General elections called in CUBA
In accordance with procedures established in the Constitution of the Republic and Law No. 72 from October 29, 1992, the "Electoral Law," the Council of State convokes the Republic's voters to general elections to elect delegates to Municipal Assemblies, delegates to Provincial Assemblies, and deputies to the National Assembly of People's Power.

The first round of elections to chose delegates to Municipal Assemblies of People's Power, for two and a half year terms, will take place October 22, 2017, and, on October 29, a second round in constituencies where no candidate receives more than 50% of the valid votes cast.

The date for elections to elect delegates to Provincial Assemblies and deputies to the National Assembly of People's Power will be set at the appropriate time.
Nuria Barbosa León

- COMMITMENT to quality health services as a social imperative was at the center of discussions during the 1st National Conference of the Health Care Workers’ Union, where the closing remarks were made by José Ramón Machado Ventura, second secretary of the Party’s Central Committee and a vice president of the Councils of State and Ministers.

The Party leader praised the quality of the event, which for two days addressed core issues, including the ongoing improvements to the Cuban public health system.

He also highlighted the organization and preparation of the delegates and insisted on the importance of establishing discussion processes at the grassroots to complement decisions and provide continuity to the agreements reached.

More than 350 delegates and some 100 guests who gathered at Havana’s International Conference Center June 9-10, also addressed repairs and maintenance currently underway at the country’s health care facilities, efforts to improve efficiency, socialist incentives, and the trade union’s functioning.

Ulises Guílarte de Nacimiento, member of the Party Political Bureau and secretary general of the Cuban Workers’ Federation, (CTC), described as combative the commitment expressed throughout the productive meeting, during which debate focused on finding solutions to problems. He likewise praised union members’ sense of ownership and the strength of proposals made by delegates on organizational and management issues, recognizing that a lack of efficiency continued to limit the sector’s performance this past year.

Granma International spoke with several delegates from the central province of Sancti Spíritus. After the meeting, pharmacist Daisy Torres Ramirez emphasized the importance of creating opportunities for discussion within local units to follow up on agreements reached at the Conference. She added, “Our sector is immersed in a process of needed change, and on the material level, with palpable results in the improvement of working conditions and assistance provided in hospitals, polyclinics, and neighborhood family doctors’ offices. This therefore calls for a greater commitment by workers to medical attention for the population.”

Her colleague María Elena González Rodriguez works at the Faustino Pérez Provincial Rehabilitation Hospital, where the staff is known for its active union. She shared her positive experience during the Conference’s work commissions, for the benefit of other workers in similar institutions.

González referred to the local assembly process held prior to the Conference, to address the major issues among all staff members, saying, “We discussed the appropriate use of resources which the state makes available, to avoid waste and poor medical practices. We proposed efficient internal control to prevent the misappropriation of these resources, necessary for our work.”

For her part, Eliza Montano Rivero, secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee, and a vice president of the Councils of State and Ministers. She noted the provision of resources in our hospitals were given new cars. Emergency staff break rooms were equipped with appliances like refrigerators, microwave ovens to cook food, and flat screen television sets, to make rest periods on work days more comfortable.”

She also noted the awarding of motivating distinctions like the CTC 75th Anniversary Seal to pediatrician Dr. Ernestina Ramírez, who has devoted herself to infant nephrology for more than 40 years, concluding, “Many resources are allocated by the Ministry of Public Health to ensure that our workers feel well-treated, which translates into better quality service for the population.”

José Manuel Correa

Quality and efficient services: A commitment and challenge for Cuban health workers

Nuria Barbosa León

From left to right: Daisy Torres Ramírez, María Elena González Rodríguez and Eliza Montano Rivero, Sancti Spíritus delegates to the Conference, who highlighted the resources distributed by the state to health sector workers.

Evelio Estrada Vega and Sara Dalma González, from Granma province, emphasized the sense of belonging, humanism and altruism that characterize health sector workers.

Another topic of discussion, Estrada Vega reported, was the innovators’ movement, which involves talented individuals with a knack for solving technical problems and fabricating spare parts, often in short supply, to keep advanced technology equipment in working order.

Sara Dalma González, also from Granma, explained that this movement is composed largely of young people, who are keen to pay special attention to attract them to the field, and keep them.

Across the country, the pre-Conference discussion process included 160 municipal assemblies, at 15 provincial ones. Members of the trade union made 817 proposals, the majority of which have been addressed, since they were within the organization’s limits. Only 11 are awaiting resolution on the national level.

All the interviewees agreed on the importance of defending our socialist society and its accomplishments, while identifying love and affection as basic premises for health care workers, reflecting the humanism and altruism so necessary to a Revolution like Cuba’s.”
Raúl receives Foreign Minister of Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

• AMY General Raúl Castro Ruiz, President of Cuba’s Councils of State and Ministers, June 12, received Jean Asselborn, minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Immigration, and Asylum, for the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, who made an official visit to the country.

Discussed during the meeting were the positive relations which have been established between Luxembourg and Cuba, as well as the intention to develop them in areas of mutual interest. The two leaders likewise addressed issues on the international agenda.

Also participating was Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla.

STRENGTHENING TIES

Bruno Rodríguez and Jean Asselborn, Foreign Ministers of Cuba and Luxembourg respectively, described relations between the two small nations as historic and positive during a meeting held at the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Relations, June 12.

Rodríguez noted that ties between the two small nations are an example of friendship and respect, with enormous potential. He went on to highlight that this year will see the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Cuba and Luxembourg, and thanked the European country for its contribution toward efforts to build a new relationship between the European Union (EU) and Cuba.

Meanwhile, Jean Asselborn, on his second official visit to the island, stated that Cuba has many friends in Europe, noting that his country will continue supporting the process of rapprochement between the island and the EU.

MEETING AT THE CUBAN PARLIAMENT

Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn also visited the National Assembly of the People’s Power of Cuba (ANPP), where he was received by the organization’s Vice President, Ana María Mari Machado, acting on behalf of the President of the Cuban Parliament, Esteban Lazo, who is currently visiting Vietnam.

Lazo thanked Asselborn for his country’s support for an end to the blockade imposed by the United States on the island.

The ANPP Vice President also expressed gratitude for Luxembourg’s support in this new stage of relations between Cuba and the EU after the bloc ended its Common Position against the island last year.

Meanwhile, Asselborn recalled that he made his first official visit to Cuba in 2011, returning at the end of last year to participate in the funeral ceremony for Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro.

Machado Ventura receives delegation from Communist Party of Portugal

• ON the afternoon of June 12, José Ramón Machado Ventura, second secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba (PCC) Central Committee, received Jerónimo de Sousa, secretary general of the Communist Party of Portugal (PCP), leading a delegation from the organization to the island. Machado explained to De Sousa the key elements of Portugal’s strong rejection of the economic, financial and commercial blockade imposed by the United States on Cuba, which remains in effect and severely impacts the country’s development. He also highlighted the importance of the thought and work of Comandante en Jefe Fidel Castro for current and future generations.

