

Cubans Celebrate International Workers Day



By Juan Jacomino

Havana, May 1-- Cubans paraded today in squares all over the country to celebrate May Day and show support for the on-going process of changes in the island's social and economic model.

This was the first mass rally in Cuba following holding of the 7th Congress of the Communist Party, which took place from April 16-19 and which also ratified that path of change. The May Day parade was an expression Cuban workers' determination to continue playing a leading role in that process.

Thousands of trade union members from the field of education led the parade in Havana, where the main event for the International Workers' Day took place, an event set in the context of the 55th anniversary of the Literacy Campaign and the declaration of Cuba as an illiteracy-free territory.

The parade Sunday morning in Havana was attended by President Raul Castro and other top government leaders. Cuba's Trade Union Confederation secretary general Ulises Guilarte de Nacimiento spoke at the inauguration of the May Day parade in Havana's Jose Marti Revolution Square.

The priorities for the Cuban labor movement remain being economic development, the struggle for piece, and ideological firmness, said Guilarte.

On the new U.S.-Cuba scenario, Guilarte recalled that the lifting of the blockade was an indispensable condition for the normalization of relations. In order for our relations with the United States to normalize, the financial, economic and commercial blockade imposed on Cuba for more than half a century must be lifted, and the Guantanamo territory illegally occupied by that country in eastern Cuba must be returned, the Cuban union leader pointed out.

He underlined that Cuba will never abandon its revolutionary and anti-imperialist ideals, its foreign policy committed to the defense of just causes and self-determination.

In this regard, Guilarte denounced the maneuvers aimed at weakening regional integration processes in Latin America and destroying the achievements attained under progressive governments such as those of Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua and El Salvador.

Nearly 1,600 personalities and members of trade unions from Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Asia and Canada traveled to Cuba to participate in the May Day festivities and were present at the plaza.

Under the slogan "For Cuba: Unity and Commitment", the march also celebrated the 90th birthday of the Cuban revolutionary leader Fidel Castro and the 55th anniversaries of the Cuban victory at Bay of Pigs and the proclamation of the socialist nature of the Cuban Revolution. And as mentioned earlier during our programming, Radio Havana Cuba was also proud to be part of the anniversaries this year, as our station celebrated today, May 1st, 55 years of its official inception in the airwaves with the name Radio Havana Cuba. And we have received letters from listeners from all over the world—Italy, Canada, Russia, the U.S.—all congratulating Radio Havana on its anniversary. But about that you will hear in our upcoming special "The Mail Bag Show."

On May 2, an International Solidarity Event will be held in Havana, with the participation of an expected 200 representatives of trade unions, institutions and social movements from 34 countries.

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