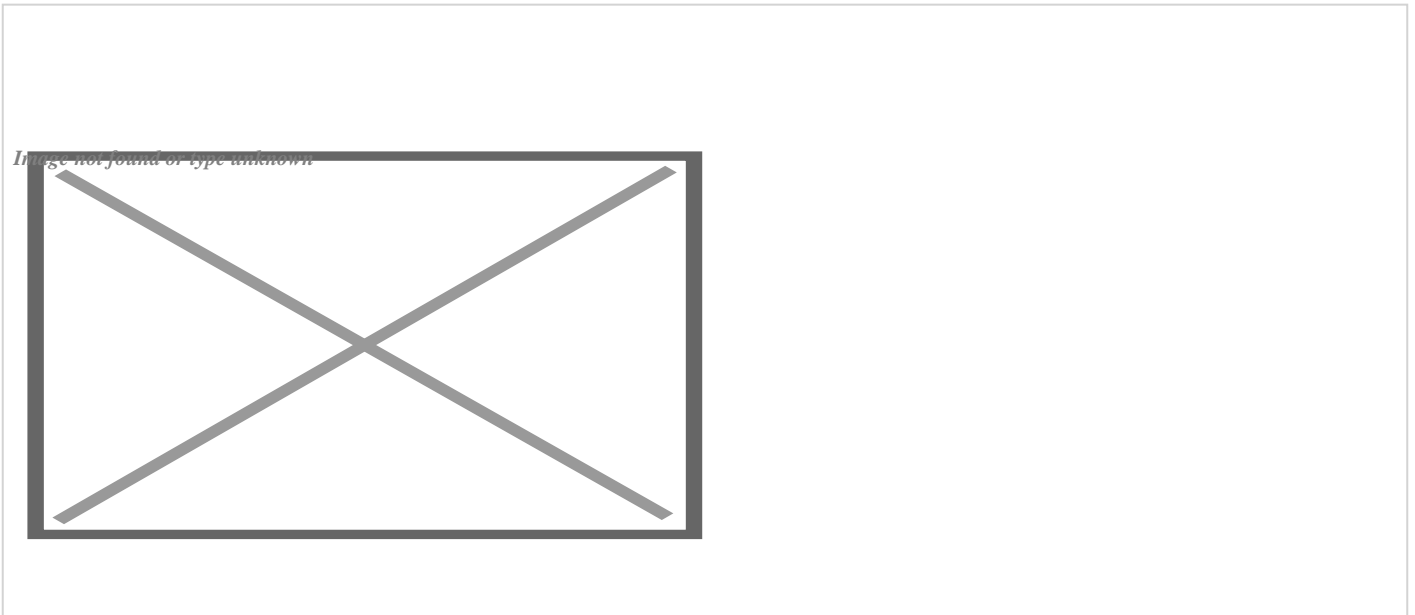


# *Cuba between lights and shadows*

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By Pedro M. Otero Cabañas

The dystopian Cuba that is sold around the world by the press, social networks and influencers with roots in Miami and cities in Europe, for the most part, falls apart after an objective and unprejudiced look at the reality of the island.

Today, we Cubans are living, without a doubt, a multifactorial crisis that impacts what we would call having a normal life. Electricity outages, poor public transportation, depressed public health and education, depreciation of the Cuban peso, shortages of food and medicine, and more.

But the country has not come to a standstill. In fact, it maintains vitality and develops multiple cultural, sports and social activities with the participation of foreign guests.

Examples: Currently the 63rd National Baseball Series is taking place, with the participation of 16 teams, as well as the 61st Playa Girón 2024 National Boxing Tournament, based in the city of Guantánamo, while just a few days ago it was held in the stadium Pan American in Havana the Cuban Athletics Cup and almost immediately the Barrientos Memorial began, of the same discipline.

Cuban athletes prepare inside and outside the country with a view to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games that will begin next July

The culture area also generates multiple events.

The Caribbean and Sun festivals have not stopped taking place in Santiago de Cuba, with numerous foreign participation.

In Holguín, theater events for adults and children continue to take place, the May Romerías, the Gibara International Film Festival and many more shows of various disciplines.

Havana, as the capital, brings together the largest number of events. From the shows in its iconic Tropicana cabaret and dozens of other centers to dance, theater, music and film festivals, in which the Havana International Film Festival stands out.

Radio and television operate as they have always been accustomed, without cuts to their programming.

Tourism is diversifying. It is not only the traditional sun and beach. Other destinations have been promoted, including nature, health and historical destinations. The number of foreign visitors continues to grow, especially with the incorporation of Chinese and Russian tourists, under agreements signed with airlines of those nationalities.

The figure of 5 million foreign visitors that the Cuban authorities in the sector had proposed before the pandemic is still far away, but a discreet and sustained increase is being recorded.

The scientific, technical and environmental areas join this dynamic movement of social activities that maintains Cuba as an important place of knowledge and culture.

I cannot ignore the growing number of leisure and recreation centers. I'm talking about cafes, restaurants, game rooms and others, boosted by the rapid growth of private enterprises.

In other words, the image of a destroyed, sad and unmotivated Cuba is just a nodule manufactured from abroad in order to add gunpowder to the anti-Cuban propaganda arsenal of the most reactionary centers that today oppose the Revolution.

There are problems and serious difficulties, but there is potential to reverse that situation.

So, despite the acute problems that we face today, and the impact of the Yankee blockade, Cubans continue to build a country tailored to us, with shadows and lights, but with the conviction that we will get through this bad moment of economic crisis. And together with the other nations of Latin America and the Caribbean, we will continue to work for a better world.

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