

This week in Cuba December 29, 2019 to January 4, 2020



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By Charles McKelvey

(1) Reflections on the meaning of the Cuban Revolution on its 61st anniversary

Wednesday, January 1, 2020 marked the sixty-first anniversary of the triumph of the Revolution, when, in the aftermath of the rebel victory in the central provincial capital of Santa Clara on December 31, 1958, Batista fled the island in the early morning hours of January 1; and the Rebel Army occupied, without resistance, the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba. During this past week, there were many events commemorating and reflecting on the historic moment. The daily newspaper Granma, managed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, dedicated its January 1 issue to reflections on the Cuban Revolution.

The front page of the January 1 issue of Granma contained a selection from a classic and insightful book on the Cuban Revolution, entitled *Ese Sol del Mundo Moral* (That Sun of the Moral World). The book was written by Cuban poet, essayist, and novelist Cintio Vitier, initially published in 1990 with a

second edition in 2002. The selected text declares that 1959 was the most beautiful year in the life of the nation, because an army of peasants had entered the city to erase the innumerable frustrations and humiliations of the people. What seemed impossible, was now possible.

An article by Dilbert Reyes Rodríguez describes the triumph of the Revolution as a parting of the waters in Cuban history, from exploitation and abandonment toward national dignity, attention to the common good, the sharing of bread and of wars, and the seeking of full independence and total sovereignty. Before the triumph of the Revolution, Reyes observes, citing Fidel's 1953 address "History will absolve me," foreign companies owned great extensions of land, peasants did not own the land they worked and lived in wretched conditions, the economy was dedicated to the exportation of raw materials while the state did nothing to promote industrial development, and access to health care and education was limited; conditions that gave rise to corruption, prostitution, gambling, discrimination, crime, and violence. But then, Reyes declares, "the alliance of arms and ideas, which the Revolution attained in the mountains, conquered, banishing from Cuban reality the corroded society of the neocolony." First a military victory, followed by a social emancipation. The Cuban reality would now be defined by the return to constitutionality, the redistribution of land, the battle against illiteracy, the universality of primary education, the availability of culture to the masses, and universal and free health care.

An article by Fredy Pérez Cabrera maintains that the leaders of the Revolution since 1868, from Céspedes to Maceo and Martí to Fidel, Raúl, and Díaz-Canel have had confidence in the victory of the Revolution, on the basis of the backing of the Revolution by the people and the unity of the people. Juan Antonio Borrego also emphasizes the unity of the people. He writes that Fidel taught that the independence war of 1868 to 1878 was not defeated by Spanish arms but by divisions among Cubans themselves. Martí understood this, and to unify the people, he formed the Cuban Revolutionary Party and put forth the concept of a nation "with all and for the good of all." Recognizing the importance of unity, Fidel's July 26 Movement united with the March 13 Revolutionary Directorate in the struggle against Batista, and after the triumph of the Revolution, with the Popular Socialist Party (the First Communist Party of Cuba). The unity of the people has been the key, Borrego notes, to many of the struggles of the Revolution since the triumph, such as the literacy campaign, the struggle against terrorism, the sacrifices of the Special Period, and the Battle of Ideas against imperialism.

Borrego maintains that the Party is the force that unifies the people, but the Party is able to unify the people only insofar as it is connected to the people. Fidel declared that the revolution is made by the people and for the people, and the Party will have prestige and authority to the extent that it has real ties to the people.

Today, nearly six decades since its founding, the Communist Party of Cuba, formed by Fidel, continues to be of and for the people, and it continues to possess in the eyes of the people the teaching and moral authority necessary for maintaining the unity of the people and forging a national consensus with respect to economic, political, and cultural challenges that the revolution confronts.

(2) Cuban national program for the development of nanoscience and nanotechnology

On Monday, December 30, an article in Granma described the Cuban national program for the development of nanoscience and nanotechnology, based on information provided by the Ministry of Science, Technology, and the Environment. The article explains what is meant by nanoscience and nanotechnology. Starting with the meter as a point of reference, if we divide it into a thousand parts, we arrive to the millimeter. If we divide the millimeter into a thousand parts, we arrive to the micrometer, the scale at which we find bacteria. If we divide the micrometer into a thousand parts, we arrive to the nanometer. Nanoscience is the study of phenomenon at this scale; and nanotechnology is the design, production, and application of structures and systems at the nanometric scale.

Nearly all electronic products use nanotechnology. In addition, nanotechnology applications have

produced cloth that does not stain, get wet, or wrinkle. Nanostructures have been developed to transport medicines to containers directly, reducing secondary effects. And nanoparticles are used to burn cancerous tumors. The article mentions that these are merely examples; there are many fields in which nanotechnology is employed.

Cuba has had results in nanotechnology, including the production of magnetic nanoparticles for the treatment of cancer. Twenty-five projects are presently in development; twenty-one of them involving the generation of new products, and five that seek the development of new methods, technology, or knowledge. The Center for Advanced Studies of Cuba has been created as a collaborative national technological platform for the introduction and accelerated expansion of nanotechnologies. The Center gives priority to bionanomedicine, agriculture, water, energy, environment, and construction. The article notes that all that has been attained and is projected with respect to nanotechnology is a sample of the nation's political will for the practical utilization of science as a driving engine for economic and social development.

(3) The “Caravan of Freedom” departs from Santiago de Cuba on January 2

On January 1, 1959, the Rebel Army occupied Santiago de Cuba; and on January 2, rebel forces led by Camilo Cienfuegos accepted the surrender of the Batista armed forces at the Columbia military camp in Havana. A caravan of the triumphant revolutionary forces led by Fidel left Santiago de Cuba for Havana on January 2, arriving in the capital city to a tumultuous and joyous popular reception on January 8.

Each year, there is symbolic commemorative caravan, retracing the road taken by the triumphant rebel army in early January 1959. During the past week, on Thursday, January 2, youth and combatants of this year's commemorative “Caravan of Freedom” departed from the Santiago de Cuba, with extensive coverage by the Cuban media.

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