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Peace, Justice and Sustainability

**Fellowship of Reconciliation
57th Pacific Northwest Regional
Seabeck Conference
Thursday – Sunday
July 2 - July 5, 2015**



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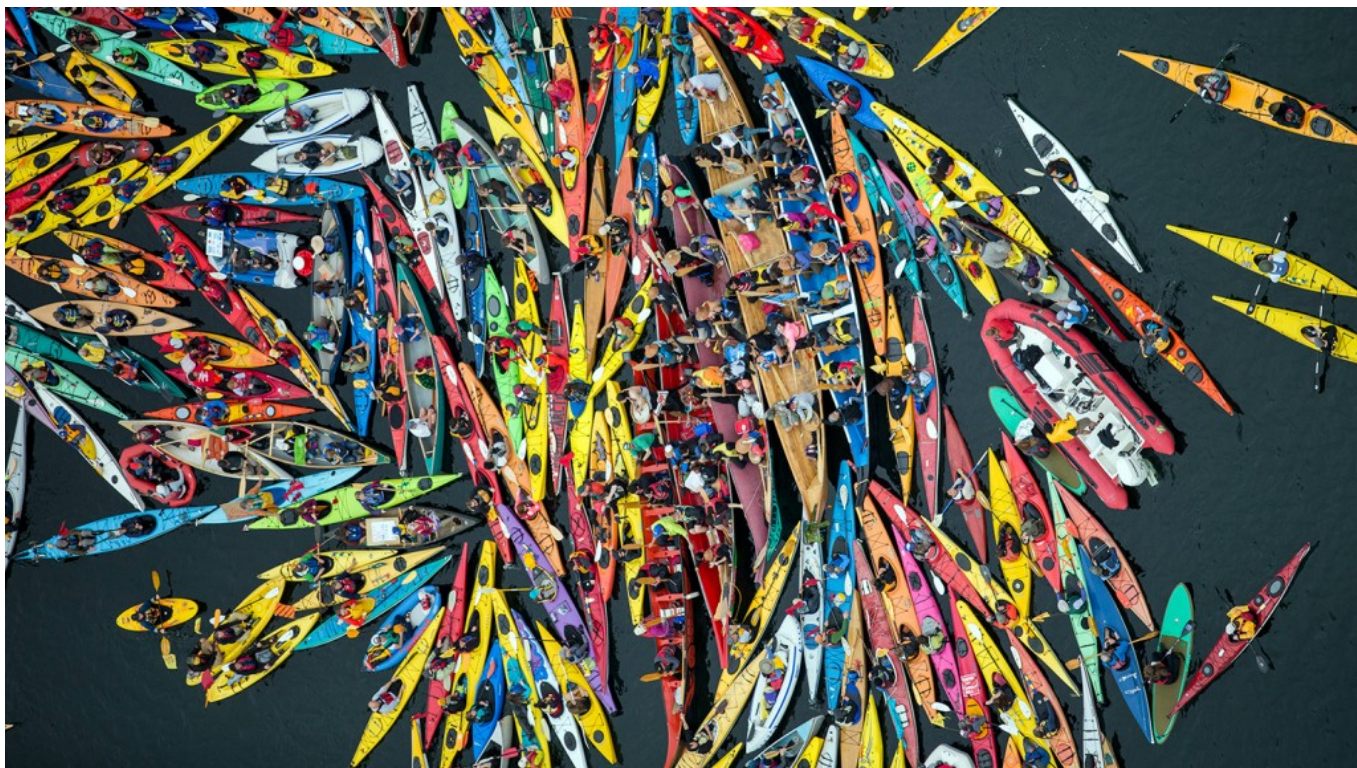
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May 16, 2015 Five Native American tribal canoes plus hundreds of kayactivists say #sHELLNO in response to the companies plans, approved by the White House, to drill in the waters off the Arctic. A horrible idea!



