HERENCIA

© March/April 1995 CUBAN NATIONAL HERITAGE VOLUME 1 No:2

La Habana en Ruinas

De *El Nuevo Dia*, San Juan, Puerto Rico
por: Leví Marrero

El deterioro sistemático de la que fuera La Habana intramuros fue estimulado por la politica de ruralización de Fidel Castro, iniciada desde los primeros meses de su cuarto de siglo de mando absoluto. Recordemos que nadie en 473 años de historia ha gobernado más tiempo en Cuba, ni aún los que en la etapa colonial tuvieron su mismo grado militar: Capitán general, título oficial que le corresponde jérarquicamente y que Castro oculta bajo el de Comandante en jefe. Prueba: Raúl Castro firma ufanamente como Teniente general.

La ciudad vieja habanera, museo vivo de la Cuba del pasado es hoy un área en ruinas, de edificios apuntalados - en muletas, dice el pueblo - incapaz de resolver no ya los viejos problemas, sino el cúmulo de los que ha creado su régimen demoledor y autocrático. Castro se enmascara ahora, utilizando a la UNESCO, para implorar que la comunidad cultural internacional financie la restauración de lo que él, y nadie más, permitió se arruinase, mientras dilapidaba millones de pesos y centenares de vidas cubanas en aventuras coloniales al servicio de la Unión Soviética.

Cuba era visitada anualmente, hasta la década de 1950, por centenares de miles de turistas de veintenas de paises. Y esos turistas conocieron que

Continuado en la pagina 3

Nuestra segunda edición se dedica al gran historiador cubano

Leví Marrero

1911 - 1995

Havana in Ruins

From *El Nuevo Dia*, San Juan, Puerto Rico
by: Leví Marrero

The Systematic deterioration of what once was within Havana's protective walls was stimulated by Castro's ruralization policy, which began within the very first months of his quarter-century of absolute rule. Let us remember that no one in 473 years of history has governed longer in Cuba, not even those who in the colonial era had his same military rank: Captain General, an official title which hierarchically belongs to him and which Castro veils under the rank of "Commander in Chief;" proof: Raul Castro signs ostentatiously as "Lieutenant General."

The old city of Havana, a vivid museum of Cuba of the past, is today a ruined area of braced buildings "in crutches" as the Cuban people say - incapable of solving not only the old problems, but also the accumulation of those created by his demolishing and autocratic regime. Castro now disguises himself, using UNESCO, to implore the international cultural community to finance the restoration of what he, and no one else, permitted to be ruined, while he squandered millions of pesos and thousands of Cuban lives in colonial adventures at the service of the Soviet Union.

Until the 1950's, Cuba was visited annually by hundreds of thousands of tourists from dozens of countries. And those tourists knew that if not all the buildings of the old city - inhabited without

Continued on page 4

Mensage del Presidente

por **Alberto Bustamante**

Cuando desaparece un hombre de los valores de Levi Marrero la sensación de un vacio terrible nos invade - al pensar en su deseo de volver a la tierra que lo vió nacer.

No tuve el privilegio de conocerlo personalmente, pero en todos los cubanos por varias generaciones, vive su ejemplo y enseñanza. Sus libros de texto, en Geografia e Historia de Cuba fueron parte de nuestra formación intelectual.

Con motivo de la labor que realizamos en el Patrimonio Nacional Cubano, estuvimos en contacto con él desde su inicio, por representar, como nadie, los valores que tratamos de rescatar y defender. Estábamos en el proceso de reimprimir su libro *Raices del Milagro Cubano* y correspondíamos con él al respeto, siendo nuestra intención hacerle un homenaje con todo el exilio cubano y entregarle una placa de reconocimiento como Miembro Emeritus del Patrimônio Nacional Cubano.

El 5 de marzo, 1995, hablamos por telefono sobre el presente y el futuro de Cuba. Aunque palpé que el presentía no llegar a ver el fin de la tiranía Castrista, manifestó su satisfacción por la misión cumplida, refiriéndose a sus libros publicados y al último, *Cuba isla abierta*, que está en proceso de publicación, donde una vez más analisa nuestras raices étnicas desde el Siglo XVI.

Sus últimas palabras a CNH estan llenas de pasión: "Muchas gracias por defender con uñas y dientes lo que aún resta de nuestro patrimonio nacional, devorado por la ignorancia bastarda de Castro y su apremio por obtener dólares a cualquier precio."

Su optimismo sobre el futuro de Cuba y su reconstrucción que llamaba el cuarto milagro de Cubano, aumentan nuestra determinación en luchar por lograrlo. De su obra monumental, *Cuba, Economia y Sociedad*, concuerdo con Carlos Alberto Montaner, constituye una epopeya intelectual.

