba against the U.S. blockade. The vote itself will take place this Thursday, November 1

[Díaz-Canel receives President of Panama](#)

Cuba and Panama maintain historic political and diplomatic relations, and have developed a positive bilateral dialogue, based on friendship and cooperation



[A visit to help solve problems](#)

During the visit made by the Council of Ministers to the province of Artemisa, Cuban President Díaz-Canel reiterated that the purpose was not to monitor, but rather to help solve problems



[Recovery from storm damage in Cienfuegos](#)



In the wake of Hurricane Irma in September of 2017, citizens' unity was key to recovery in city of Cienfuegos

[President of Cuba opens official Twitter account](#)

Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez is the most senior political figure on the island to join this social network

[Cuban Foreign Minister denounces U.S. maneuver to undermine international support for an end to the blockade](#)

Yesterday afternoon, the United States permanent mission at the UN began circulating eight amendments to the Cuban resolution calling for an end to the blockade, reported Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez during a press conference at the ministry in Havana

[Cuba's future Constitution is a collective work](#)

Topics of interest during the popular consultation underway include the role of the Communist Party, limits on the concentration of property, and same-sex marriage, according to Council of State Secretary Homero Acosta, who emphasized that humanist values of social justice are reaffirmed in the text

[The victorious Cuban people continue to resist the blockade](#)

Yesterday, on his Twitter account, Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, demanded an end to the economic, commercial, and financial blockade imposed on Cuba by the U.S. government for almost 60 years



[Fihav shows that Cuba is not alone despite the blockade](#)

The Havana International Trade Fair is an established venue for developing commercial ties and exploring new markets



- [36th Havana International Trade Fair](#)

Recovery from storm damage in Cienfuegos

In the wake of Hurricane Irma in September of 2017, citizens' unity was key to recovery in city of Cienfuegos

Author: [Julio Martínez Molina](#) | [informacion@granma.cu](#) - october 26, 2018 15:10:57

Adalberto Ramírez, his spouse, daughter, and grandson live in one of the 68 multi-family apartment buildings in Cienfuegos affected by Hurricane Irma, which beginning September 8, 2017, ravaged Cuba for more than 72 hours with winds over 250 kilometers per hour.



The mettle and willpower of Cienfuegos residents were key to the province's rapid recovery. **Photo:** Julio Martínez Molina

The roof of Adalberto's buildings was left with multiple leaks, walls were chipped, everything left colorless and unsightly.

"The building was waterproofed and now no one gets wet. It's all painted and looks new. But if this effort, executed rapidly, is worthy of recognition, so is the work done before, during, and after the event," he stated.

"All for one, just like in Fuenteovejuna, the story by Lope de Vega they taught us in school. Just like that, we mobilized to clear the trash, rubble, downed trees..." said Yandri Sarmientos, who was completing his military service at the time and among the young Revolutionary Armed Forces troops who provided decisive support to the recovery of province, hit hard by Irma.

The call on our "combative people," made by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, served as a powerful motivation for residents of Cienfuegos. As he pointed out, those were days of much work, which once again showed the strength of Cubans and their confidence in the Revolution, noted Mayrelis Pernía Cordero, vice president of the Provincial Civil Defense Council.

Reynaldo Gómez Hermida, head of the temporary task force noted that across the province there were "a total of 2,445 dwellings affected, including 68 multi-family buildings; 1,737 roofs partially damaged; and 240 dwellings completely destroyed."

By the end of August this year, Pernía reported, solutions to 96% of these cases had been found.

Although the figure is relatively low, given the total damages, 66 totally destroyed dwellings have yet to be rebuilt and the commitment has been made to finalize the effort over the last months of the year, to reach December with no pending cases, the director said, adding, "The fundamental problem is carpentry trim; but local solutions are being sought," she explained.

NO MAGIC TRICK

Only a political-government system which has serving the people as its basic premise could accomplish so much, in such a short time. The Party and government in the province have carefully supervised and channeled the work throughout an entire year of arduous effort.

Innumerable meetings and tours have been conducted, as well efforts made to guarantee the resources needed by those impacted. The result has been notably positive because of this constancy, in which willpower has always prevailed.

Noteworthy was increased local production of building materials, as directed by

Army Corps General Joaquín Quintas Solá, head of the Central Strategic Region, during his many visits to review work underway

around the province. The progress made with this program contributed greatly to the success of recovery efforts, as every day 70 square meters of construction materials for walls, floors, and roofs were delivered.

"Working here is hard, but it's very rewarding to know that, with what you make, people can build a home in a few months," said Alipio Almaguer, a worker at one of the materials centers.

Cienfuegos residents like the family of Sandy Quintana and Rosa María Cedeño, and many others in the province, have acquired building materials valued at a total of 15 million pesos. Some 2,415 persons in need of funds to repair or rebuild their homes were able to receive bank credits worth close to 2.5 million pesos.

On another front, the Cienfuegos Mixed Cement Enterprise S.A. contributed to the recovery effort following Hurricane Irma by supplying 70% of the national market demand, and making the repair of damage possible via its products.