War Is Not the Answer

By Tom Ewell

Despite the fact that our nation is weary after 13 years of post-9/11 wars, we are becoming again embroiled in yet another war, this time with the so-called Islamic State. Our bombs in Iraq and Afghanistan produced neither peace nor stability but rather unleashed a firestorm of tribal and sectarian violence and a flood of arms to the area. And now we are being led into doing it all over again. **War has become a national addiction.**

Our homeland was not bombed nor pillaged; thousands of our citizens were not killed or wounded or scattered in refugee camps; we have not had our country endure years of violence, hunger, shortage of water and health care that follows warfare. Yet Americans are beginning to understand that war costs us dearly, too, as we deal with its effects on our national debt, our neglected infrastructure and human needs, and most tragically, the cost to the lives of those who fought these wars.

Of the 2.5 million combat troops deployed over 50% suffer chronic pain; 20% conservatively wrestle with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and/or depression; another 20% suffer from Traumatic Brain Injury. These signature injuries translate into a suicide rate of one active service member and 22 veterans each and every day. This in addition to the death of more than 6,800 American troops and the estimated 970,000 new disability claims pending before the VA.

And the economic cost is equally staggering. While Congress trims the budgets for human needs, the cost of the wars since 9/11 stand at \$4.4 trillion in addition to the \$7.6 trillion spent on defense and homeland security, amounts which exceed almost all other nations combined. All the while spending even a portion of those dollars on peaceful industry - education, health care, infrastructure, and renewable energy, for example - produces more and, in most cases, better paying jobs and a stronger society.

And, as noted above, perhaps even more tragically, our present wars are not effective in addressing the presumed goal of defeating terrorism. It does not make us safer nor does it reduce terrorism because the impact of torture, drones and U.S. bombs have only led to the recruitment of new members to terrorist groups such as the Islamic State. In a study by our own State Department they found that in 2013 alone incidences of terrorism increased by 47%. Imagine any other policy that spends trillions of dollars to address a problem such as eradicating Ebola or polio and then we find that the incidence of the disease has increased 47% in one year! That would be a failed policy, and so is our military approach in fighting terrorism.

Our nation cannot continue to ignore these negative consequences of war. It is like ignoring a self-destructing addiction. There are historically proven alternatives to our present war addiction: conducting a vigorous diplomacy program; offering human and structural assistance to the poor countries we oppose; controlling the Pentagon budget; and now that we have the opportunity, demanding that Congress assert its Constitutional responsibility to declare war and thus engage our reluctant and war-weary public in the debate as the public did in effectively stopping the proposed "surgical strikes" on Syria in 2013.

Breaking free of our addiction will not be easy, and any proposals will be met with skepticism and resistance from elected officials, from the war profiteers benefiting from the military-

industrial complex, and even from the general public until the American people truly become sufficiently disenchanted with war that we seriously consider withdrawing our support.

As with all addictions, we begin a withdrawal process by acknowledging that war does not make us safer, stronger or more secure. As strong as our military is, it cannot bend other peoples and other nations to our will by bombing them.

We then need to recognize that a "higher power" of moral character and conscience calls us and our elected officials to begin to abolish our dependency on war as we when we were so dependent on slavery.

We also need to acknowledge with deep remorse and regret the incredible harm caused by our warfare and begin to make amends to those who have suffered, beginning with our own veterans and those whose countries and lives we so brutally disrupted.

We need to establish a new code of conduct in which we commit to working cooperatively with other nations through the United Nations and other international allies to support humanitarian needs and the planetary environment.

And finally, we need to stop feeding the addiction within our selves and others by halting arms sales.

Kicking an addiction of any sort is difficult and requires a fundamental transformation. Working toward the abolition of war will challenge our moral character and will. But the alternative is the ultimate destruction of self (nation) and those around us (all victims of war). It is a struggle worth pursuing.