Palabra Editorial

por **Miguel Rodez**

Este mes le pesa el alma al pueblo cubano. Levi Marrero, un historiador de primera categoría, falleció el dia 10 de Marzo, 1995, después de terminar una historia enciclopédica de nuestra patria. Durante 23 años de ardua labor, el Dr. Marrero publicó 15 tomos que constituyen su obra monumental: *Cuba: Economía y Sociedad.*

Sus investigaciones lo llevaron a los archivos y bibliotecas de Puerto Rico, Nueva York, Londres, Madrid y Sevilla, de las cuales acumuló cerca de un millón de fichas de información. Tan amplios y profundos fueron sus estudios que el Dr. Marrero se considera el tercer descubridor de Cuba, después de Cristóbal Colón y el alemán Alexander von Humboldt, quien hizo grandes estudios sobre Cuba durante el siglo XIX.

Además de su fuente enciclopédica, el Dr. Marrero publicó otros libros y artículos que ganaron premios por su claro análisis y fluidez. Como historiador, le concedieron los honores más altos alcanzables en su profesión. Entre ellos, la Orden de San Gregorio Magno, una de las más altas distinciones conferidas por el Vaticano; El título de Doctor Honoris Causa de Florida International University; Profesor Emérito de la Universidad de Puerto Rico y la Orden de Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, otorgada por la Nación de Cuba, antes de la diáspora.

Levi Marrero se conoce no sólo por sus grandes logros escolásticos, sino por ser un hombre de fervor que luchaba constantemente por descubrir la verdad. Cada dia notaba los cambios que inevitablemente resultarán en la libertad de su pais nativo. Cuba sufre pero se recupera y pronto. Lo hizo después de la Guerra de los 10 años (1868-1878), después de la Guerra de Independencia (1895-1898) y después de la dictadura de Gerardo Machado. Aunque nunca ha enfrentado una destrucción tan sistemática como la del sátrapa Fidel Castro, de ese desastre también se recuperará. Levi Marrero no dudó que Cuba surgirá de sus cenizas una vez más. Vamos a extrañar su incansable mente y su corazón de oro.

CUBAN PRESERVATION AND ARCHITECTURE CONFERENCE

The University of Florida recently hosted a highly successfull conference designed to disseminate information about Cuba's cultural heritage. The two day symposium (February 24 &25) resulted in extensive discussions about various aspects of Cuban culture. Among them were presentations on historical archives and the lithographic art of cigar box labels. The discussions, however, focussed on the history and preservation of Cuba's architecture and urban environment. The symposium included the display of the Monuments of the Greater Caribbean exhibition, produced by the regional preservation organization CARIMOS and the University of Florida in 1992 for the Organization of American States. Viewers feasted their eyes on Caribbean architectural sights, including monumental Cuban buildings and historic centers.

More than 50 participants from throughout the state traveled to Gainsville for the event. Eleven experts led the presentations, 4 from the University of Florida and 7 from other institutions. The conference is part of a series designed to link together persons interested in preserving Cuba's cultural legacy. By exchanging well researched, up-to-date information, attendees can work toward developing strategies and taking action to rescue Cuba's cultural riches from years of neglect. In addition to the Cuban National Heritage Trust's support, the conference was sponsored by the University of Florida's College of Architecture, the Center for Latin-American Studies, the Institute for Hispanic-Lation Cultures, the hispanic Alumni Association, and the Preservation Association of Students. Future conferences in this series are being planned for Miami, Tampa, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.

LA HABANA EN RUINAS

Continuado de la Pagina 1

si todos los edificios de la ciudad antigua - habitados, sin excepción, en condiciones humanas - estaban debidamente restaurados, era posible disfrutar de la más nitidas joyas urbanas: la Plaza de la Catedral, rodeada de residencias del siglo XVIII declarada monumento historico desde 1934; la Plaza de Armas bordeada por el Museo de la Ciudad, el Palacio de los Capitanes Generales - luego de la Presidencia y del Ayuntamiento - y el Castillo de la Fuerza (Biblioteca Nacional hasta 1958); el Convento de San Francisco (Correo central hasta que la República construyó en la década de 1940 el Palacio de Comunicaciones) y el Convento de Santa Clara, adquirido por el estado en 1923, bellamente restaurado, y sede del Ministerio de Obras Públicas hasta la década de 1960. Además, decenas de palacios residenciales de la vieja aristocracia, conservados por sus propietarios, hoy expropriados, al igual que algunos adquiridos por empresas que los restauraron, como la firma Arrechabala, productora del Ron Havana Club, marca hoy "nacionalizada", con la cual festejó en Suecia Garcia Márquez juto a su tribu macodeña el Nobel que comparte con Castro.