Oscar Rodríguez Ayala, assistant manager at the plant, emphasized that their products supported the recovery across the island, given the facility's responsibility to deliver cement to the entire central region, including resort areas on the northern keys, and to the country's east via bulk deliveries by train.

The Cienfuegos Provincial Defense Council's (CDP) experience - and that of its counterparts on the municipal level and of all state bodies involved in preventative and response efforts before, during, and after the storm - were collected, with the goal of extracting lessons to better prepare for events of this type in the future.

The final evaluation, a key part of the learning strategy, was comprehensive, allowing for both positive and negative experiences to be identified, explained Lidia Esther Brunet Nodarse, CDP president, also a Central Committee member and Party secretary in the province.



Expanded local production of building materials contributed significantly to the recovery. **Photo:** Julio Martínez Molina

QUICK THINKING & PREPARATION TO FACE THE STORM

- As Irma approached, sheltered in Cienfuegos were some 23,000 persons, while 3,500 boarding school students and 378 campers were returned to their homes in 406 means of transportation, all very rapidly.
- Responding to Raúl's appeal to the Cuban people, 18 mixed brigades were created, including 260 workers from all municipalities.
- Intense work was organized to clear debris and ensure hygiene at the People's Council level, in the province's eight municipalities.
- Immediately following the storm, food services began to sell prepared meals at accessible prices to help the residents who had lost their food supplies, given the lack of refrigeration.
- Telephone workers gradually restored service to more than 4,000 clients affected.
- Once urgent recovery efforts were concluded, temporary task forces were established to organize and direct reconstruction and repair work.
- The province's leadership directed farms and cooperatives to intensify the planting of short cycle crops to be able to respond rapidly to the population's food needs.

Cuba's future Constitution is a collective work

Topics of interest during the popular consultation underway include the role of the Communist Party, limits on the concentration of property, and same-sex marriage, according to Council of State Secretary Homero Acosta, who emphasized that humanist values of social justice are reaffirmed in the text

Author: [Homero Acosta](#) | internet@granma.cu - october 24, 2018 10:10:07



Photo: Miguel Febles Hernández

The first discussion about the proposal is if we are considering a new Constitution or a partial reform of the 1976 text, and furthermore, if the current one can be revoked. Those who take the latter position do not agree that, according to the reform clause, just as it was amended in 2002, a total reform is not possible, and that this would only be viable if the revolutionary Cuban political and social system were altered, which would lead to a collision.

From our point of view, the change made to the reform clause does not proscribe a total reform, nor must this necessarily imply totally re-constructing the political and social order established in the Constitution. This is about a new text, to introduce profound shifts in the structure of the state, in particular in its higher bodies. There is a broadening of the range of rights, which make it different from the current Constitution, without losing its socialist nature and essence.

Another question raised was that a constituent assembly should be convoked. From our point of view, this would directly contravene the reform clause which gives the National Assembly constituent authority. In addition to this, there is no break from the past, but rather changes within political and social continuity.

We should emphasize several general questions that stand out upon reading the draft. Reaffirmed is the socialist nature of the political, economic, and social system. This acknowledgement is not enough, but rather that identifying features of this concept are visible, to which specifics have been added that in no way devalue this.

The role of the Communist Party is maintained as a guiding element in society and the state, emphasizing its democratic character and necessary link with the people. Some positions have attempted to counterpoise the role of the Party and popular sovereignty, and the state powers afforded to each one of the bodies defined in the Constitution.

The first point to be raised is that the Party is not placed above the Constitution; as a political entity it is obligated to abide by and defend it. Likewise, in its activity, the Party does not take the place of state or administrative bodies, since these have powers and jurisdictions defined in the Constitution and by law.

Specified in the text are the humanist values of social justice and respect for human dignity that characterize our socialism. The recognition of Cuba as a socialist state of law is emphasized. This affirmation is not a simple, complacent statement. It expresses the determination and will to attain the rule of law and the supreme character of the Constitution, within the framework of a socialist state.

One item that leads to an important re-ordering is that related to regulation of the economic system. Maintained as a principle is the socialist ownership, by the entire people, of the fundamental means of production - I repeat: fundamental - and the planned direction of the economy, along with recognition of the role of the market. This is not about market socialism, but rather considering the market within the framework of a system of planning, which, of course, will need to have greater flexibility.

The recognition of private property, among the different forms of property, has attracted attention. The Constitution does not create it, it has existed. The changes introduced in the economic model, derived from agreements reached at the Sixth and Seventh Party Congresses, make viable the existence of this form of property, which goes beyond what has been called self-employment, since the possibility of hiring a workforce is in place. What is significant is that private property does not distinguish the model, or predominate. It is also necessary in certain activities, with appropriate regulation and control. The draft includes the prohibition on the concentration of property in the hands of individuals or non-state incorporated entities, with the goal of preserving "limits compatible with socialist values of equity and social justice."