The articles on pages 2 through 6 are abridged versions of longer articles posted on the website: www.wwfor.org

Making Connections to End the New Nuclear Arms Race

by Mona Lee

On August 8, 1945 when atomic bombs were falling on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I was six years old and living on Chambers Road in Ferguson, Mo. which at the time was a working class suburb of a predominantly poor black city. To this day, I vividly recall a photograph on the St. Louis Post Dispatch front page of Japanese faces distorted into hideous masks of terror. In school we learned this had been done to end the War.

Thus began the old nuclear arms race. From then on, that race escalated as later we were told the US nuclear arsenal was to prevent “the communists” from taking over the world. In Catholic school we learned that communism was the essence of evil although my mother, who lived in fear of my father losing his job, once told me that under communism she wouldn’t have to worry because the government gave everyone a job. I also remember my father saying that nuclear weapons made our country the most powerful nation on earth. Yet we were frequently reminded that the bombs could, and in fact most likely would, eventually destroy the world.

It was not until much later that I figured out why our country needed to be the most the most powerful nation. That was to control the world’s resources because our economic system, called capitalism, runs on the need for ever increasing profits for the wealthy. It is also capitalism’s insatiable hunger for profits that has increasingly deflated the wages and living standards of working people until today we have the most obscene income gap between rich and poor in more than a hundred years. And the people to whom the least of all this trickles down are today’s young people, especially African American descendants of slaves like the ones who now inhabit my home town, Ferguson.

Recently our government has decided to spend one trillion dollars to modernize its entire nuclear arsenal, thus enabling our weapons to destroy missile silos of other nations before they can strike back. This, of course, has frightened Russia and other nuclear arms nations, thus triggering a new arms race that has made nuclear war more likely than it has been since the Cuban missile crisis. The capitalist ruling elites have decided that their profits are worth the risk of nuclear war. So where will the trillion dollars come from to pay for this insanity? From you and me and working class people of places like my home town where the African American teenager, Mike Brown, was shot by police the day before he was to enter College . . . like New York City where James Garner, another young black man was suffocated by police . . . like Cleveland where twelve year old Tamir Rice was shot while playing with a toy gun in a park . . . and countless other places where a bludgeoning US police state currently imprisons more African Americans than it once held as slaves.

On August 8 2015, 60 years after Hiroshima woke us up to audacity of our country’s military might, the Ferguson incident jolted us into the realization that this military power could be turned against its people as police, equipped with M16 rifles, riot gear and armored vehicles, descended upon peaceful protestors decrying the untimely death of their young neighbor. We learned that that all this war machinery had been supplied by the same military establishment that owns the nukes. An affective capitalist police state had been

stealthily created in America, our “land of the free” without our knowledge. It took a shock wave like Ferguson to jolt the capitalist media into letting us know.

I shudder to think what it might take to force them to inform us about the “New Nuclear Arms Race.” During the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 everyone with a TV set was sitting in front of it trembling and biting their nails. Yet when I spoke to nearly a hundred young activists gathered at the University of Washington last month, virtually none were aware of the new nuclear arms race. Most were unaware that the Trident Base Bangor is located in Hood Canal only 15 miles northwest of where we sat and contains the largest stockpile of nuclear weapons on the planet. So of course, it had not occurred to them that an accident in loading or unloading a missile there could contaminate the entire Puget Sound Region.

Those young activists gathered that day at UW were some of the most aware people I know. Most had worked hard to deliver Seattle workers their famous \$15 minimum wage; every one of them was clued in to the likelihood of capitalism’s insatiable thirst for profit destroying all life on the planet by disastrous climate change; most had marched to cry out that, “black lives matter.” But the recently increased threat of nuclear war had not crossed their radar screens, nor had it occurred to them how much good the millions of dollars poured into nuclear weapons modernization might otherwise do to further their many worthy causes like education, health care, public works, jobs programs.

