

Venceremos!

Fifth Estate Collective

1969

Six hundred young Americans are planning to show their support this winter for the Cuban revolution by taking to that country's fields armed with machetes.

They will be members of the Venceremos Cane-Cutting Brigade and will join with Cubans in a battle to harvest 10 million tons of sugar cane.

Venceremos is Spanish for "We Shall Triumph" and is the motto of the Cuban revolution.

The 1969 through 1970 sugar harvest is the road to economic independence for Cuba, the culmination of 100 years of struggle against colonialism.

The brigade will consist of black, Latino, white working-class youth, drop-outs and returned GIs.

It will go down to Cuba in two separate contingents; one group of 300 will leave at the end of November and the other will leave in January. Their stay will be two months each.

Just like in the revolution here, young people in Cuba are in the forefront of the new revolutionary battle. Young Americans in the Venceremos Brigade will be living and cutting cane in the fields of Camaguey Province with Cuban youths, members of the Youth Centennial Column.

The Column was organized by the Union of Young Communists in 1968, the year marking the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the Cuban War of Independence. Consisting of over 50,000 members recruited from all over the island, the Youth Centennial Column is organized into battalions spread throughout Camaguey; it provides a fighting labor force for the 10 Million Ton harvest in a province famous for its large sugar crop as well as its labor shortage.

Camaguey, like the Isle of Pines before the revolution, was one of the most backward and stagnant areas of Cuba, due to the method of neo-colonial exploitation of the local economy. And it is precisely in these areas where Cuban youth are in the front-lines, the shock troops in the fight to overcome economic backwardness and to build communism.

Youth in the Column volunteer for a three-year period, and in addition to agricultural work, they attend classes (corresponding to their grades in school), and participate in political education sessions.

They call themselves "Canecutters of 1970, mambises of the 20th century" (the mambises were the peasant rebels, armed with machetes, who fought the Spaniards in the Cuban War of Independence), and they see themselves as part of the Mambi Army, fighting to plow under underdevelopment in Cuba.

The Venceremos Brigade will join the Youth Centennial Column and the rest of the Cuban people in their work to develop the Cuban economy.

The war against imperialism must be fought with machetes, hoes and tractors, as well as with rifles and bullets.

The Venceremos Brigade will be a group of Americans who will actively and materially demonstrate their solidarity with the Cuban Revolution in this war by working in the 10 Million Ton harvest. At the same time, brigade members will have a chance to learn about the Cuban revolution from their own daily experience.

The Brigade is open to all who want to show their solidarity with the Cuban Revolution. In the Detroit area applications for the trip are being handled by Newsreel; call 833-7855 for more information.

Nationally, applications may be obtained from Venceremos Brigade, PO Box 643, Cathedral Station, NY, NY

Local meetings to build support for the Brigade are held each Wednesday at the Ad Hoc building, 5705 Woodward at Palmer at 8 pm. Newsreel will screen Cuban films and persons that have traveled and worked in Cuba will speak.

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