Changing the concept of marriage has also been controversial, as the current definition which addresses marriage between a man and a woman is to be abandoned, and in its place the statement that marriage is between two persons, which opens the way for the possibility of same-sex marriage.

It was decided to maintain this formulation and assume the challenge of the new concept, knowing that its inclusion could generate disagreements for cultural reasons, prejudice, and stereotypical visions that do not change overnight.

If the Constitution proclaims the full recognition of the right to equality, why should people of different sexual orientations be prevented from establishing a marriage? Must this concept continue to be anchored in visions that have already been surpassed over time, or can we modify it and recognize this right, as is occurring gradually around the world?

Different positions on this issue include preferring to maintain the concept in the current Constitution; those who favor the formulation proposed in the draft; those who accept the civil recognition of established unions but not marriage; others who support the proposal but limit the right to adoption; and lastly those who advocate a concept that includes "two or more persons." Thus, a variety of opinions which must be evaluated, like others, with the rigor and depth required.

In our opinion, the law cannot remain perpetually enslaved to backward social attitudes, even when, at some point, it may collide with part of the social spectrum. Given its transformational mission, the law must also spur development. This is not the first time we have faced these challenges. We can recall historical conflicts about women's right to vote, the acceptance of divorce, or, in our case, incorporating equal rights for men and women, and equal responsibility for both spouses, as established in our Family Code.

Some economic and social rights, which cannot be guaranteed immediately for economic reasons beyond the will of the state, and that would make the Constitution fictitious, are included with a gradual projection, which likewise generates some disagreement. This is the case with the right to a dignified dwelling, the right to food, the right to water, among others.

The formula used requires the state to work toward fully guaranteeing these rights, but from our point of view, these cannot be established categorically given the objective limitations on their attainment.

Local People's Power bodies are also the object of transformation in the draft. At the provincial level, People's Power Assemblies are eliminated, and in their place, a government including a Governor and Provincial Council is proposed. This government, led by the Governor, would additionally include the presidents of Municipal Assemblies and Superintendents in charge of municipal administrations.

This structure is considered more functional and appropriate to the characteristics of the provinces as territorial coordination entities, and looks to further strengthen municipalities. One question to be analyzed, on the basis of proposals made to date (during the consultation), is if the Governor should be appointed or elected.

Municipalities acquire greater power. It is no accident that some have seen them as "winners" in the draft. Recognition of their autonomy and stronger relations between the community and its representatives distinguish the text presented.

We must understand the document as what it is: a draft proposal. The text is not definitive. It is perfectible. It is not the work of a commission or a group. It is a collective work, and the future Constitution is being constructed with the contribution of the entire people.

Without vanity, we can affirm that we are immersed in a unique exercise of real, effective democracy, of an equally exemplary constituent process, with the people as the true protagonist. The outcome thus far is considered very positive. In addition to contributing to the future Constitution, the consultation has served to expand the people's legal and political culture.

Once the process is concluded, the drafting commission will evaluate each proposal, including doubts expressed by our citizens. No opinion will be left out of consideration. This, of course, does not mean that every recommendation will become part of the text, since there are dissimilar and even contradictory suggestions.

After this complex, arduous work, the commission will present a new draft to the National Assembly, from where the final Constitution of the Republic will emerge, and be submitted to a popular vote. Therefore, the text agreed upon by consensus and popular participation will have a high level of legitimacy. Every Cuban can be proud of our Constitution.

Once the new Carta Magna has been proclaimed in effect, the perfecting of the country's legal system will be required. The Constitution alone is not enough. An updating of our legal structure will be needed, and for thus an intense legislative effort.

- Excerpts from presentation by Homero Acosta, Council of State Secretary, opening the 2018 International Legal Congress.

An effort for life

Forecasts indicate that by the end of the century, four Pinar del Río towns will be completely inundated due to climate change.

The province is taking decisive steps to adapt, as part of the state plan "Tarea Vida"

Author: [Ronald Suárez Rivas](#) | internet@granma.cu - october 24, 2018
10:10:09

PINAR DEL RÍO.—Cuba will not be as we currently see it on the maps in the future. Devoured by the sea, what are now peaceful coastal towns will be submerged under water, while several beaches will be "swallowed up" by the rising sea.

There will be loss of biodiversity, and species from other places will come to take refuge in some ecosystems of the archipelago.

The climate will become increasingly hot and extreme. Hurricanes will be stronger, droughts more intense. And although not visible to the naked eye, saltwater intrusion will endanger crops and the purity of groundwater.

This is not the synopsis of a disaster movie, but the scenario that scientists predict for Cuba toward the end of this century, due to climate change.

In Pinar del Río, for example, it is expected that four towns will be completely inundated, and thousands of hectares of agricultural land will be affected by soil erosion and salinization.



Photo: Ronald Suárez Rivas

Faced with such gloomy prospects, which are already becoming palpable, the province is adopting measures to adapt to climate change, and mitigate as much as possible its effects, as part of the state plan known as "Tarea Vida" (Life Task).