Two years before I had joined them to work on issues they cared about, and that’s what gave me the opportunity to address them on the nuclear threat and how it is integrally connected with all their other concerns. Bruce Gagnon of Global Networks speaking at Ground Zero during the Martin Luther King Day Activities reminded us that, “All of our progressive movements are on the losing end of things these days. **We’ve got to get out from behind our single issue silos and make connections between our various campaigns if we hope to have any success.**”

I am going to explore going to the unemployment office, Social Security office, welfare office and hand out flyers that show the links between massive cost overruns on Navy warships, F-35 fighters, space war fighting technologies and the real cuts coming in social programs that are daily impacting the lives of people across the nation. When we begin to shine a light on these wasteful military programs for endless war, and help the public see the deadly connections to cuts in social program, then we can seriously talk about expanding our movements.

Until we take these steps to connect the dots across issue lines, we will remain isolated, weak, and ultimately ineffective.” The hundreds of leaflets we hand out will continue to be tossed into the nearest trash bins until we succeed in making those connections. All our efforts to awaken young people to the threat of nuclear war will fall upon deaf ears unless we call awareness to those connections.

Visit <http://www.notnt.org/> for more information and ways to get connected.



The U.S.'s Endless Wars

Serve the Military-Industrial Complex

by Glen Anderson

70 years of endless wars:

While the U.S. had a "Department of War" from 1789 to 1947, we fought only a few wars, but – in an Orwellian irony – since 1947 when the Department of War changed to the "Department of Defense," the U.S. has been almost constantly at war. We simply pretend that endless wars are for our "defense."

For more than 70 years the U.S. has attacked many, many countries and overthrown their governments – including real democracies that U.S. businesses and politicians did not like. Likewise, the U.S. has armed and supported many, many dictators who served U.S. business and geo-political interests.

However, 1942 was the last time Congress actually declared war. After that, presidents have started wars, typically without approval by Congress, in violation of the US Constitution and in violation by the Vietnam-era War Powers Act.

"Do something" means: Do something violent – and militarize our "Homeland":

When an international crisis occurs, Americans want our government to "do something." Because militarism has been the U.S.'s default policy, "do something" is nearly always assumed to mean "do something violent!" Honest diplomacy is usually bypassed.

Hawks like to say, "After 9-11 everything changed." Compliant mainstream media have repeated it often and conditioned us to accept endless wars, the loss of our Constitutional rights, and the militarization of Homeland Security and local police. Local police departments tend to hire military veterans who have been trained in how to occupy and dominate foreign populations. Now they occupy American cities and treat our people like enemy populations, rather than as people to be served. This leads to the current epidemic of police shooting unarmed African-Americans.

Military violence has become the default assumption for how to deal with any problem, foreign or domestic.

Deceive the American people and normalize violence:

Martin Luther King criticized the U.S. for being on the wrong side of history in violently fighting poor people while militarily protecting corrupt elites in Vietnam and elsewhere. **The rest of the world knows this, but the American people are largely ignorant because our mainstream media and our politicians are subservient to the dominant economic and political elites**, so they deceive the American people into thinking we are "the greatest democracy in the world."

Politicians, mainstream media, and the dominant nationalistic culture not only misinform us but also disinform us – replace truth with lies. This national self-deception promotes "American exceptionalism," the mistaken notion that the U.S. is so special that we are not bound by international law, and our government is entitled to attack any other nation on earth.

If we were to ask the public whether they want peace, nearly everyone would say yes. But violence and war have become so "normalized" that many people think war is the way to achieve peace.

War is terrorism with a bigger budget.

Militarism backfires: Military "solutions" are really the problem:

Many people think "the end justifies the means." In contrast, **Gandhi, King, and the Fellowship of Reconciliation all affirm that the ends we reach depend significantly on the means we use to get there.** Whatever we sow is what we will reap. Just as an acorn leads to an oak tree, militarism leads to war, but nonviolent actions lead to peace.

