

*Cuban students rally on the steps
of the University of Havana for
Palestine*

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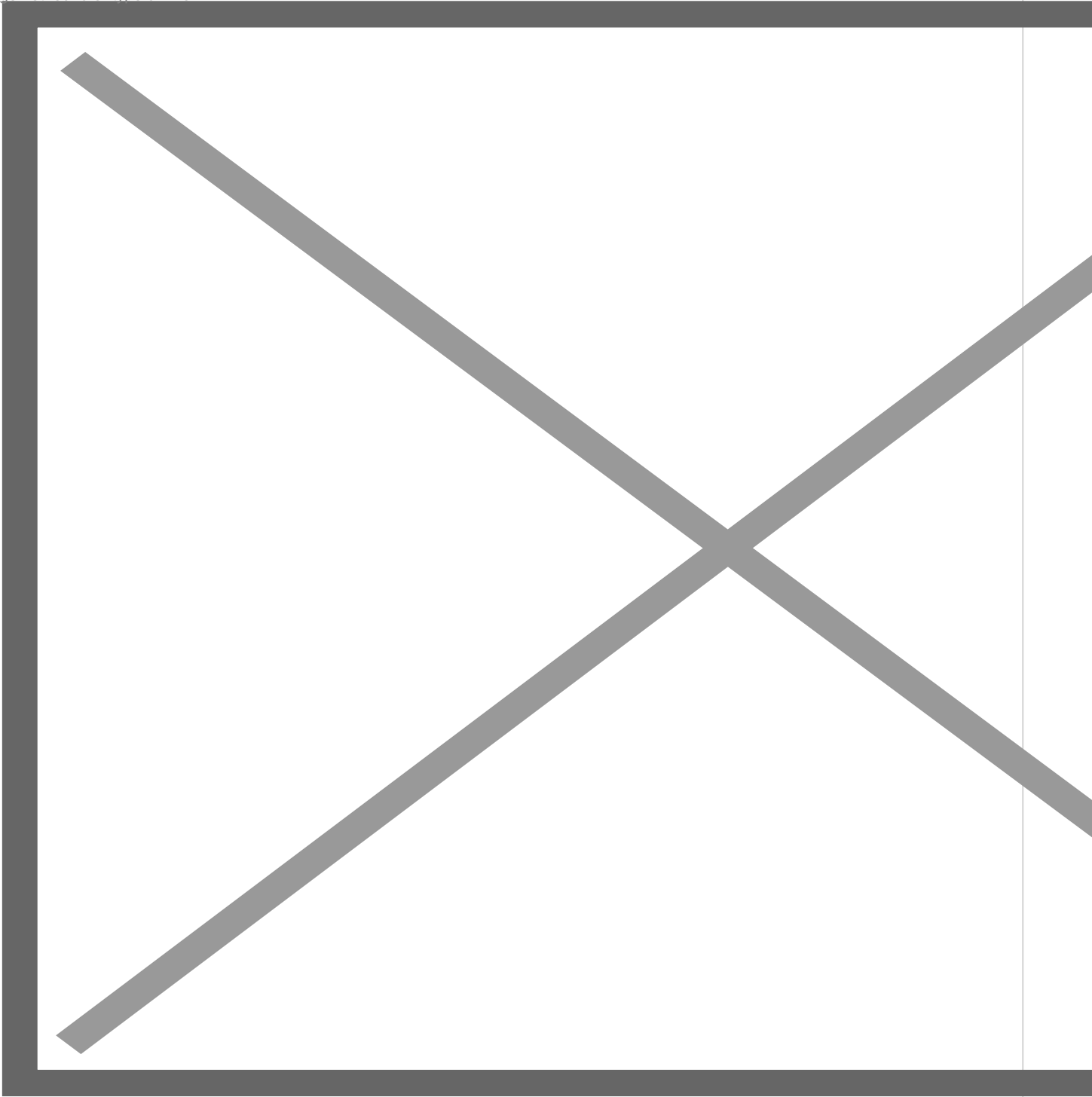


Photo by Ed Newman (Radio Havana Cuba)

By Bill Hackwell / RESUMEN LATINOAMERICANO AND THE THIRD WORLD

Havana, May 4 (RHC)-- Unlike the scenario that has unfolded on college campuses across the U.S. where student encampments in support of the Palestinian people have been met with police brutality and attacks by agent provocateurs, the University of Havana Friday held a rally in solidarity with Gaza and in keeping with Cuba's unwavering support of the Palestinian people that Fidel cemented with Yasser Arafat soon after the Revolution.

Since its inception, the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) has opened its doors to young Palestinians seeking to fulfill their dream of becoming doctors. Over 100 Palestinians, many from the Gaza strip, are currently studying medicine in Cuba, both at ELAM and at other universities in the country.

The comparison of what the courageous students at over 80 University campuses across the U.S. have faced to clearly express their opposition to the US sponsored genocide (with over 2300 of them having been arrested according to The New York Times), and what unfolded here in Havana on Friday could not be starker.

Here the iconic steps leading up to the Alma Mater statue at the entrance to the university was filled with Palestinians who live and go to school here, Cuban students attending the university, Cuban athletes, members of the military, musicians including Raúl Torres, Marcos David Fernández and international Cuban artists Buena Fe, community members and their families and solidarity groups who have been here for the International May Day celebrations. All were standing enthusiastically cheering and chanting, shoulder to shoulder for Palestine.

Watan Jamil Alabed, a Palestinian doctor who graduated in Cuba, exclaimed to the crowd: "The students are in the vanguard and they believe in the victory of our cause, because they know that to fight for Palestine is to fight for the world."

He was followed by Shaquille Fontenot, who is a co-chair of the National Network on Cuba (NNOC) in the United States. She demanded that President Joe Biden "stop spending money on wars and use it on health and the desperately needed building of affordable homes for our people."

Also speaking was Miriam Nicado, President of the University of Havana who greeted the crowd with a heartfelt welcome on behalf of the institution. Like all institutions in Cuba, their solidarity with Palestine is beyond reproach and dramatically stands out in contrast with most US university administrations.

Take for example Columbia University President Minouche Shafik, who was called to testify at a hearing in the U.S. Congress on April 17th about the "unrest" on campus. After receiving her marching orders, Shafik returned to New York and the next day unleashed swarms of New York City Police to arrest the students with force.

Friday's event was organized by the Federation of Cuban Students (FEU) who next week will be carrying out a campaign with events throughout the country to reaffirm solidarity with the Palestinian people and with the students who have been repressed demonstrating in favor of Palestine.

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