

Elections and a new President.

On January 20th the Cuban people elected 614 members of the National Assembly and 1,201 provincial delegates. Cuban elections are different: in place of the 'politics as marketing' that we are used to, candidates are freely and directly proposed by their neighbours from their constituency. The Communist Party takes no part in the elections. Voting is not compulsory yet 96.89% of the electorate took part with 3.73% blank papers (abstentions) and 1.04% spoiled or invalid ballots.

Representatives are selected on the basis of their qualities and not their membership of a party, or their access to the resources to pay for a campaign. Once elected they have to give quarterly accounts of their activities to their constituents who can and do recall them if not satisfied.

Western politicians and journalists constantly call for elections and democracy in Cuba. While not perfect (delegates are often perceived as having insufficient authority to resolve their constituents' problems, for example) Cuban democracy is real and it is functioning.

Comparisons with our own system would be instructive.

Once the National Assembly was due to meet, one of its members, Fidel Castro, made the announcement that he would neither seek nor accept nomination as President and Chair of the Council of State. So he did not resign, as the press universally reported, nor did he pass power to his brother in some kind of dynastic succession. Instead Raúl Castro was proposed and unanimously elected by the National Assembly. A First Vice-president and 5 Vice-Presidents were also elected.

Political participation does not begin and end with elections: people throughout Cuba have been taking part in a national debate (in workplaces, community organisations, trade unions and so on) about how to address problems in the economy. The first results are now emerging, with the revaluation of the National Peso by 8% and the removal of restrictions on the sale of some kinds of electrical goods. Further changes will certainly be announced, and these will be within Cuba's chosen socialist system, in response to advice from the Cuban people and in response to their needs, always within the context of continued aggression from the US and its allies.

CSC members countered press misinformation about the elections in Cuba. This included an interview on Radio Manchester.
Join CSC's Press Action Network: campaigns@cuba-solidarity.org.uk



NEWSLETTER Spring 2008

Featuring:

- ★ Matanzas Project latest
- ★ Election in Cuba
- ★ Two Fundraising events

Cuba Solidarity Campaign Manchester Area Branch

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Regular Meeting: every first Monday of the Month, - The Unicorn Pub, Church St.

Please let us have your
email address - it keeps our
costs down!

Matanzas Project

Thanks to your fantastic support and solidarity we have now been able to send our first donation of £2,000 to the José Martí Co-operative in Los Saez, in the municipality of Los Árabos, Matanzas. This is a big step towards the £5,000 needed to establish the sheltered plant house and tree nursery, allowing supply of fruit and forest trees to the surrounding area and the production of fruit and vegetables by the co-op. The project is environmentally sustainable and will also contribute to the economic development of the community.

One of our members, Jenni Ford will be visiting the co-op this month so we should have more to report soon.

Meanwhile, please support our next two fundraising events - the centre spread of the newsletter is in the form of photocopyable flyers for each - please help to publicise them. Or you can download a poster from our Website (go to the events page).

It will be fantastic if we can complete the project in time for 2009, fiftieth anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban revolution.

Not a member yet? then join CSC now:

<http://www.cuba-solidarity.org.uk/member.htm>

Donate safely online using this link to our
Paypal page: <http://tinyurl.com/27f7dl>

Cajun Cuba Night

Fundraiser for an environmental and community development project in Matanzas, Cuba

At the Lloyds Hotel, Wilbraham Rd, Chorlton, Manchester
Thursday 3 April from 9p.m.

Free admission - raffle - stall - collection

with The Bourbon Street Preachers

playing their soulful Blues, swinging Cajun and stomping Zydeco.

Food menu (last orders 8.00pm) and free dish of the day at 9.00.



Cuba Solidarity Campaign Manchester

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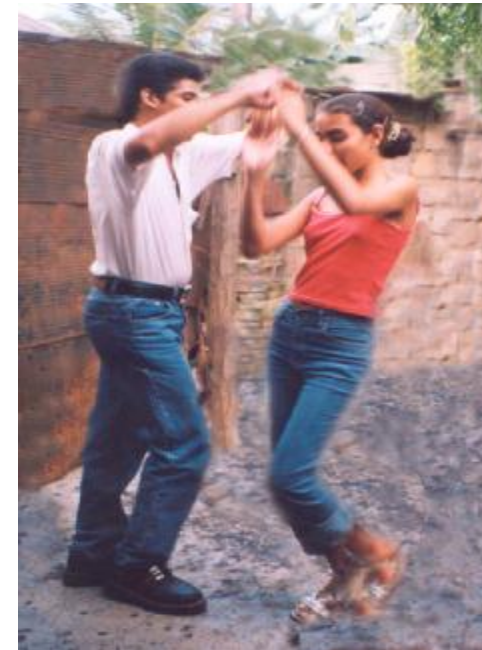
Thursday 1st May –8.15 to 1.00

Dance May Day Away with Cuba Solidarity Campaign

Copacabana Latin Club

7 Dale Street, off Oldham St, Manchester

Fundraiser for an environmental and
community development project in
Matanzas, Cuba



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With free salsa class

Free Salsa Class for Absolute Beginners (usual price £4.00).

Class starts at 9.00 - numbers limited.

Tickets £6 (£4 conc.) on the door