In many of our recent and current wars, we are fighting enemies who are using weapons we had provided to our allies. Now ISIS is using weapons that the US had provided to someone, and the US – which had wanted to overthrow Syria's President Assad – is now his ally in fighting ISIS, and the US also is on the same side as Iran and Hezbollah – both of whom our government has demonized – in opposing ISIS. In mid-September 2014 Congress rushed to pass a bill authorizing President Obama to train and arm so-called "moderate" Syrian rebels to fight ISIS.

This backfired also decades ago when President Reagan armed Afghanistan's Mujahedeen to fight the Soviet Union's troops that were occupying Afghanistan in the 1980s. The Mujahedeen evolved into the Taliban and led to al Qaeda, so then the US started fighting the very forces that we had previously armed.

Military violence nearly always backfires. The US continually creates new enemies for the US to attack, provoking the creation of new enemies, and so on, and so on, and so on.

Of course, this means more power for the Pentagon and CIA, and more profits for the U.S.'s weapons manufacturers. The Pentagon and CIA have long understood the concept of "blowback" – the retaliation that occurs after the U.S. uses military or covert actions in another country, but the Pentagon and CIA keep escalating these violent escapades. The CIA and military-industrial complex are playing the President and Congress and American people for fools – deliberately escalating the "war on terror" for self-serving purposes of power and profit.

The U.S. government – while paying lip service to seeking peace – actually wants endless wars with more enemies. It does not really want to "win" a war, but rather to continue provoking new enemies and conducting endless wars in order to continually shift hundreds of billions of taxpayers' dollars every year into the business corporations that supply the War Machine – and to continually shift political power from honest democracy into the Pentagon, CIA, NSA, Homeland Security, and other parts of militarized America.

The biggest threat to U.S. security is the recklessly violent military-industrial complex. They get rich and powerful while endangering and bankrupting the 99%.

Military "solutions" make problems worse! If we want peace, we must use only peaceful means. If we want a peaceful and just domestic society, we must use only peaceful and just methods at the local and national levels.

We need a nonviolent foreign policy grounded in profound respect for the oneness of the entire human family and in profound respect for human rights.

U.S. Barbarism

By Larry Kershner

Earlier this year news reports presented the burning alive of a Jordanian pilot and the beheading of 21 Egyptian Christians as the work of the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). These are clearly monstrous acts carried out by religious and political fanatics. However, I was struck by the morally self-righteous tone of many of the newscasts. Unstated was the idea that these are acts so evil that we Americans could never commit them.

Once again, Americans either don't know or won't acknowledge our history. American history is replete with similar instances of barbarity. African Americans have been raped, lynched and burned to death throughout the history of this country. Nearly 4,000 African Americans were victims of "racial terror lynching" in the South between 1877 and 1950, according to a report by the Equal Justice Initiative. More than half of the victims were killed under accusation of committing murder or rape against white victims. Most people think only of hanging, however lynching is the killing of African Americans or other racial minorities who were tortured, mutilated, burned, shot, dragged; accused of an alleged crime by a white mob; and deprived of their life without due process and equal protection of the law.

In a more recent form of lynching, a Black man, James Byrd, Jr. was murdered on June 7, 1998 by White Supremacists, who dragged Byrd for three miles behind a pick-up truck along a rural asphalt road. Byrd was killed when his body hit the edge of a culvert severing his right arm and head.

Lest you think this is ancient history, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement reported that at least 136 unarmed African Americans were killed by police, security guards, and self-appointed vigilantes in the year of 2012. Overall, one black person was killed in an extra-judicial shooting every 28 hours in this country.

Various estimates of the pre-contact Native population of the continental U.S. and Canada range from 1.8 to over 12 million. Over the next four centuries, their numbers were reduced to about 237,000. Extermination of Natives started with Christopher Columbus' arrival in 1492. Native population dropped dramatically over the next decades, some directly murdered by Europeans; others indirectly from contact with diseases. Later European Christian invaders systematically murdered Indigenous Peoples, from the Canadian Arctic to South America using warfare, death marches, forced relocation, destruction of food supply, and poison. Some Europeans shot at Indians for target practice.