La quiebra total de Cuba, cuyas reservas en divisa y capital de equipamento expropriados malversó alegremente Castro en poco tiempo, ha convertido a una de las naciones proporcionalmente más prósperas de la América Latina, en una nación paria, arruinada y endeudada. Se olvida por los exégetas del régimen que en la década de 1950 la deuda externa del Estado cubano no llegava a cien millones de dólares. Hoy debe Cuba a Occidente y Japón más de tres mil millones, de ellos quinientos millones a España, que le fue celestinamente propicia bajo Franco y ahora cómplice bergonzante bajo Felipe González y Alfonso Guerra, quien acaba de llamar a La Habana, en una declaración arracaoa por la prensa

madrileña, "un barrio de Moscú".

En la nación pordiosera en que ha convertido Cuba Castro - a quien calificara hace poco el Presidente Reagan, como mendigo internacional - el pueblo, que le conoce bien, y sabe quien ha destruido por un odio irracional hacia la vida urbana, La Habana Vieja entrañable de todos los cubanos, debe estar reactualizando una historieta judicial calcada de la mejor tradición picaresca hispánica: un abogado encargado de la defensa de un degenerado que habia asesinado a su madre, falto de argumentos, cerró su alegato con una imploración final, mientras señalaba con el indice al matricida: !Señores Magistrados: no olvides al dictar sentencia que el destino de un pobre huertano está en vuestras manos!

Seria bueno que las naciones occidentales y desarrolladas a las que corresponderá restaurar La Habana Vieja y pagar la cuenta, averiguasen la magnitud del crimen urbanistico que indujo e hizo posible, en los últimos cinco lustros, con su decidia e irrespeto proverbial hacia el legato histórico de nuestra patria, el huertano antonomasico que acaudilla el inclasificable régimen cubano.

HAVANA IN RUINS

Continued from Page 1

exception under human conditions - were properly restored, it was possible to enjoy the clearest urban joys: the Cathedral Square, surrounded by 18th century residences which had been declared national monuments in 1934; the *Plaza de Armas* bordered by the Museum of the City, the Palace of the Captains General - later the Presidential Palace and later still the City Hall - and the Castle of *La Ferza* (the National Library until 1958); the Convent of San Francisco (the Post Office until the 1940's, when the Republic built the Palace of Communications) and the Convent of Santa Clara, acquired by the State in 1923, beautifully restored, and seat of the Ministry of Public Works until the 1960's. Besides dozens of residential palaces of the old aristocracy, preserved by their owners, now expropriated, as others acquired by corporations that restored them, like the firm Arechabala, producer of the Havana Club rum, today a "nationalized" label, with which Garcia Marquez and his massive tribe feasted in Sweden the Nobel Prize he shares with Castro.

The total bankruptcy of Cuba, whose resrves in foreign currency and capital of expropriated equipment Castro gaily embezzled in a short time, has turned one of the proportionally wealthiest nations of Latin America into a pariah nation, ruined and indebted. The decipherers of the regime forget that in the 1950's the external debt of Cuba was less than one hundred million dollars.

Today, Cuba owes the West and Japan three thousand million, five hundred million of them to Spain, which under Franco acted as her complaisant pimp, and now as a shamefaced accomplice under her present leaders Felipe Gonzalez and Alfonzo Guerra, who has just called Havana, in a statement seized by the Madrid press, "a suburb of Moscow."

Within the mendicant nation into which Cuba has been turned by Castro - who was recently labeled by President Reagan as an international beggar - the people, who know him well and know who has been the destroyer through an irrational hatred towards the urban fleeing, Old Havana, beloved by all Cubans, must be reliving a comic judicial vignette copied from the best roguish Hispanic tradition: an attorney responsible for the defense of a degenerate who murdered his mother, lacking in arguments, closed his summing up with a final entreaty, while pointing at the matricide with his finger: "Gentlemen Magistrates, don't forget that the fate of a poor orphan lies in your hands!"

It would be good if the Western and developed nations who will bear the burden of restoring Old Havana and pay the bill would find out the magnitude of the urban crime which, with his indolence and proverbial lack of respect to the historical legacy of our country, influenced and made possible, during the last twenty-five years, the autonomic orphan who commands the unclassifiable Cuban regime.

MUSEUM COMMITTEE

To accomplish its mission, the Museum Committee seeks information to create a database of artworks with Cuban connections. Artworks may be from any period, condition, ownership, location or origin. The information may be found in lists, inventories, wills, etc. This will help prevent Castro's dissipation of Cuba's artistic heritage. The committee's objectives are to create public awareness of artworks remaining and being removed from Cuba; to catalogue existing art collections within and outside Cuba; to create a network and information clearinghouse for Cuban art. Please address your correspondence to the CNH Museum Committee at 3oo Aragon Avenue, Suite 260, Coral Gables, FL 33134.

