

[Our spirit of sacrifice and the empire's blackmail](#)

The first news on the case I read reached us through the Italian news agency ANSA, on April 22.

According to the article (dated April 22, La Paz), a Commission of Deputies was to investigate the case of a female Bolivian boarder student who died in Cuba, whose body was repatriated with several vital organs, including the brain, missing.

The President of the Parliament's Commission on Social Policy Guillermo Mendoza announced that he would ask the Chancery for all the case records, according to the Catholic news agency Fides.

According to the same report, the relatives of Beatriz Porco Calle, who resided in Cuba as a boarding student, filed charges claiming Cuban embassy officials had delivered her body without eyes, the tongue, teeth and other vital organs, including the brain, without offering any explanation whatsoever.

Deputy Mendoza, the article adds, said he would exhaustively review Cuban legislation on organ transplants and the commitments Bolivian boarders assume in writing before travelling to Cuba.

Spain's EFE reports similar news, adding that the family of the young woman had requested compensation from the Cuban embassy in Bolivia and, when this was denied, had threatened to go to the press.

The Bolivian foreign minister, the article concluded, opined that her parents had gone too far in demanding compensation, affirming that the government had acted in a humanitarian fashion in this case.

Anyone who observes what goes on around the world needs little else. Everything surrounding what occurred could be deduced.

Nevertheless, I inquired about the case's formalities, requested details and precise information to be able to respond to these claims of an alleged and inhuman divesting of a body. In addition to this, I requested precise reports, with exact figures, on our medical cooperation efforts in Bolivia, a country in our continent that the empire seeks to destroy.

Since Evo Morales, a native through and through, was elected President of long-suffering Bolivia, we offered him support in the areas of healthcare and education. I recall that afternoon vividly. We were convinced that, each year, we could save many thousands of lives and give back an incalculable number of people their sight and full health at no cost for the nation. An intensive and proven comprehensive literacy program was to be implemented immediately, in several languages, including the most widely-spoken: Spanish.

In Bolivia, 119 Cuban educators work to apply their experience and knowledge, with the aim of declaring the nation, in only two and a half years, an illiteracy-free country. From the very beginning, our country provided Bolivia with the teaching materials needed to take on this challenge: 30,000 21-inch television sets imported from China, the same number of VCRs, with 16,459 transformers and 2,000 photovoltaic systems (which make up an entire network used for follow-up courses taught during the day), 1,359,000 primers in Spanish, Quechua and Aymara, reading pamphlets and other materials I shall not mention so as to not make the list interminable. A part of our war reserve of solar panels was sent to Bolivia. During Evo's visit to our country a few weeks after his electoral victory, Cuba officially offered him the free transportation of these materials to Bolivia.

Venezuela, a country which had just been declared illiteracy-free following the implementation of the "Yes I Can" method, joined the program.

A total of 23,727 teaching locales were created in Bolivia. Since then, 76.6 percent of the country's illiterate population has joined the program and 62 percent of those who did not learn to read or write in primary school have already done so, and not one person has paid a cent.

It is in the field of healthcare, however, where the most intense cooperative efforts have been undertaken in the country; there where Che and his Cuban and Latin American comrades and a young German internationalist perished. In this field, no country in the world today, and perhaps this will be true for a long time, can compete with Cuba. It is a form of free cooperation engaging the poorest nations which is, at the same time, a means of exporting services to countries around the world that have many more resources available. In Latin America and the Caribbean, particularly, we have offered these free cooperative services to the neediest countries.

A total of 1,852 Cubans arduously work in Bolivia. Of them, 1,226 are doctors, 250 specialized nurses, 119 healthcare technicians, 9 dentists, 86 professionals and technicians working in other fields and 102 selected individuals committed to offering vital services of different sorts, required by the Cuban brigades and their hospitalized patients there.

Cuba's medical brigade is working in 215 municipalities of Bolivia's 9 departments, treating people of modest means and anyone who request their services. They have the best equipment, donated by our country, at their disposal. In 18 ophthalmologic surgery positions, 186,508 patients have been operated on. Well over 130,000 patients can be operated on a year.

Our doctors have treated in their outpatient cabinets nearly 12,000,000 patients since the first arrived in Bolivia. The number of lives saved can only be determined through calculations for, as a rule, these patients did not receive any kind of attention prior to their arrival.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of our medical cooperation efforts is the training of 5,291 young Bolivians who currently study medicine in Cuba, 621 of them at the Latin American School of Medicine, which has seen three graduations with excellent results, and 4,670 in the new program. I am not exaggerating when I say that the relatives of the young people who study this specialty in our country are the firmest and most combative friends of Cuba in Latin America, including, of course, Bolivia.

The 22-year-old student Beatriz Porco Calle the cable refers to held passport number 5968246. She was from the department of Oruro, Samara province, in the Curahuara de Carangas municipality, a rural community in Toypicollana. She was a native and an Adventist Christian. She was faring satisfactorily in her second year of medical studies, at the Miguel Sandarán Corzo School of Medicine in Matanzas.

On March 6, she suddenly lost consciousness in her dorm's bathroom. The doctors and teachers decided to take her immediately to the provincial hospital. The physical examination did not reveal anything that could explain the causes of this, nor did the laboratory and other tests, including a computerized axial tomography. She had a good recovery and was discharged. She experienced headaches and bouts of dizziness a short time later. New medical exams were conducted. She felt stressed. She was administered the medication used for such conditions. On March 23, at 7:30 p.m., she again lost consciousness. She was once again taken to the emergency ward by a professor, then to intensive care, where, prior to her death, she was diagnosed with what is known as brain death.

Bolivia's Foreign Ministry and ambassador were contacted. They prepared the documentation needed to transport the body, which travelled nearly one week later, on the 28th.

The body was taken to the National Legal Medicine Institute, which is bound by law to conduct an autopsy to determine the cause of death. The relevant formalities were rigorously observed. The

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student's boyfriend and other classmates collected her belongings and sealed her suitcases. At the school, a mass was held on March 31. The Institute's diagnosis and I quote, was the following: "Death due to endocranial hypertension, hemorrhagic brain-vascular disease caused by a congenital cerebellous meningeal vascular malformation". In this case, the extraction of the visceral block and the taking of pertinent samples proved unavoidable.

A teacher from the medical school accompanied the body to Bolivia and delivered it to her relatives. Cuba's medical mission assumed the costs of transportation to her place of origin and funeral expenses.

It is hard for me to write about this, but it is even harder to read cables, carrying around the world the image of a body divested of its organs, cables which oblige Cuba to offer this kind of explanation.

What has occurred is crystal clear. The empire needs to besmirch the truths about Cuba it cannot tolerate. It instigates and encourages relatives to demand compensation. They foster such action, as we can see in one of the cables, and disseminate across the world the repugnant lie through a member of parliament and the Fides news agency. Then, it sets its devastating media machinery in motion.

In our country —I do not hesitate to say this— there are insensitive people, knowing very little about what goes on around them, who quickly and mindlessly say that "we should not help Bolivia". They will never understand that, both in politics and in the revolution, the alternative to a mistaken or misguided strategy is defeat.

Fidel Castro Ruz

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