Yury Triana, delegate of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment (Citma), explained that a working group was formed in the territory for the control and implementation of the plan, chaired by the Provincial Administration Council and composed of the bodies with the greatest interest in the issue, such as Agriculture, Physical Planning, Hydraulic Resources, Tourism and Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca University, among others.

The main actions are focused on seven prioritized municipalities in the Vueltabajo region (Consolación del Sur, La Palma,

Los Palacios, Minas de Matahambre, Pinar del Río, San Juan y Martínez, and Sandino), due to the possible negative effects of climate change there.

The Citma delegate pointed out that the municipality of Guane is also included, taking into account the frequent flooding of several settlements, caused by the Cuyaguaje River, and Hazard, Vulnerability and Risk (PVR) studies.

“This doesn’t mean that there will be no impact in other places, but that we will have the greatest impact in the short, medium and long terms in these, according to the research,” she added.

Although there are many people who consider climate change to be a remote problem, the effects of which many of us here today will not live to see, scientists warn that its consequences are already evident.

Since the mid-twentieth century, for example, Cuba’s average annual temperature has increased by 0.9 degrees, rainfall patterns have varied, droughts have increased, and sea level has risen 6.77 centimeters.

Sc.D Jorge Ferro, of the Center for Environmental Research and Services, ECOVIDA, noted that the effects on marine ecosystems and also mangrove coverage are already visible in Pinar del Río.

Meanwhile, research shows that marine intrusion has caused an increase in salinity levels throughout the south-western plain, and that six sandy beaches have suffered intense erosion.

In addition, experts warn about a series of anomalous events in several species of the Guanahacabibes peninsula, also linked to probable manifestations of climate change.

Lázaro Márquez, director of Guanahacabibes National Park, explained that, among other phenomena, a displacement of the flowering periods of several melliferous plant species has been documented, as well as of the breeding migration pattern of the red crab.

The scientist added that new invasive species have also appeared in the region, associated with the disorder caused by hurricanes; and that some native species, such as coastal *yau-nilla* and bay lavender, have had an expansive pattern.

He noted that as a result, honey production has declined, and the nesting process of sea turtles has been affected.

“It was dangerous, that’s why they always got us out when a hurricane was forecast,” stated Amada Bellame, one of the residents of a new village built for families that previously lived by Las Canas beach.

“The trucks came and evacuated us with everything. The houses were left empty and with the roof secured.”

This happened repeatedly, in order to protect the inhabitants of this village in southern Pinar del Río from the ravages of nature.

“Once, the sea reached the reservoir. Things got really ugly,” recalled María Elena Argüelles.

“Water entered Las Canas through three different sites,” explained Gumersindo Zambrana. “Hence, almost every year we

had to leave, until that hurricane swept away all of the houses.”

Built at kilometer 21 on the road to La Coloma, to accommodate those left homeless by Hurricanes Isidore and Lili in 2002, the village of 79 homes is one of the first in the province that reflects strategic actions outlined in Tarea Vida.

On deciding its location, the experiences of the province during extreme weather events were taken into account, as well as studies that indicate that by 2050 the area of Las Canas will be totally inundated.

By then, the town of Punta de Carta (San Juan y Martínez municipality), where 56 homes have already been relocated, will also be under water.

Meanwhile, it is estimated that by 2100, the hamlets of Dayaniguas (Los Palacios) and La Bajada (Sandino) will suffer the same fate.

Hence, among the measures planned in the province is the definitive relocation of all their residents to safer sites.

The reforestation of mangroves and woodland strips for water flow regulation, the sowing of corals, the development of more drought resistant seeds, soil improvement, the introduction of more efficient irrigation systems, the updating of PVR studies, and actions to raise awareness among the population, are also among the priorities of efforts underway in Pinar del Río.

By matching the guidelines of the state plan with that of the economy, several entities are taking significant steps forward.

This is the case of the Los Palacios Agro-industrial Grains Enterprise, a series of different technologies have been introduced to level rice fields, which can significantly reduce water consumption and increase yields.

Among the experiences with the greatest impact is the Barcón agricultural production area, responsible for supplying the provincial capital, where engineering solutions and the recovery of canals has meant water can be channeled from the El Punto reservoir to the majority of the 1,500 hectares of crops.

Víctor Fidel Hernández, provincial Agriculture delegate, explained that this effort has allowed for the closure of most of Barcón’s wells, and means that in the near future, the area will not need to rely on any groundwater sources.

Following this same principle, Fidel added, the reactivation of a siphon and a system of canals, to drive the water from the reservoir, will allow for another 1,600 hectares to be dedicated to rice production, without compromising the water table.

However, this is just the beginning. To achieve its mission, the state plan will require a program of medium (through 2030) and long (through 2050) term measures, to ensure the continuity of what has been done thus far. In addition, the support of those who are still not fully aware of this complex environmental problem, or see it as something far-off in time, will be required.

The country that our children and grandchildren will inherit depends to a large extent on this essential effort of all, for the future and for life.

