
Brigade defies U.S. travel ban on Cuba

08/08/2014



Twenty-two courageous U.S. citizens, members of the 45th Venceremos Brigade, crossed the Peace Bridge from Erie, Ontario, Canada, into Buffalo, N.Y., on Aug. 3, proudly declaring that they had defied their own government's ban on travel to Cuba. Along with groups of supporters, they held demonstrations on both sides of the border, confronted U.S. customs officials and asserted the importance of challenging the decades-old U.S. blockade of Cuba.

The Venceremos Brigade is a U.S.-based anti-imperialist educational work project that organizes travel to Cuba annually, breaking the travel ban to stand in solidarity with Cuba and allowing thousands of U.S. citizens the opportunity to see Cuba for themselves.

The Brigade was welcomed to Cuba this year by Fernando González, who, along with Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero and René González, was arrested in 1998 in the U.S. All five were given harsh and unfair sentences for monitoring Miami-based terrorist groups operating against Cuba. They are known as the Cuban Five. René González and Fernando González are back in Cuba after serving their full prison sentences, and both of them are fighting for the return of their other three comrades to their families in Cuba.

As the brigadistas marched back into the U.S. with fists and voices raised, they chanted over and over, "It's time to end the damn travel ban!" The solidarity rally that greeted them picked up the chant, holding banners that demanded, "End the blockade against Cuba!" and "Free the Cuban 5!"