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Cuba va: Fifty Years Marching toward Victory

by Roberto Fumagalli

My commitment to the Cuban Revolution began in 2002 with my first trip to island. Today, after 13 trips, I feel it to be stronger than ever.

I have had the good fortune to penetrate deep into the texture of Cuban society, getting to know from the inside not only people's everyday lives but also the ongoing revolutionary process. Because of the ideals I nurture in my heart, the ideals of the revolution, I have been able to gain the trust of the Cuban officials and ordinary people that allowed me to enter hospitals, universities, schools, cooperative, factories, prisons, army compounds, and homes. As a photographer I have been able to capture the essence of this country, its people, and its revolution and create a book that goes beyond the stereotypes (and lies) we are so often told about Cuba by the mainstream media. I was accompanied through this professional and personal journey by my best friend, Roberto Chile, Fidel Castro's personal cameraman for 25 years. I owe him a lot.

I sometimes hear that the revolutionary process is over and that it has been betrayed. Today, a few days after Fidel Castro publicly declared that he would not accept the position of commander in chief, this process appears to me to be livelier than ever. It is apparent that it is worth fighting for and that Cuba has much to teach us citizens of the so-called developed nations. In a world that is following the wrong models, what is offered by the revolutionary Cuban people needs to be publicized and vigorously defended. I am thinking about Operation Miracle, in which hundreds of thousands of people from the Caribbean and Latin America have been operated on, free of charge, for cataracts and other eye diseases; about the doctors and nurses who work in dozens of developing countries to attend the poorest people; about the Latin American School of Medicine, where free medical education is given to students from countries on the five continents (including the United States) where this education is unavailable or costs thousands of dollars. Let us not forget that Cuba is a small developing country of 11 million people just a handful of miles from an aggressive and cowardly neighbor.

Cuba is not a paradise on Earth; it has problems and contradictions as does every other country. It only wants to decide for itself without any interference from the outside and to be able to show the world that the road to socialism is worth walking.

As Fidel said in Kuala Lumpur in 2003, "Our most sacred duty is to fight, and fight we will."

Roberto Fumagalli, since graduating in natural sciences from the University of Milan in 1994, has pursued a career in photography in Italy and abroad. In 2006 he published **Cuba va**, a photographic journey into the heart of the Cuban Revolution.