Oppression continued into the 20th century, by governments and religious organizations, destroying Native culture and religious heritage. The Indian Removal Act, passed by the US Congress in 1830, set into motion a series of events which led to the "Trail of Tears" in 1838.

The discovery of gold in California in 1848 prompted migration and expansion into the West. The greed of Americans for money and land increased with the Homestead Act of 1862. In California, decrease in Native population from about a quarter of a million to less than 20,000 is primarily due to the cruelties and massacres perpetrated by the miners and early settlers.

At the beginning of the 1800s, there were an estimated forty million buffalo. By 1895, the vast buffalo populations were practically extinct. The slaughter occurred because of the economic value of buffalo hides and because the animals were in the way of the rapidly westward expanding population. The end result was wide scale starvation with social and cultural disintegration of many Plains tribes.

The great American hero George Armstrong Custer was known to attack Indian villages while asleep killing many women and children.

Burning people to death has an American history also. One of the most horrible mass human burnings ever recorded was by the US and Britain during World War II, when hundreds of firestorms ignited in the civilian city of Dresden, Germany. Britain and US carpet-bombed the city for 24 hours saturating the city with incendiary bombs creating massive firestorms. Those who survived ran to open places, but US fighter planes swooped in repeatedly killing those who sought refuge.

During the Pacific similar attacks were carried out against the civilians in Tokyo. On March 9, 1945, US B-29s dropped almost 2,000 tons of bombs on Tokyo. Approximately 15.8 square miles of the city was destroyed and some 100,000 people are estimated to have died. This compares to the August 9 atomic bombing of Hiroshima in which approximately 70,000 died immediately from the explosion and another 70,000 from radiation within five years. For the follow up Nagasaki atomic bombing, the Prefectural Office put the figure for deaths at 87,000 with 70% of the city's industrial zone destroyed.

The centrality of the wholesale killing of noncombatants through the myriad uses of air power runs like a red line from the bombings of 1944-45 through the Korean and Indochinese wars to the Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

In Vietnam the US embraced chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction -- napalm and Dioxin Agent Orange. Many of us can remember the photo of Kim Phuc, the young nine-year-old girl running naked after being burned by napalm.

Reportedly 388,000 tons of US napalm bombs were dropped on the people of Viet Nam between 1963 and 1973, compared to 32,357 tons used over three years in the Korean War, and 16,500 tons dropped on Japan in 1945.

The US military used White Phosphorus extensively at Fallujah and other places in Iraq and Afghanistan but make the claim that the use is not illegal. Sometimes white phosphorus will burn for days, producing a heavy white smoke that is toxic to humans.

The US has refused to sign the United Nation's Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (landmines, incendiary weapons, blinding laser weapons).

So while we can agree that many of the actions of ISIS are inhumane and barbarous, if we look honestly at American history we cannot condemn the actions of others from any place of moral superiority.



I Have a Dream!



I Have a Drone!

Reconciliation with Cuba

by John M Repp

On December 17, 2014 Barack Obama announced that he wanted to re-establish normal diplomatic relations with Cuba and on that very day there was an exchange of prisoners. He admitted that U.S. policy toward Cuba since 1962 had been a failure. This announcement raised the expectations of citizens of both countries. Then on March 9, 2015, Obama issued an Executive Order declaring that Venezuela was “an unusual and extraordinary threat to U.S. national security and foreign policy.” Venezuela is Cuba’s closest ally and provides Cuba with the oil to keep their electricity grid functioning. In April before attending the Summit of the Americas in Panama, Obama walked back that statement.