<http://en.granma.cu/cuba/2018-10-24/an-effort-for-life>

People's Debate of New Cuban Constitution Nears the End

Havana, Nov 5 (Prensa Latina) People's consultation of the Cuban constitutional project is two weeks away from completion, a democratic exercise considered a novelty by giving citizens the right to build their own Magna Carta.

More than seven million persons have taken part in this process, referent to the world about the response of Cubans to shaping their country and a better society.

According to the secretary of the State Council, Homero Acosta, since the process started last August 13, a total of 111 thousand 872 meetings have taken place of a planned 130 thousand in neighborhoods, schools and work centers.

The end of citizens' debate is scheduled for November 15. Until this date, almost 600 thousand proposals to change or add to the original text have been made. It was also confirmed that issues such as marriage and the figure of the President are among the parts that attracted more proposals, together with the new structure of provincial governments and legal attention.

In that sense, stands out article 68 referring to the new conception of marriage, to the voluntary union between two persons with legal aptitude for it, and number 121 that limits the mandate of the President of the Republic to two consecutive mandates, after which, the person cannot again be nominated.

Also, article 122 puts a limit to age of up to 60 years, for a person to be elected as President in a first mandate; and the referred to the responsibility to elect the President of the Republic in charge of the deputies of the People's Power National Assembly (parliament), considered representative of the people's interests.

What concerns the provincial governments and the designation of the provincial governors by the President of the country, as says paragraph 572 of the article 170, has also been one of the most debated issues by Cubans.

Article 31 also aroused interest, related to work as an essential value of society and main source of income; number 48 in its subsection f, indicating the right of every person to receive legal assistance to exert his or her defense; and the article 82 about the right to a dignified home.

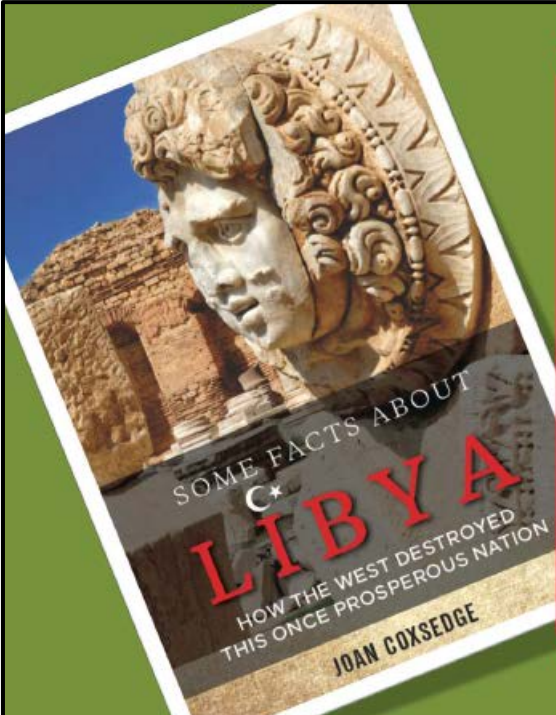
Different from the Constitution in forcé, approved in 1976, the project includes the democratic nature of the Communist Party of Cuba and that is the people's political organization, with social recognition in the history of the Cuban Revolution, said Homero Acosta.

Also, Yumil Rodriguez, deputy chief of the Secretary of the State Council and member of the parliamentary commission in charge of drawing up the Constitution, assured there are mechanisms to process all opinions.

He added that some proposals which will not be added to the final document, will be valuable when the time comes to translate into laws which will accompany the Constitution during the referendum of approval to be held next year.

As a distinctive aspect of previous similar processes in the island, on this occasion the opinion of Cuban residents abroad has been taken into account.

Como aspecto distintivo de anteriores procesos similares en la isla, en esta ocasión se han tenido en cuenta las opiniones de los cubanos residentes en el exterior.



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The sports industry, a gulf separates two worlds

The global sports industry's income exceeds the GDP of entire nations, and continues to foster inequality

Author: [Aliet Arzola Lima](mailto:aliet@granma.cu) | aliet@granma.cu - July 12, 2018 10:07:16



Lightweight footwear under one hundred grams; swimsuits designed by experts in hydrodynamics that “cut” through the water with maximum efficiency; sensors placed in different accessories that calculate heart rate and provide other real time information; rackets that reduce vibration transfer resulting from the impact of the ball...

These are just a few glimpses of the advances of the global sports goods industry, which is evolving as fast as the strides of Usain Bolt, or the strokes of Michael Phelps, icons of the athletic world who, in particular, have enjoyed the benefits of this huge production empire and, in addition, have contributed to its constant development.

Historic brands such as Adidas, Puma, and Nike, or the emerging Under Armor, four of the large consortia that sponsor and dress various competitors, completely control the sports market and have a direct impact on the main sporting events, from the Olympic Games to the World Cup - the two events that attract the most global attention.

The manufacture of sports goods saw early development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the industrial boom, the proliferation of clubs and the consequent professionalization of sports changed the essence of what today cannot be described as anything other than a business, given the huge network of companies it involves.