Both officials reaffirmed the excellent relations shared by the two parties, and their willingness to continue working together to strengthen unity within the international communist movement.

During their stay in Cuba, the PCP delegation undertook a program of activities, which included commemorations of the anniversaries of the births of Maceo and Che; meetings with other PCC officials, the Young Communist League (UCJ), and mass organizations; plus visits to several sites of economic and social interest. The distinguished visitor was accompanied by Pedro Guerreiro, head of the PCP’s International Relations department. Participating on the Cuban side was José Ramón Balaguer Cabrera, a member of the PCC Secretariat and head of the Central Committee’s International Relations department, in addition to other officials.

Who are we?

Amistur CUBA S.A. travel agency of the Cuban Friendship with Peoples Institute (ICAP), organizes specialized tourism, promoting and selling products and services which guarantee visitors’ enjoyment and provide the opportunity to learn about Cuba’s reality through direct contact with the country’s people.

What do we do?

Amistur CUBA S.A. offers a broad range of products and services:
• Solidarity Brigades, volunteer work, and opportunities to interact with Solidarity with Cuba movements
• Specialized tours of unique sites which combine Cuban history, culture, and identity, to provide an abundance of new experiences

We can organize and promote:
• Events & Conferences
• Specialized complementary excursions
• Cruises and sailboat outings
• Individual tourism
• Professional guide and interpretation services

Amistur CUBA S.A. promotes the uniqueness, beauty and humanism of Cuba, giving visitors a positively different view of the country’s life and future, acting as a bridge between peoples.
Cuban medical technology
to ensure quality care
The production of electrocardiographs by the Central Institute for Digital Research contributes to import substitution.

Israel Zayas, commercial vice president of this institution, tells Granma International: “Exports are mainly to Latin America, countries such as Mexico, Venezuela, Ecuador, Colombia and Brazil. A sale was also made on the African continent, specifically in Angola, and we are trying to gain other international markets.”

In Cuba, the enterprise mainly supplies the Ministry of Public Health and certain health centers, such as the Cira García Central Clinic, the Medical and Surgical Research Center (CIMEQ), the La Pradera International Health Center, the National Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation’s clinic, and the International Center for Neurological Restoration (CIREN).

“With ISO 13485 Medical Devices, and ISO 9001 Quality Management System international standards, and is also certified by the Center for State Control of Medicines, Medical Equipment and Devices (CECMED), which is the Cuban equivalent to the certification of the European Union and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Zayas explains.

ICID has been awarded several prizes for the quality of its products, such as the Exporter Prize, granted by the Ministry of the Iron, Steel, Mechanical and Electronic Industry; and the National Design Award, presented by the National Office of Industrial Design, among others.

LINES OF BUSINESS

Research is carried out in cooperation with Cuban public health organizations, including the Institute of Cardiology and Cardiovascular Surgery, the Havana Provincial Medical Emergency Center, the National Institute of Oncology and Radiobiology, and the William Soler Pediatric Cardio Center, among others.

The ICID promotes a line of devices for cardiac investigations, its main area of research. This is divided into two fundamental areas: diagnosis and rehabilitation; for which specific equipment is provided for the country’s hospitals, among which are electrocardiographs, portable electrocardiograph recorders (EGG), cardiopulmonary stress testing systems (ERGOCID AT-PLUS), defibrillators and biphasic monitors.

Zayas indicates that for the correct development of this sector, ICID incorporates some accessories purchased on the international market, in order to provide a higher quality service.

He also explains that the firm provides full maintenance service, with spare parts and specialized personnel for this work guaranteed.

He emphasizes that ICID has two factories: a mechanical production plant, and an electronics production plant. The mechanical components that make up medical equipment are made in the first, using a wide range of high technology machinery and tools.

In the second, the circuit boards are installed and their operation is tested, while the equipment is assembled, as well as the packaging and final preparation before they are stored pending their final destination,” he adds.

The equipment manufactured in the Center complies with ISO 13486 Medical Devices, and ISO 9001 Quality Management System international standards, and is also certified by the Center for State Control of Medicines, Medical Equipment and Devices (CECMED), which is the Cuban equivalent to the certification of the European Union and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Zayas explains.

In 1991, exports of the first medical equipment based on the CARDIOCID M computer began.

Dedicated to the development of medical electronic devices in Cuba, this entity is affiliated with the BioCubaFarma Enterprise Group, which brings together the island’s pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical equipment industries.

ICID was founded in 1969 as a pilot plant, originally called the Digital Research Center. Its first purpose was to develop a microcomputer. Later on, with a small group of young engineers and students of the University of Havana, the first Cuban digital microcomputer, the CID-201, was created.

Subsequently, with the perfection of the technology, new models were created, in addition to peripheral devices such as keyboards, video terminals, as well as operating systems and high-level programming languages.

In 1983, the first investigations applied to medical equipment began, and two years later the first Cuban-made digital electrocardiograph, the CARDIOCID-PC, was introduced in the country’s hospitals.

IMPORTANT SUBSTITUTION

Research, development, production, marketing, and installation of electronic equipment, as well as computer modules, accessories, and applications for medicine and biotechnology, mean ICID has highly qualified personnel.

The products manufactured in the Center are grouped under the trademark COMBIOMED, which is also the ICID’s foreign trade enterprise, with exclusive rights to the sale of its equipment abroad.

In 1991, exports of the first medical equipment based on the CARDIOCID M computer began.

The use of technological advances to benefit society and their implementation in various fields, such as medicine, is one of the primary objectives of the Central Institute for Digital Research (ICID), with the purpose of guaranteeing the wellbeing of the Cuban people.
Cuba’s first luxury five-star plus hotel inaugurated

New hotels in Villa Clara
The Cuban official went on to explain that the hotel, managed by the world renowned Kempinski chain, features the latest technologies, while its patrimonial assets have also been greatly exploited.

According to Marrero Cruz, hotels such as the Manzana Kempinski will attract new clients and contribute toward making Cuba a more complete tourist destination.

During the inauguration, Havana City Historian, Dr. Eusebio Leal Spengler, highlighted that the work was completed in the same year as the building is celebrating its 100th anniversary, and at a time when other noteworthy restoration projects are being undertaken, such as the Alicia Alonso Grand Theater of Havana, the Martí Theater, and Capitolio building, among others.

Meanwhile, Markus Semer, chairman and CEO of Kempinski Hotels, noted that the opening of the establishment is an important moment for the company, which has not been present in the Americas for several years. “The market is ready for a luxury hotel such as this. With a range of quality, contemporary-style bars and restaurants, this will be the home of the most demanding clients.”

