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Delegates attend festival in Cuba

During their stay, students were able to learn about worldwide political oppression

By Michael Burnham
Community Reporter

Recent University of Oregon graduate Holly Rudclitsch and eight other students and alumni from the University traveled to Cuba this summer to learn more about political issues affecting other nations around the globe.

They came back having learned just as much about the United States.

Rudclitsch and the other delegates, members of the Committee in Solidarity with the Central American People (CISCAP), traveled to Cuba to take part in the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students, where they listened to other Americans and people from 133 countries exchange ideas and speak out against various international political oppressions.

According to Scott Mikisch, CISCAP's coordinator, the program is a grassroots organization based in Eugene since 1981, whose mission is to change U.S.

foreign policy toward Central American countries through educational programs.

The CISCAP delegates attended the conference in an effort to understand how Cubans perceive Americans, but they also had the unique experience of seeing that perception first-hand on a different level.

Some of the University students walked with other Americans in the festival's opening march, where there was a lot of demonstration against America, Rudclitsch said.

"At the march, I felt there was a lot of fragmentation [among the Americans]," she said. "I felt very strange and kind of isolated from these people that are from the same nation that I'm from."

She said some Americans chose to march in protest of the U.S. way of government, but many others did not.

"[The American delegates] didn't make it a point to find a common ground with one another," she added.

Similar complaints against the United States were voiced at a forum that some of the delegates also attended.

University student Aric Bright

said the United States was charged with unjust imperialistic practices by many other countries in addition to Cuba. The forum brought together more than 800 representatives from the United States, as well as people from former Communist countries such as East Germany and Kazakhstan, Bright said.

The trip proved to be timely because of recent discussion in Congress over a bill that would give humanitarian aid to Cuba.

The bill, titled the Cuban Humanitarian Trade Act, would make an exception to the 1961 Cuban trade embargo. The new bill, which is co-sponsored by Oregon Rep. Peter DeFazio, would allow medical supplies and other goods to be exported to Cuba.

Rudclitsch said the Cuban people had many questions about how America perceives itself because of their limited exposure to American citizens.

"The conference was very important in trying to bridge an understanding between people from other nations," she said. "I think we all came away with a lot of love and support for Cuba."



THE UNIQUE
Success of Divided
Government

Abner Mikva

SEVENTEENTH OCCUPANT OF THE
WAYNE MORSE CHAIR OF LAW AND POLITICS

White House counsel, judge, congressman, state representative, and professor, Abner J. Mikva will draw on his experiences in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the federal system to address the success of divided government in this country.

MORSE CHAIR LECTURE

7:30 P.M.
Wednesday, October 15, 1997

Ballroom
Erb Memorial Union
University of Oregon
Eugene

The event is free and open to the public
For information, call 346-3004



Wayne Morse

WAYNE MORSE CHAIR OF LAW AND POLITICS
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