According to studies conducted by Plunkett Research, specialized in “market research, business analysis, industry trends, statistics,” according to its website, the value of the global sports industry can match that of annual U.S. exports, and exceed the GDP of entire nations. In addition, powerful soccer and baseball clubs see revenue of more than 500 million dollars, and a single boxing match can generate more than a trillion dollars.

The figures are shocking, especially when in this day and age, a high percentage of the world's population continues to live in extreme poverty and need. However, they also make clear that sports is a profitable business for the major powers and brands, which invest, generate, and receive huge sums of money through television contracts, advertising, licenses, merchandising, and tickets.

But beyond the impact of these firms on athlete representation and their transformation into true cult heroes according to their results, let us pause for a minute to think about their real scope in terms of the equitable growth of sports. Can Puma's state-of-the-art products really reach a poor kid from a favela in Brazil, or the most remote villages in Central America or Africa? Does the unbridled competition between Adidas and Nike really pursue, at least as a secondary objective, the discovery and financing of emerging talents in underdeveloped countries?

The answer to these questions is a resounding no. Rather companies have used sports as an

ideal source of prosperity; they have fostered inequality and increased the economic gap between rich and poor, the latter with very few opportunities to acquire equipment or develop infrastructure for the practice of any discipline. The fact that the main sports goods firms pursue the same goal and have similar effects in underdeveloped countries does not mean that there is any sense of alliance or cooperation among them; on the contrary, their relations are marked by grudges stemming from past gimmicks, and competition in areas of technological research, development, and advances.

The emporiums of Adidas and Puma, for example, have their origins in Germany. In fact, they arose following the breakdown of relations between the Dassler brothers (Adolf and Rudolf), who had founded Gebrüder Dassler Schuhfabrik (Dassler Brothers Shoe Factory) in the 1920s. The company gained worldwide fame in the 1930s on signing Jesse Owens, the stellar Black sprinter and long jumper who won four Olympic gold medals in Berlin 1936, before the defiant and frustrated gaze of Adolf Hitler. However, the Dassler brothers' project disintegrated after WWII, leading to the creation of Adidas and Puma. Paradoxically, from that moment on they were never at peace.

The height of their run-ins came during the 1970 World Cup in Mexico, for which the two powerful rival brands agreed to what became known as the “Pelé Pact” - a mutual agreement not to approach the Brazilian star to sign a sponsorship deal.

Despite the pact, a representative of Puma took advantage of the fact that the legendary striker had no knowledge of such an agreement, and signed him up without the company's approval, which later gave the go-ahead. The move unleashed an ongoing fight with Adidas, which didn't turn out very well for Puma, as in the last 20 years, the brand of the three bars has completely overtaken it in the market.

Nike emerged much later, and for a long time looked askance at the struggle between the two flagship brands, until Michael Jordan changed the fate of the U.S. brand forever with his Air Jordan shoes, a success all over the world. Since then, Nike has been Adidas' rival par excellence, in an all-out war that constantly engages millions of consumers.

The competition has reached such a degrading point that personalities like LaVar Ball, the eccentric former U.S. football and basketball player, attempted to spark a bidding war over his son Lonzo Ball's feet, to see which of the two firms (Adidas or Nike) would offer the most lucrative contract in exchange for the

player wearing its sneakers in his NBA debut with the Los Angeles Lakers. Modern sports are sold on a daily basis as a lavish spectacle, while millions of people simultaneously consume the brands that sponsor the events, and the athletic product itself. This practice has been established through and through, especially thanks to communications monopolies, which bombard all competitions with advertising, no matter the level.

It is precisely these commercial advertising commitments (for which millions are paid) and the sponsors that determine to a large extent how, when and where competitions take place. This has completely changed the situation for athletes, who must prepare to face an increasingly high competition volume.

These demands, to which we must add the constant and universal pressure of their followers, have led an endless number of athletes to resort to other means (doping, bets, match-fixing), all to secure six or seven digit advertising contracts - a privilege reserved for a minority group that reaches economic and publicity “glory” in line with its results in the competitive arena.

Commodification and commercialization have attacked the sports world, and its protagonists are treated as mere objects, sometimes pushed to sacrifice their prestige and values to achieve a result, even risking death by consuming prohibited substances. It's an endless cycle, a loop in which often not even the athletes themselves can appreciate that they are trapped.

Developing nations generally excel in sports thanks to specific talents but, frequently, that success fades, as it lacks the solid foundations to support it.

It's not surprising that this happens, as underdeveloped countries suffer from limited access to all the facilities of an overly classist sports goods industry, which views the athletic world as a source of easy and safe revenue.

Surviving this neoliberal approach is not easy, but Cuba has achieved it and stands at the forefront of the most disadvantaged nations, even now when its sports movement is not enjoying its best moment.

What has its formula been? In this small Caribbean archipelago, sports has been defended as a right of the people, as a source of health and well-being, a dignified concept that has allowed us to consolidate an organized and successful system in multiple disciplines - a real achievement if we consider our scarce economic resources and the limitations imposed by the most powerful country on the planet.