Freddy Pérez Cabrera (Text & photo)

- SANTA CLARA— The construction of six new hotels in Villa Clara and improvements to all non-hotel facilities, are part of an ambitious development plan being undertaken in the central Cuban province, in preparation for next year’s International Tourism Fair, set to be held on Cayo Santa María with the United Kingdom as guest country of honor.

The 246-room Grande, a destination with enormous tourist potential and set to benefit from a luxury five-star hotel, among other initiatives; all of which will be presented during the upcoming edition of FIT-Cuba 2018, according to Armenteros Mesa.

Given the sizable investments being made and the need for high quality construction across hotel and non-hotel facilities, workers of the Emprestur enterprise from various provinces have been mobilized to undertake the works, which will require combined efforts with industries and entities of the region in order to revive its cultural and gastronomic infrastructure, as well as that of other services in the municipalities involved, the official noted.
Further support for full-time caregivers

Over 3,500 families with severely disabled children protected by Cuba’s social assistance system

Yenia Silva Correa
Photos: Ismael Batista Ramírez

• ANA saw her dreams fade away when she received the diagnosis a few weeks after giving birth to her son. The particularly unpronounceable condition was the confirmation that the child suffered from a severe disability which would change the family dynamics forever. She wouldn’t see her son fulfill his lifelong dreams while Ana would dedicate her time entirely to his care.

The years weigh heavily on Maria. Since she was born, Maria’s daughter has been completely dependent on her. The young woman is approaching 30 years of age and, despite her limitations, has been the source of many happy moments in their home. Her mother has one concern though: Who will look after her daughter when she is gone?

In truth Ana and Maria are fictional, but the reality of mothers with severely disabled children is far from fantasy. Many women face situations similar to those described above, dedicating their lives to taking care of a child. And who protects these women? How do they support themselves and their children?

A FULL-TIME JOB

Talking to Haydee Franco Leal, deputy director general of the National Social Security Institute, we discuss the support Cuba offers mothers with severely disabled children, who – given their child’s condition – choose to give up their jobs.

"Today legislation regarding mothers working rights includes support for mothers with children who suffer from an illness or have a physical-sensory disability, and need special care."

"If at one year of age the child exhibits such problems, and given that they cannot be institutionalized in either a health or educational center, the mother can take unpaid leave until the child is three.

“Legislation also includes other unpaid leave benefits that can be claimed after the child has turned three if he or she cannot be institutionalized in either an educational or healthcare facility."

"There are also a set of requirements established by law for working mothers: the individual has the right to request unpaid leave to care for her child until they turn 17, as long as she has worked for four of the six months prior to submitting her leave request.”

According to the expert all these measures, put in place to support those most in need, reveal the humanist nature of the Cuban Revolution, as those unable to work – including mothers taking full-time care of their children – are protected.

“Protection for mothers with severely disabled children who are obliged to give up their job because the child demands continuous full-time care did not feature in the country’s previous legislation, hence the creation of these benefits, which represent a genuine example of the humanist foundation of our revolutionary system.

“Under the new Decree law 339, time dedicated to taking care of children is recognized as a period of service for mothers; if they meet the requirements and age established by law they can claim the right to a pension as established in the General Social Security Regulations for workers.”

PROTECTION FOR ALL

So far we have only addressed working mothers with disabled children, but what about mothers with severely disabled children who were not working prior to giving birth. They also have the right to Social Assistance. Belkis Delgado Cáceres, deputy director of Prevention, Assistance and Social Work, explains that Law 105 regarding social services offers safety nets for mothers with severely disabled children.

“This consists of recognition of the years of full-time service the mother has dedicated to providing constant care for her child,” noted the representative.

“This is considered to be the mother’s occupation, therefore the years of work are recognized when the pension is granted meaning that the mother obtains the right established by law to, at some point, receive a pension.

“In the same way, if the mother dies, the disabled child is also entitled to a survivor’s pension. These two pensions are established by law.

“Just like any working mother, if the child outlives the mother, he or she is guaranteed economic support through a survivors’ pension.”

Who does Social Assistance protect in Cuba?

• SOCIAL assistance protection is deemed necessary when a family member is proven to be unable to find employment, suffers from health issues, a disability or other justifiable causes; when household income is insufficient to cover food and medication costs, basic service payments or in the absence of relatives responsible for providing assistance.

MOTHERS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

• EVERY activity undertaken in the non-state sector is today supported by special Social Assistance regulations, designed to adapt benefits to the specific working conditions of private sector employees.

Just like state workers, private-sector employees are also entitled to maternity rights, although there are some differences. Unpaid leave isn’t established in the non-state sector, however mothers who need to take care of their children can request leave for reasons justified and outlined in each one of the special regulations.

In these cases, temporary unpaid leave is granted in accordance with that which is established in regulations regarding private sector work.
La Conchita: Past, present, and future

Nuria Barbosa León

[Text & photos]

Among the company’s best known and most sought-after products are fruit sauces, candies, and preserves, prepared at the state enterprise unit (UEB) La Conchita, located in the western province of Pinar del Río and designed to process more than 12,000 tons of fruit annually.

La Conchita was founded in 1937, occupying several houses on 20 de mayo Street and Antonio Rodríguez Avenue in the provincial capital, and is named after the mother of one of the proprietors, Concepción Martínez, known as Conchita. Its first product was guava paste, a popular snack for schoolchildren.

By 1942, there were already 150 workers employed in shifts of up to 12 hours a day. Import technology was added, and warehouses expanded. The plant was later re-located to an area seven kilometers out of town, on the Central Highway, where it has remained to date. Two more bays were constructed, along with tanks to store 65,000 gallons of diesel and 1,400 gallons of gas, as well as an office and sanitary services.

With the triumph of the Revolution, conditions changed dramatically. On October 14, 1960, the plant was nationalized dramatically. On October 14, 1960, the plant was nationalized, part of the Food Processing Industry Group (GEIA), created as part of the reorganization of the Cuban economy over this past decade.

Industry Group (GEIA), created

In the late 1960s, the plant was merged with the National Vegetable Industry (INV), becoming the new La Conchita. The plant name was changed to La Conchita after finishing secondary school. She was motivated to study Law in an adult education program, completing her studies in 2013, and is now a specialist in the Human Resources Department at the plant.

Felicia Ramos is one of the plants' most efficient workers, with a record of having produced more than a 1,000 cans in a single workday.

Felicia, as she is affectionately called, explained, "I get to the plant before six in the morning, and prepare the working conditions to receive the staff. Then I place them in each of the activities to be completed that day, with the help of the area manager. I also distribute tools and protective gear. When a worker is absent, I take their place so that production is not affected. The workday ends with cleaning the area and turning it over to the next shift." She notes that the jobs requiring the most skill involve the bottling, labeling, and wrapping equipment.

"The workers follow me, because I take on the work with lots of energy. I'm the union leader in my area, with more than 170 members, including 66 retired. I complete my trade union activities by collecting dues and providing direct attention to the workers in solving their problems at work," Felicia reported.