TRIP TO CARTAGENA

According to a report by Tina Fanjul, the first trip of the San Cristobal de la Habana Fund was a huge success. Group members visited Jorge Tadeo Lozano University in Cartagena, Colombia, from February 23 to 26, 1995. While there, they studied reconstruction and restoration plans, examined projects and discussed them with the architects in charge during the day. At night, they attended receptions at the restored homes of Julio Mario and Beatriz Santo Domingo, Richard and Kitty Kirby, and Richard O'Connell.

MEETING AT LA CASITA

CNH members met with Dr. Gaston Fernandez-Torriente and Dr. Gaston J. Fernandez of the National Association of Cuban-American Teachers [NACAT] at La Casita Restaurant, in Coral Gables, Friday, March 17, 1995. Representing CNH were Alberto Bustamante, Armando Cobelo, Maria Teresa Fernandez Concheso, Fernando Garcia Chacon, Malvina Godoy, Celso Gonzalez Falla and Miguel Rodez. NACAT is the largest organization of Cuban-American teachers nationwide. The meeting at La Casita served as an introduction so the two groups could learn about each others' efforts to rescue our heritage. As a result of the meeting, both groups will seek to work closer together.

ARCHITECTURE/URBANISM

In November of 1993, a group of distinguished architects united to form the Center for Urban Studies. The group soon joined CNH and became its Architecture & Urbanism Committee. As such, the group will be studying measures to rescue Cuba from the throes of the decay and disrepair inflicted by a negligent dictatorship.

Among the primary goals for the future are devising emergency codes for the protection of Havana, repairing now blighted areas, and designing a first-class transportation system, all taking into account Cuba's cultural traditions and way of life. Hopefully, the results of the studies will be published when completed.

Various prestigious universities recognized the group's dedication and chose to endorse the project. Among them are the University of Miami, Florida International University, Harvard and Yale. The excitement of scholars and amateurs alike is almost palpable. As a result, CNH has been the subject of many news articles, radio and television shows, and community lectures in Miami, Orlando, Tampa and Gainesville.

FOUND IN FRANCE

Enrique Jose Varona, great-grandson of the famed Cuban historian and philosopher of the same name, learned of CNH's preservation efforts while living in Straussberg, France. Mr. Varona recently called Dr. Alberto Bustamante, Jr., and after a long disscussion regarding their mutual desire to protect Cuba's cultural heritage, he pledged to join CNH in its quest. Prior to leaving Cuba, Enrique Jose Varona specialized in the study of French paintings still remaining at Cuban museums and private collections. He is presently a Professor of Art History at the University of Straussberg and works with the Straussberg Museum. CNH members will be meeting Mr. Varona in Paris in May to discuss how he can help CNH meet its mission. The result of the meeting will be published in a subsequent issue of *Herencia*.

NEW OFFICE FOR CNH

CNH's new headquarters is located at

300 Aragon Ave., Suite 260
Coral Gables, Florida 33134

Address your comments, suggestions and information regarding this newsletter to your Editor, Miguel Rodez, at the above address.

MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

The Orange County Board of County Commissioners named **Dr. Alberto Bustamante, Jr.** Vice-Chairman of Orange County's Sesquicentennial Committee. The State of Florida created the Sesquicentennial Committee to facilitate the coordination of meetings and events surrounding Florida's 150th Anniversary celebrations.

Dr. Alberto Tagle was recently named Director of the Scientific Program at the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles, California. It is one of the top preservation positions in the world. Prior to joining the Getty Conservation Institute, Dr. Tagle served at the Winterhur Museum in Delaware as Head of the Analytical Laboratory of the Conservation Division. The Winterhur is possibly second only to the Getty as the most important research and restoration facility in the United States. Dr. Tagle was educated in Germany, where he specialized in analysing architectural and museum objects.

Dr. José M. de Lasa was promoted to Senior VicePresident of Abbot Laboratories, D364, AP6D, 100 Abbott Park Road, Abbott Park, IL 60064-3500.

NOTE WORTHY EVENTS

The Preservation Institute at the University of Florida is sponsoring two programs in preservation this summer, one in St. Augustine, Florida, the other in Cartagena, Colombia. The **St. Augustine** session runs for six weeks, from July 3 to August 11, 1995, at the University of Florida's campus in St. Augustine. Two parallel courses offer an introduction to issues and methods of preservation, with an emphasis on international and regional concerns. The instructions also include an introduction to electronic archive construction on the internet. Cost: $850 program fee, $400 for quad occupancy apartment within walking distance to the university. Six graduate credits are available for additional cost or transfer to applicable institution without charge. The **Cartagena** program will be conducted in cooperation with Jorge Tadao Lazano University in Cartagena. It runs for four weeks from May 28 to June 23, 1995 and involves analysis of the urban spatial patterns of this important colonial city. It involves lectures, field trips and studio projects. Cost: $650 program fee and $560 for University arranged accommodations. Three graduate credits are available for additional cost or transfer to an applicable institution.