Without the benefits of the big brands, without access to cutting-edge technologies developed in the specialized laboratories of these companies, Cuba has not only exalted its virtues, but has also charted a path for nations with the same limitations.



Photo: www.brandchannel.com

Attacks on Jeremy Corbyn make us weaker against the far-right

Attempts to brand Corbyn's Labour 'antisemitic' hinder the real struggle against rising racism, including anti-Semitism. by [Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi](#) - 8 Sept 2018



Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn is probably the most principled anti-racist to serve in parliament, writes Wimborne-Idrissi [Reuters]

The summer months have seen a massive escalation in attacks on UK Labour Party leader [Jeremy Corbyn](#), centring on charges that he and his supporters are hostile to Jews and that a government headed by him would constitute an "existential threat" to the Jewish community in Britain.

As a founding member of Jewish Voice for Labour and vice-chair of Chingford and Woodford Green Labour Party constituency, I believe such attacks are motivated by a determination on the part of the political establishment to undermine Corbyn's left-wing leadership. His commitment to a solution to the conflict in the Middle East that guarantees justice and self-determination for the people of [Palestine](#) makes him a key target of attack by supporters of the Israeli state, both Jewish and non-Jewish. The real struggle against rising racism, including anti-Semitism, in Britain and elsewhere is seriously endangered by Corbyn's enemies' determination to define criticism of the Israeli state as motivated by hatred of Jews.

Fighting anti-Semitism alongside all oppressed people of every race

My family background is 100 percent Jewish. My four grandparents were refugees from Eastern Europe in the late 19th and very early 20th centuries - from Russia, Ukraine, Poland and eastern Germany.

Growing up in the East End of London and as young adults in the north of the city, my parents experienced the anti-Semitism which was rife at the time. My father and his brother both anglicised their surnames, from Jewish-sounding Weinbaum to oh-so-English Wimborne. My mother told me many stories of being abused as a young schoolgirl by other children shouting "You killed our Christ!" and of being discriminated against when evacuated with her brother during the war. We know only too well what anti-Semitism is.

OPINION - My take on Jeremy Corbyn's apology - by [Haidar Eid](#)

The Labour Party after the war was, by and large, a haven from any kind of anti-Jewish prejudice. My parents never experienced any form of anti-Semitism bigotry in the party and, as a member myself in the 1970s, nor did I. I worked abroad during the 1980s and did not resume membership upon returning to the UK until Jeremy Corbyn became its leader in 2015. The welcome I received from non-Jewish members - by far the majority in my constituency - showed not a hint of hostility towards me as a Jew.

I have spent decades of my life explaining patiently to people who, on learning that

I'm Jewish, presume that I must, therefore, be a Zionist and a supporter of the state of [Israel](#), that the two things are quite distinct. Most of my large family are not Zionists (though a few are). Our identity is not defined by our political beliefs about Israel. Most of us identify with the Jewish Labour Bund tradition adhered to by the majority of radical Jews in the Russian Empire and Poland before the Holocaust. Bundists had as their watchword "doykayt" or "hereness" - the belief that Jews belong wherever in the world they live, that the fight against anti-Semitism has to be fought alongside all oppressed people of every race or faith. It is

shameful that such a position is now condemned by self-declared Jewish community leaders as heretical and treacherous, that "real Jews" are only permitted to hold one view and that questioning Zionism and the Israeli state is treated as a form of anti-Semitism. To me and the many Jews I know who share my view, the suggestion that Jews can be regarded as an undifferentiated mass, as if we were genetically programmed to support a particular nation-state in which Jews dominate over the original non-Jewish population, is itself a racist, anti-Semitic, suggestion.

Baseless accusations of 'institutional anti-Semitism'

Pro-Israel lobbyists have recently called on the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to brand the Labour Party as "institutionally anti-Semitic". This charge can only be supported if opposition to Zionism is equivalent to hating Jews, which it clearly is not. For the party to be institutionally racist, there would need to be evidence that Jews are under-represented compared with their 0.5 percent share of the population - as members, as office holders in branches and constituency parties, as councillors, as regional officers, as electoral candidates and as Members of Parliament. There is no such evidence. In fact, Jewish people are generously represented in parliament, with nearly four percent of members.

Amidst the mounting wave of accusations about anti-Semitism being rife in the party, I was puzzled and alarmed and made serious efforts to find members who honestly felt unwelcome simply because they were Jewish, without any reference to arguments about the Israeli treatment of Palestinians. My search was almost entirely fruitless. Almost every story turned out to be related to upset caused by the very vociferous way some people furious about Israel had expressed their anger.

I do acknowledge that some critics of Israel can be insensitive to the feelings of Jewish people who feel an attachment to the state. Some Jews feel offended by strident attacks on what Israel does to Palestinians now and what Zionists have

done in the past. It would be better if we could have political debates without offending one another, but there is no such thing as a right not to be offended. We do have a right to express political opinions, even very robustly.