She added that she has taken several courses and trainings to gain skill in the operation of equipment and is proud to report that she has produced more than 1,000 cans in a single day.

She has been recognized with certificates and distinctions for these accomplishments, including the Pedro Marrero medal, awarded by the sector union, and has participated in national congresses and events. Another exemplary staff member is Germán Rodríguez López, a retired worker who is proud to have worked at the plant for 30 years. He is invited to all celebrations and remains a member of the union, participating in scientific events and assemblies, because his opinion is still valued. He recounts that his house was built by workers at the plant, in a nearby community, for which he is profoundly grateful to La Conchita and the Revolution, concluding, "We all feel like a true family."

Yudith Montes emphasizes professional development opportunities at La Conchita and notes that salaries are linked to production.

Yudith Montes, 25, recently graduated from the University of Havana. She is currently working at La Conchita as an office and sanitary service employee. She began her work here in 2014, and has been recognized for her hard work and dedication to the company. She notes the sense of belonging felt by the staff at La Conchita.

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Inside Cuban airports: Legal questions
According to official data from authorities at Havana’s José Martí International Airport, in 2016, 91% of the 2,444,501 passengers who arrived in Cuba through its air terminals did not declare any items on their customs forms and passed through what is known as the “green lane.”

Let us recall that Havana is among the most popular destinations in the Caribbean and the main entrance point to the country, with 47% of all visitors to the island arriving at the city’s airport. In 2015, a total of more than 1,680,000 passed through its gates, coming mainly from the United States, France, Italy, Mexico, Spain, Britain, and Germany. This figure increased by almost a million from one year to the next.

In an in-depth interview with Granma Internacional, the head of Legal Affairs at the José Martí International Airport, Maydel Tarré Cala, noted that although use of the green lane increased last year, up from 87% in 2015, it is a priority to further increase this figure, “to facilitate the movement of passengers through customs, conducting the required checks and clearance. This demands greater professionalism, and legal awareness as we deliver customs services, and that the population understands established regulations better.”

The specialist explained that the increasing numbers of passengers arriving to the country has meant a higher level of activity for customs authorities at airports. Specifically this past year, 21,371 primary procedures were conducted, 2,700 more than in 2015.

It should be clarified that “procedures” means actions taken by a customs officer regarding a specific article or piece of merchandise, which involves completing documentation, such as a Retention and Notification Certificate or, in some cases, a resolution that authorizes confiscation.

On the other hand, in most instances declaring an item at customs does not imply that it will be held or confiscated. This only happens when a regulation has been violated or when a specific requirement must be met before the item is cleared and released.

All items retained are safeguarded and passengers are informed of their right to file a legal claim or complaint. As the number of these procedures has increased, the number of claims has as well, although in 2016 there were only 19 more appeals (487) than in 2015 (468).

Tarré reported that, over the last two years, most of these cases have involved Cubans living in the country or abroad. Of the total number of claims, 89 were declared valid, according to the attorney. These
Laimy Yi León notes that customs agents must know how to deal with passengers, explain regulations clearly, and apply them correctly.

Suárez notes that everything Customs does is legally defined and there is a solid foundation to enforce the law, adding that with few resources they are attempting to ensure the professional development of all staff. In this regard, Tarre comments, “Likewise, we have not achieved the specialization we would like among supervisors in the Customer Service Department, which includes experts on customs issues. We meet with them to attend and process all claims and complaints that emerge from the enforcement of customs regulations, above all those questions of a purely technical-legal nature, such as a declaration of heirs or a notarized power of attorney.”

Laimy Yi León, another veteran attorney at the airport with a decade of experience, adds that also central to the team’s work is advising the population and customs officials, who must not only know the law, but be able to explain it to a passenger clearly and apply it correctly.

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Tarré reveals that on the day of this interview the team was responding to complaints, claims, and appeals which had been submitted, challenging administrative actions such as confiscations, and fines on individuals and legally recognized bodies. They will present their findings to a Legality Commission, an advisory body headed by the head of Customs at the airport, which evaluates every claim and challenge presented by the population and travelers, as well as the regulations violated, what the plaintiff alleges, and proposed decisions.

The Commission meets on a weekly basis and the ruling agreed upon is communicated in writing to those involved by the Customer Service Department.

Among the legal team’s very specific tasks at the airport are participating in prosecuting passengers who evade payment of customs duties or have an outstanding debt, as well as the inspections of areas within the terminals where Customs operates, such as the Lost and Found, or storage rooms for confiscated and held items.

On another topic, Tarré notes that Customs at the airport is currently working with a young staff, which requires further training. The AGR has its own school, which is constantly perfecting its teaching methods and study plans, projecting that the basic course for customs officers be more specialized.

She comments, “The attorney is essential. There cannot be a Chief Customs Officer who does not have a strong legal advisor. These days, we are being given a greater leadership role and participation in other spheres for which Customs sues the legal team.

Only a few know that behind constant efforts to improve the airport’s functioning, there are six dynamic attorneys.

Although the practice of international law in many countries includes the specialty of customs law, this is not the case in Cuba. Nonetheless, the work of the General Customs of the Republic (AGR) over the last several years has led to broader awareness of the importance of this type of work.

Thus the work carried out by the women under Tarré’s leadership is truly unique. They represent it in the negotiation of economic contracts; in disagreements with other institutions; and before the courts when needed.

They are also responsible for monitoring the legality of labor-related processes, ranging from AGR mandates, to appointments to promotions and demotions.

Tarré, who came to work at José Martí International Airport in 2001 after finishing Law School at the University of Havana, noted that the subject of customs is a complicated one, and that attorneys must constantly update their knowledge regarding both national and international topics.

She notes that with greater access to the internet, they have been able to keep up with international agreements, and customs developments around the world, but adds, “It has been difficult to simultaneously take on motherhood and domestic tasks along with those inherent in such broad, diverse work, that never ends.”

Via the Union of Cuban Jurists, to which all members of the legal team belong, they provide advice on the drafting and dissemination of bulletins and other informative materials; participate in professional events and present classes on customs regulations, technique, and confronting illicit activity; and train customs officials at the airport in legal affairs.

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Nusha Suárez Eizmendi, well known for her solid work and 17 years of experience at the Havana airport, notes that a customs lawyer must fully understand a great deal of specific information, saying that the work requires “general culture, which allows one to know about property, just as well as technical equipment, psychology, or computer science, without forgetting the legal point of view. It demands a great deal of documentation to exercise control, and participate in the professional training of Customs’ fundamental workforce; officers in marinas, ports, airports, and mail depots.”

Cases she handled, mostly involving illegal entry into the country, or someone seeking to re-route the item or transfer it to another traveling relative, or re-route the item or transfer it to another relative.