After Obama’s December announcement, Fidel said he hoped the U.S. would not try to use “the carrot and the stick” in their negotiations with Cuba. He meant that if the U.S. takes the position that Cuba must “recognize human rights” in order for the U.S. to end the trade embargo, no progress will be made.

I was able to visit Cuba for two weeks in February 2015 with a group of five. We traveled as researchers and community activists: two University of Washington Global Health professors, a retired veterinarian, and my wife Cindy and I. As life-long peace and justice activists, we were intensely curious about Cuba. As the Internet is not widely available in Cuba, it was difficult to contact “informants” (in an anthropological sense, not a political sense) before we arrived. However, Stephen, who was researching the health outcome differentials between whites and blacks, was able to set up a meeting with a professor from the University of Havana. We were able to spend two evenings with Enrique, and the five of us asked him as many questions as we could think of about Cuba.

Cubans are a proud and healthy people. Their life expectancy is higher than ours and their infant mortality rate is lower. The health outcome difference between blacks and whites is the lowest of any comparable minority/majority in the world. We did not see any homeless people or crazy people like we know so well from Seattle’s streets. We saw a few drunks. Cuba is a still a poor country, but without the grinding poverty of Third world countries. Its economy is not as productive per hour as Cubans want, but the country is one of the few countries in the world that is sustainable **and** developed in the sense of high literacy, education and health.

When Raul Castro became President in 2008, many of the large state farms were broken up and formed into cooperatives. The direction of reform seems to be getting the government out of managing the economy. The state retains ownership but leases the productive property to individuals or cooperatives. They will regulate but not manage. They are starting to tax. There is resistance from the middle layers of the bureaucracy about these reforms because those officials stand to lose their power, function, and even their jobs, so the plans of the top leaders are not always carried out. Many of the reforms have been made after meetings held all over the country where the government listened to the complaints and suggestions of the

people.

The socialist system set up by Cuba after 1959 provided free health care, free education, a job, a pension, and a subsidized basket of groceries each month. Renters got title to their houses. Land reform limited the amount of land one family could own. Most foreign companies were expropriated with offers to pay compensation with Cuban bonds but many owners refused. Health care, education, housing, a pension and a job are still considered human rights

in Cuba (as well as in the rest of the world) and are not left up to the market. The media is controlled by the government. There are local elections in which any citizen can run but there is only one political party. About one million people or one out of eleven are members or young members of the Communist Party.

Nearly a million middle and upper class Cubans left the country because of the Revolution, many going to Miami and this provided more upward mobility for those who stayed than in any of the economies in the capitalist world. Many of the Cubans we met in the course of our travels like hosts, local guides, and taxi drivers had degrees in professions like engineering or law, and after working at least five years at their profession in

exchange for their education, they started working in the tourism sector because they could make more money. There is growing inequality between people in contact with tourists and the rest of the Cuban people.

We found the Cuban people to be very good hosts. We stayed in *casa particulares*, private rooms with separate bathrooms in ordinary people’s houses. The rooms were \$25 a night for a couple. Several had sumptuous breakfasts for \$5 a person: fresh pineapple, guava nectar, bananas, and papaya with a small omelet and bread and cheese, and in the evening, a lobster dinner for \$12. The hosts of the *casa particulares* were networked, so when we wanted to travel to another town, they would make arrangements for us, getting bus tickets or a taxi. We rode in those old American cars. With five of us it was perfect: two in front, three in back, and our luggage in the spacious trunk. The old cars had been refitted with Russian diesel engines, maybe a Czech transmission, or an East German differential. We took several guide books with us. Cindy and I spent less than \$100 a day each. We flew to Mexico City and then to Havana. Direct flights may be available as soon. The U.S. just took Cuba off its list of countries supporting terrorism, so soon it should be possible to use a U.S.-issued debit card to get cash in Cuba. We took Canadian money in cash and always felt safe. The Cubans did not stamp our passports, and upon returning to the U.S., no official asked where we had been and what we were doing in Cuba.



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