It is no coincidence that the charge of institutional anti-Semitism emanates from an organisation called the Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) which was set up in 2014 explicitly to defend Israel against opprobrium for its deadly assault on Gaza that year. It deliberately deploys accusations of anti-Semitism to try and shut down campaigns in support of Palestine. It is, for this reason, the subject of a complaint to the Charities Commission.

OPINION - Corbyn and anti-Semitism: Much ado about something else - by [Sharif Nashashibi](#)

Of course, there are some people with anti-Semitic prejudices in the Labour Party. As the Institute for Jewish Policy Research said in its report on a [survey](#) of attitudes towards Jews last year, between three and five percent of the British population harbour a range of beliefs about Jews, such as their being greedy, rich, conspiratorial, in control of the media, which would qualify them as being anti-Semitic. About 30 percent hold one or two prejudices, which does not justify labelling them anti-Semitic, but can make Jewish people uncomfortable and create an atmosphere of unease. These proportions are naturally reflected within the Labour Party's considerable membership.

Social media has unleashed the potential for nasty language to be hurled around unjustifiably, and sometimes people claiming to be supporters of the Left are responsible for this.

There are cases of people ignorantly believing Israel's supporters when they insist that the state represents every Jew, leading to unjustified abuse directed at Jews on the assumption that they support what Israel does. Such people need to be corrected and, if they prove recalcitrant, disciplined or expelled. However, there are too many cases of fake identities and robot accounts being used to discredit pro-Corbyn social media groups for all such allegations to be taken at face value. In two notorious cases, prominent

Jewish activists were summarily [excluded](#) from the party following baseless allegations. Glyn Secker and Moshe Machover were both hastily [reinstated](#).

It is becoming increasingly clear to most observers of the British political scene that attempts to brand the Labour Party institutionally anti-Semitic form part of an orchestrated campaign targeting a party whose leader is probably the most principled anti-racist to serve in parliament. All British citizens, in particular those from minority ethnic and religious communities, will be the losers if this cynical campaign is allowed to succeed.

This article is based on Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi's submission to the EHRC about the calls by pro-Israel lobbyists for Britain's Labour Party to be branded "institutionally anti-Semitic". The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera's editorial stance.

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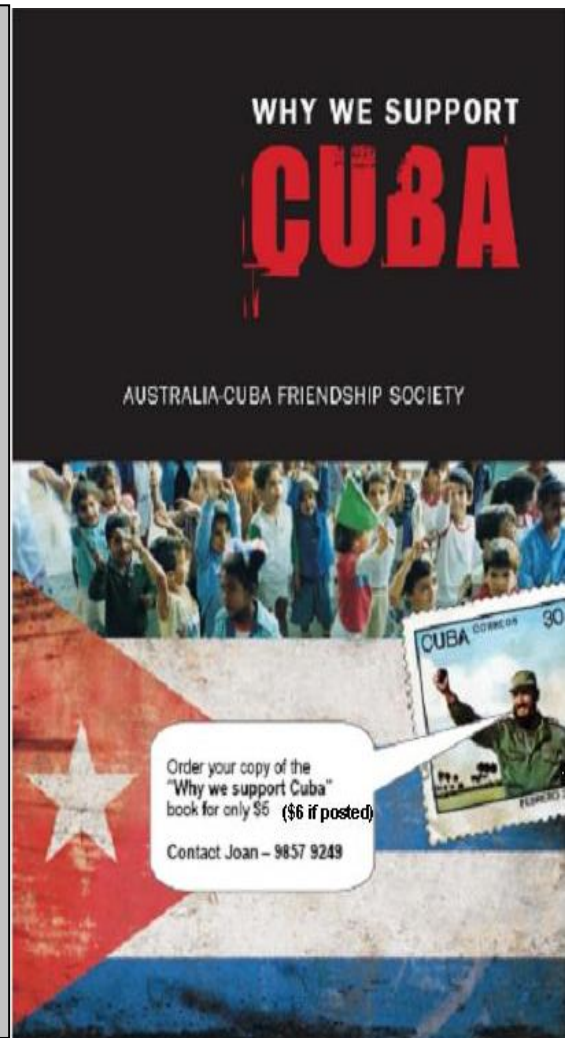
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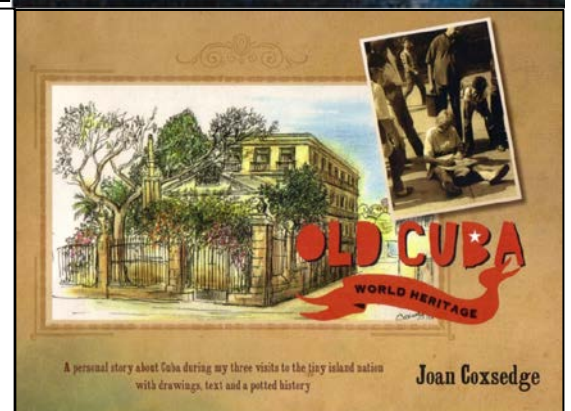
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