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She comments, “The attorney is essential. There cannot be a Chief Customs Officer who does not have a strong legal advisor. These days, we are being given a greater leadership role and participation in other spheres for which Customs is responsible, but we continue to aspire to reach higher levels in our legal consultation activity, especially at a time when work is being done on increasing institutionalization in the country.”

“We have influence in what is administrative, commercial, and economic law in Cuba. We deserve our own space. Everything that makes us more competent, including at the level of international law, is important.”

“Our work to be more professional and competent as legal specialists makes us better public servants, with the purpose of ensuring the legality of all customs procedures and guaranteeing that the population’s rights are respected.”

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Danzón: Cuba's national dance

Ricardo Alonso Venereo

• EACH new edition of the Havana International Danzón Festival, organized by the National Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC) and its Association of Musicians, since 2004, recognizes and pays tribute to the history of this Cuban musical genre and its main figures in the youngest of the country's provinces: Artemisa and Mayabeque.

As such Danzón Habana 2017, to be held June 21 - 25, in the capital and other nearby provinces, will be dedicated to the towns of San Antonio de los Baños, in Artemisa, and Madruga and Santa Cruz del Norte, in Mayabeque.

Maestro José Loyo Landa, founder and president of the event, announced that as part of the International Festival outside the capital, these three Cuban towns will see an important series of activities surrounding the figures of the brothers Demetrio Failde Pérez and Pablo Valenzuela, of San Antonio de los Baños, and José Urufe and Antonio María Romeu, from Madruga and Santa Cruz del Norte, respectively.

Other towns across Artemisa and Mayabeque will also experience the magic of danzón during the event. For example, the cities of Artemisa, Guíñez, Quivicán and Bejucal, among others, where a strong movement of danzón clubs and orchestras still exists today, will see events to celebrate Cuba's national dance. This lively movement represents one of the reasons why UNEAC always returns to Artemisa and Mayabeque with this festival.

A LITTLE HISTORY: DANZÓN IN ARTEMISA AND MATAQUE

Danzón, a genre born in Matanzas, under the baton of Miguel Ramón Damielio Falide Pérez (1852-1921), author of “Las alturas de Simpson,” was declared the island's national dance. The Rojas were a family of musicians who trained new generations. Today in Guíñez the orchestra has been revived as the Hermanos Rojas and each month amateur musicians of the area offer Sunday concerts in the central park. The Melodías Danzóneras Orchestra also continues to perform.

Also worth mentioning is singer Dominica Dámaso, Jose de Dios Alfonso’s orchestra, La Flor de Peru, when it was directed by Ricardo Flores Vizcarrá.

Today danzón continues to attract new generations of Mayabeque musicians, as evidenced by Quivicán native, jazz great Chucho Valdés’ “Danzón para Alicia,” a piece with great experimental force.

From that moment on, danzón developed across other provinces of the country. While in Matanzas Los Faildes cultivated the new rhythm and Miguel Ramón Damielio Falide Pérez enjoyed the success of his danzón piece “Las alturas de Simpson,” in the west of the country Raimundo Valenzuela and Aurelio Gómez Jardín carried out similar efforts. The work of the latter, unfortunately little known, according to researcher Luis César Núñez, reached beyond our borders, as his danzón “Unión Cienfueguera,” was performed across the island and by the mid-twentieth century it was conductor of the Orquesta América, the violinist, composer and conductor Enrique Jorrín Olead was born on December 25, 1926. Jorrín is the author of the danzón pieces “Unión Cienfueguera,” “Doña Olga,” “La Antorchita de Artémisa,” “Candelaria,” and the cha cha cha pieces “La Engañadora,” “El Aradoso” and “El Tone.” He was part of the Artémisa, ideal and Arcadio y sus Maravillas orchestras. He was the conductor of the Orquesta América, and formed his own group in 1954.

Soon the new rhythm, which replaced the contradanza, took over the country’s dance halls and by the mid-twentieth century it was declared the island’s national dance. The example of Miguel and his orchestra Los Faildes was followed by other musicians, among them composers and conductors of the current province of Mayabeque.

Among these were clarinetist Nicolás González, who was known as Simónte Guiniero, teacher and director of the Bomberos de Guíñez band, trombonist Pedro Plutarco Rojas y González, known as Perico, who founded his orchestra first in 1884, followed by a second stage which commenced in 1904, with Andrés Rojas on the violin and Miguel Rojas on the clarinet. The Rojas were a family of musicians who trained new generations. Today in Guíñez the orchestra has been revived as the Hermanos Rojas and each month amateur musicians of the area offer Sunday concerts in the central park. The Melodías Danzóneras Orchestra also continues to perform.

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August 5, 1887, he made his debut as a pianist at the Casino Español de Aguacate, where he performed a danzón for the first time, entitled: “Canó no hay mejor café que el de Puerto Rico.” His first danzón was “Ten Dollars or Ten Days,” and he would go on to write more than 500 danzón pieces, the most widely known include: “Marcheta,” “Alémán prepara tu carón,” “La danza de los miltones,” “El servicio obligatorio,” “Cinta azul,” “El mago de las teodas,” “Alborada,” “Los frescos,” and, above all, “La fausta mágica,” in collaboration with Alfredo Brito. But his most universal composition is the danzón “Cien años de juventud.”

The 2017 Havana International Danzón Festival will also be dedicated to the Mexican states of Yucatán, Veracruz, Campeche, and Quintana Roo. Under the slogan “From Danzón, to Mambo, to Cha cha cha on the centenary of the birth of Dámaso Pérez Prado (1917-1989),” the event will also honor Paulina Álvarez (1912-1965), the “Empress” of danzónete, and Aniceto Díaz (1885-1964), creator of danzónete, as well as recalling the centenary of the arrival of Cuban danzón to Yucatán.

“Cultura” June 10, 2017

Danzón dancers in Cuba.

Today danzón continues to attract new generations of Mayabeque musicians, as evidenced by Quivicán native, jazz great Chucho Valdés’ “Danzón para Alicia,” a piece with great experimental force, as well as recalling the centenary of the arrival of Cuban danzón to Yucatán.

“Cultura” June 10, 2017

Danzón is considered Cuba’s national dance and is recognized as Cultural Heritage of the Nation. Many young people do not include it among their musical interests, although others have taken on the task of revitalizing the genre, and making it more visible across the country’s public and recreational spaces.
FOR the fourth consecutive time, Cuban boxing has reached its goal of making the finals in the World Series of Boxing (WSB), just as the Tournament of the Americas is underway in Honduras, June 10-18, where they hope to qualify for the 19th World Championship, scheduled for September in the German city of Hamburg.

Many thought that Cuba’s participation in the seventh WSB finals was practically guaranteed, but rivals who entered the ring put up good fights, challenging the defending champions, making clear the high level of boxers participating in the event.

It has not been easy for the Domadores of Cuba, especially for boxers in the C-1 group (49, 56, 64, 75 and 91kg), to triumph in other countries’ venues. Of the 25 fights which have taken place abroad, in Colombia twice, Venezuela, Argentina and Uzbekistan, the team has suffered 12 defeats, often in fights that were not even close. Officials have yet to determine in which country the last bouts with the Astana Arlans (Kazakhstan) will begin.

If the Domadores advance to the finals, it will be in great part due to the success of the C-2 group (52, 60, 69, 81 and +91kg), a quintet that survived the quarter and semi-finals with an adverse score of 2-3. One interesting fact is that no visiting opponent has been able to defeat the home team in Havana’s Ciudad Deportiva, during the current version of the World Series.

Prior to the fights scheduled against the favored Kazakhstan, Cuba sent a complete team to Honduras, seeking one of the six tickets being awarded in each division to the Hamburg World Championship.

This tournament will allow boxers who have had unstable performances in the current season to get in better shape to take on the powerful Astana Arlans. The plan is to send the same individuals competing in Honduras to the WSB title competition. The World Series title match will see two teams of fighters with experience at the international level, be that in World Championships, the Olympics, and continental tournaments. The challenge facing both teams is great, in particular for the Astana Arlans, a franchise which will make its first appearance in Havana, where no team has won during the last two years. The Cuban and Kazak teams have met once before in title matches, in 2015. In this match, the Domadores succumbed against Kazakhstan, on a night that was not exempt from controversial decisions.

Thus, the winner of this meet will take the 2017 crown. The Domadores are hoping to get even, in addition to revalidating their championship victory of 2016. If Cuba can live up to its status as the pre-competition favorites, the team will have won three gold medals in four World Series, which would be the beginning of a veritable dynasty.

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The third way or political centrism in Cuba: A historical approach
take an equidistant position between Batista and Fidel foreign policy in the late 1950s, with the aim of preventing imagined solutions that preceded it..." maintained for a people formed in the revolution, the patriotic vanguard, led by José Martí, fought so hard the "mother country" of Spain, to modernize its dom-
edded at the time were experimental ideas, so when the movement stood out for their intellectual qualities, they sharing annexationist ideas when the U.S. intervention- attacked the revolution, which they considered the worst of closed ranks along with the fundamentalists to curb and fundamentalism, and annexationism. It was the tendency to the radical supporters of Cuban independence. When moderation is weighed against Cuban revolutionary radicalism – which is to go to the roots, in no way associated with extremism, which is something else entirely [2] – it is inevitable that we should find certain analogies between the current attempts at articulating centrism in Cuba, and nineteenth-century autonomism. Autonomism as a political trend which arose in the first half of the nineteenth century, but was formed as a political party in 1878, as one of the results of the revolution of 1868. It was a current that existed at the same historical moment as the independence movement, fundamentalism, and annexationism. It was the tendency par excellence of moderation, of evolution, an enemy of the radical supporters of Cuban independence.

The centrists assumed an "equidistant" position between fundamentalism – the defense of the status quo – and independence, but at defining moments they closed ranks along with the fundamentalists to curb and attack the revolution, which they considered the worst of evils. Some celebrated figures of autonomism ended up sharing annexationist ideas when the U.S. intervention-occupation of Cuba occurred. The main leaders of this movement stood out for their intellectual qualities, they were great public speakers, but their thought was elitist, essentially bourgeois, hence they could never win over the Cuban masses. The last thing the Cuban people ne- eded at the time were experimental ideas, so when the new independence movement erupted in 1895, the Autono-
mist Party would be completely displaced given the new national reality. Autonomism defended a moderate nationalism that excluded the great majority; its funda-
damental aspiration was to avoid breaking this link with the "mother country" of Spain, to modernize its dom-
ination of the island. It was no wonder that the Cuban patriots who took part in the Montecristi Group opposed against these ideas. On January 31, 1893, during one of his extraordinary speeches, Martí expressed: "...It was the singular case that those who proclaimed the political dogma of evolution were merely retrogrades, who maintained for a people formed in the revolution, the imagined solutions that preceded it..."

However, the idea of supporting a third force in Cuba – more moderate, less ob- sessed with a foreign policy in the late 1950s, with the aim of preventing the July 26 Movement from reaching power; something that became an obsession for the Eisenhower ad-
ministration in the final months of 1958. This idea was to take an equidistant position between Batista and Fidel Castro, and its development was stimulated both militarily and politically. The local CIA station in Havana was the first to manipulate this strategy and would later be its main executor. This was confirmed by CIA officer David Allee Phillips in his autobiography The Night Watch, when he noted that James Noel – then head of the local CIA station in the Cuban capital – had informed him at one of their infrequent meetings of his recommendation to the United States government to discretely sponsor the action of a third political force in Cuba, "a moderate group between Castro on the left and Batista on the right."[3] In February 1958, William Morgan, a U.S. intelligence agent, had joined the Second National Front of the Escambray, led by Eloy Gutiérrez Menoyo. His mission was to become the second chief of that guerrilla force, something that he achieved in a brief time, as well as reaching the rank of Commander. Morgan would not be the only U.S. agent to infiltrate the area with the intention of stimulating a third guerrilla force that, at a given moment, could impose itself and fight against the forces led by Fidel Castro in the Sierra Maestra. The United States was also involved in other plots where the names of various figures that could provide a political option that would snatch the revolutionary triumph from Fidel Castro’s grasp were considered, among them; Colonel Ramón Barquín; Justo Carrillo, head of the Montecristi Group; and former prime minister Manuel Antonio "Tony" de Varona. Even as late as December 23, 1958, at a meeting of the National Security Council, Eisenhower expressed his hope for the growth, strength, and influence of a "third force" on the island.[4] The creation of a ‘third force’ was not only promoted by the United States, but also by certain politicians who advocated it internally: “The Third Force,” notes Jorge Ibarra Guitart, “was a movement of private civic in-
stitutions that, representing the feeling of important sectors of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie, promoted peace efforts and reconciliation with the regime. The promoter, under wraps, of all these efforts was José Miro Cardona, who from the Society of Friends of the Republic had already planned the tactic of mobilizing bourgeois institutions to force the regime to reach an agreement. This was the moment to imple-
ment this strategy, as the enemy, in the person of the bourgeoisie, noting that more revolutionary organizations were gaining ground daily, was alarmed by the threat posed to its political and economic interests by the development of a civil war with active popular par-
ticipation.”[5]

As it was impossible for the United States to avoid the triumph of the Cuban Revolution and the coming to power of the Non-Aligned Movement, the fundamental objective of Washington during the first months of 1959 consisted of supporting and assisting those figures within the rev-
olutionary government who were considered “moderates,” of the center, against those they described as “extre-
mists,” in order to prevent the Revolution from deepening its social scope through their predominance.[6] When Fernando Martínez Hendera points out that in Cuba today there exists a right-wing nationalism with pretensions of being a center force, that has “a cultural accumulation to refer to,” he is referring to the long history of this form of nationalism which, on the political level, has its background in autonomism; the same tendency that during the years of the bourgeois neocolonial republic admitted and defended domination, and that on many occasions was used by the government of the United States itself, with the purpose of curbing, pre-
venting, or obtaining post-revolutionary situations that kept the structures of capitalist domination in Cuba, under some kind of consensus. Today we can see that this right wing nationalism, which is encouraged by those who oppose us under the deceptive guise of centrism, has no other purpose than the decisive attempt to restore capitalism in Cuba. Once again, it will be a frustrated attempt, since the main obstacle that this current has always faced is that it has never managed to anchor its ideas among the people. This people who for the most part have embraced throughout history the independent, patriotic, national-
revolutionary and anti-imperialist tradition; never that of autonomism, annexationism, or right wing nationalism. (Originally published by Cubahora)
The end of Brazil’s economic recession?
BRASILIA—Vaunted as the end of the recession by President Michel Temer, the modest growth in Brazil’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the first quarter of 2017 was described by economists as chicken feed.

“Brazil is growing again. And with the reforms it will grow even more,” Temer posted on social media after a report from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) showed a 1% increase in GDP for the January-March quarter with respect to the last quarter of 2016.

In the same euphoric tone, Finance Minister Henrique Meirelles—who just a few days before was bemoaning an exaggerated climate of pessimism regarding the country’s economy—described the announcement as “historic,” despite admitting that “there is still a way to go to achieve full economic recovery.”

Referring to this first increase in GDP following two years of continuous decline, experts at the Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socio-Economic Studies (DIEESE) warned that when compared to the same period last year, GDP had actually decreased by 0.4%, while the accumulated fall over the past 12 months is 2.3%.

In a press release, DIEESE explained that the growth reported in the first quarter of the year had a greater relation to external factors, such as exports and the rising prices of certain commodities, than domestic economic policy measures.

On the contrary, it pointed out, indicators such as gross fixed capital formation, which measure investment in machinery and new industrial facilities, showed a fall in the period in question, which testifies to the fragility of the Brazilian economy.

Economist and professor of the University of Campinas (Unicamp) Marcio Pochmann agreed, noting that the crisis continues and everything indicates that the pace of economic downturn merely slowed, due to isolated and external factors.

Without effective measures for recovery, given the current scenario, the figures celebrated by Temer could be just one point off the curve of a prolonged recession, the former president of the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) told Brazilian daily Brasil de Fato.

For Brazil’s working class, the recession continues to hit hard, as unemployment increases and wages remain stagnant, Pochmann stressed. He insisted that latest statistics come not as a result of the policies of the Temer government, but of the expansion of foreign trade, which since 2015 has been produced by the devaluation of the country’s currency.

Meanwhile, Joao Sicsú, professor of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRRJ), agreed that the quarterly result was driven by external demand; a factor that he stressed no government can control.

The sectors that saw growth, such as agriculture, transportation, and warehousing, are all linked to external activity, while on the other hand the domestic market, household consumption and investments, all declined, he noted.

Sicsú highlighted that in fact the country is experiencing a long course of decline, noting that since the last quarter of 2014, domestic consumption has fallen by approximately 10%, while investments have fallen by 24 percentage points.

There is no consistent path to recovery, nor any indication of improvement, the expert stressed, for whom the Brazilian economy simply “sighed” in the first three months of the year “despite the government and not because of it.”

A single quarter does not set a trend, Mauro Rochlin, a professor of Macroeconomics at the Getulio Vargas Foundation (FGV) in Rio de Janeiro, told reporters, noting that for the time being it is difficult to say whether any sector has been altered structurally.

However, Rochlin expressed his belief that certain indicators seem to indicate a trend toward recovery, although on a very limited basis.

According to the National President of Brazil’s Central Workers’ Union (CUT), Wagner Freitas, Temer’s fanfare regarding quarterly GDP growth is no more than a wistful attempt to impose a positive result on his administration’s balance sheet, at a time when his departure from the presidential palace appears imminent.

He stressed that Temer has no idea of the reality, the needs, and much less the suffering of ordinary Brazilians, who during his government have lost their jobs and seen their living conditions worsen.

A country with more than 14.5 million unemployed, including 2.6 million in just a year of Temer’s administration, has nothing to celebrate. Brazil is at a standstill, companies are closing up shop. It is not possible to turn political, economic, and moral defeats into victory through a financial spreadsheet, Freitas insisted.

(PL) •
We communists struggle for human values

Interview with First Secretary of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP), Kemel Okuyan, leader of the country’s Cuba Solidarity Movement

Ernesto J. Gómez Figueredo

**TURKEY** is often depicted as an economic power hidden behind the Bosphorus, waiting for the moment when it can join the European Union (EU) and make the leap toward “Western modernity.” However, the country’s current reality is more complicated than before.

Situated in a rather unique location, the bi-continental country is the gateway between the Middle East, destabilized through internal conflicts and external threats, and a West in crisis.

Turkey itself is experiencing an equally complicated situation. An attempted coup took place in June of last year, while the country has also suffered several terrorist attacks, leaving hundreds dead and injured.

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey (parliament) recently authorized the deployment of troops to one of the country’s military bases in Qatar, as well as military operations in Iran, Saudi Arabia and Russia.

Given this situation, the Communist Party of Turkey, despite lacking any great political influence, is fighting for the inclusion and civil and political rights of the country’s most vulnerable sectors.

“Despite not being a necessarily large force, the Turkish left has a fundamental characteristic, we are tough fighters, whose ideology and political stance is difficult to change,” stated Kemel Okuyan, first secretary of the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP), speaking to *Granma* during an official visit to the island.

The TKP was founded in 1920, but operated clandestinely until 2001 when it was finally legalized. “After the fall of the socialist camp the Party entered into a phase of self-assessment, which is why we can now say it’s a renewed force,” stated Okuyan.

“Our Party is relatively unknown, given the country’s reality,” he noted. Okuyan explained that Turkey is a majority Muslim country, where a party must secure at least 10% of votes to be represented in Parliament, and where no one is willing to take the risk and vote for a small party.

“We Party is against Turkey joining the EU and the Recep Tayyip Erdogan government, but we do believe in national unity and the need to come together now more than ever in order to tackle the particularities of the region in which we live,” he noted. Okuyan explained that the position defended by the TKP is to organize the working class as the only way to resolve Turkey’s internal conflicts, many of which stem from the tense regional situation.

He noted that the main aim of his visit to Cuba was to learn more about the changes underway to the island’s socio-economic model.

“Relations between the TKP and Communist Party of Cuba have never been pure protocol, we have always maintained a sincere and frank exchange,” he stated.

“For all communists worldwide Cuba is a beacon guiding us toward the future. The struggle of communists is a class struggle but also a struggle for human values,” Okuyan concluded.
The United Kingdom: No calm in the face of chaos

A further attack in London on June 3 saw the United Kingdom in mourning and on alert. This was the third terrorist attack in three months in the nation, and the Islamic State claimed responsibility, as on the other two occasions.

British Prime Minister Theresa May held a press conference the following day in which she made clear her position to toughen the country’s security forces’ strategies, in order to prevent further tragedies of this type.

“We cannot and must not pretend that things can continue as they are. Things need to change,” May stated, announcing an immediate review of the United Kingdom’s counter-terrorism strategy.

MAY’S FOUR-POINT PLAN
- Fight against the “evil ideology” that inspires attacks.
- Draft new regulations to tackle extremism on the Internet.
- Promote measures to put an end to extremism in society.
- Review of the anti-terrorist strategy.

TERRORIST ATTACKS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

MARCH 22, WESTMINSTER, LONDON
A man rammed his vehicle into pedestrians along Westminster Bridge before crashing into one of the fences surrounding the British Parliament. On getting out of the car, he stabbed a policeman and, on heading toward the Parliament entrance, he was shot down by several officers.

- Dead: 5
- Injured: 50
- Khalid Masood, a 52 year old British man. The Islamic State claimed he was one of its soldiers.

MAY 22, MANCHESTER
After a concert by U.S. singer Ariana Grande, there was an explosion in the area connecting the Manchester Arena with Victoria train station. Among the victims were a large number of children and young people, fans of the singer.

- Dead: 22
- Injured: 59
- Attacker: Salman Abedi, 22 years old (he died in the act). The Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attack.

JUNE 3, LONDON BRIDGE
Initially a van intentionally ran down several pedestrians on London Bridge, before its occupants stabbed several people in Borough Market.

- Dead: 8
- Injured: 48
- Attackers: Khuram Shazad Butt, aged 27; Rachid Redouane, aged 30; and Youssef Zaghba, aged 22 (all three were shot dead by police). The Islamic State claimed responsibility.

THE CRIME OF TERRORISM
The Terrorism Act 2006 establishes the offence of encouragement of terrorism, which is understood as the glorification of acts of terrorism and the incitement of others to emulate such acts. The Act also establishes the offences of preparation of terrorist acts, and giving or receiving training for terrorism.

SECURITY INSTRUMENTS
TERRORISM PREVENTION AND INVESTIGATION MEASURES (TPIM) ACT
- Introduced in 2011 and strengthened in 2015.
- Applies restrictions on those suspected of terrorism who have not been charged with any offence, but who are on the intelligence services’ “radar.”
- Allows for the individual to be put under house arrest for up to two years, or relocated up to 320 kilometers from their residence.

PLAN PREVENT:
- Strategy promoted after the attacks of July 2005 in the British capital.
- Seeks to combat radicalization in the country and prevent citizens from supporting or engaging in terrorism.

Last year, the United Kingdom passed the Investigatory Powers Act, which among other measures:

- Legalizes a large number of surveillance programs.
- Forces internet providers to store their customers’ data for one year.
- Allows for British citizens’ phones to be hacked, even if they are not in the country, without the need for a warrant.
- Six million closed circuit television cameras (equal to one camera for every 11 people).
- The cameras are installed in businesses, streets, public buildings and the transport network, supposedly to reduce crime and ensure citizen safety.
Colonialism, the fundamental issue in Puerto Rico
The severe economic crisis in Puerto Rico has led to the closure of 179 schools, a measure that will affect the quality of the education system and leave thousands of teachers unemployed.

Nuria Barbosa León

- THE Free Associated State model, imposed on Puerto Rico since 1952, has entered a profound, worsening crisis, aggravated by a public debt which has reached more than 73,000 million dollars, according to Edwin González, the country’s representative in Havana, who spoke with Granma International.

González stated that the current Puerto Rican government has recognized that it cannot repay Wall Street as much money as is owed, given the inexistence of a treasury, since all funds generated on the island go directly to Washington.

Moreover, Puerto Rico lacks any kind of national sovereignty to seek financial aid internationally, and cannot declare bankruptcy like any other U.S. state. The island is not part of the United States, so none of that country’s bailout programs apply, as has happened in innumerable cases within U.S. territory.

González, a member of the Hostosian National Independence Movement, commented, “In previous years, the U.S. government assumed part of the debt, because it was very much interested in presenting Puerto Rico, with 3.4 million inhabitants, as the Caribbean’s showcase, to serve as an example to the rest of Latin America. The neoliberal model being implemented in several nations of the region, right now, was tried out in our country.”

To resolve the issue of the enormous debt, in 2016, the White House named a Financial Oversight and Management Board, to begin its work this year, composed of seven members and with the authority to override the Puerto Rican government. The group was charged with developing austerity plans to guarantee payment to bondholders.

One of the challenges facing the Oversight Board has been approval of the island’s annual budget, which includes cuts in funding for universities and retirees. This issue has not been widely disseminated, to avoid provoking greater popular resistance, especially by students who conducted a two-year strike to challenge the privatization of higher education.

González reported that the Board is attempting to reduce the budget by 500 million dollars beginning in July, affecting workers first of all, denying them access to basic services; while the income of consortiums and transnational corporations established in Puerto Rico, with majority U.S. capital, is considered untouchable.

“The solution will always lie in Puerto Rico’s sovereignty,” he affirmed, recalling that around July 20, another resolution in the United Nations’ Decolonization Committee will again condemn the country’s colonial status.

Over the last decade, this proposal to the UN has been presented by Cuba every year, and has received the support of almost all Latin American countries. Despite being approved by the majority on all previous occasions, the United States obstinately insists that this is a domestic issue.

“We hope that the anti-colonial resolution will again be approved, although a novelty this year is that we won’t be demanding the freedom of independence leader Oscar López Rivera, because thanks to national and international solidarity, we were able to free him from behind bars,” Edwin González stated, referring to the 35 years of martial spent in U.S. prisons for his commitment to independence for Puerto Rico.

González insisted that the fifth referendum held June 11, did not resolve the colonial issue facing the island, as long as the U.S. stands apart from the process, not taking the result seriously. The way the convocation was made, and the questions formulated, made it no more than a survey, he said, explaining, “If the independence option were to win, it would be impossible to implement, since the colonial power declared the vote non-binding, beforehand.”

He emphasized the fundamental role Cuba has played in supporting Puerto Rico’s freedom, expressing an honorable, clear position in international forums, and serving as the voice of the country in international organizations like the Non-Aligned Movement, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, among others.

He concluded saying, “With the great victory won with the release of Oscar López Rivera, we now face new tasks. Our resistance to the economic cuts will continue. We will struggle until national independence is achieved, so that Puerto Ricans ourselves, all together, may be who decide our fate and future.”