

# Castro admits problems in Cuba

WASHINGTON (AP)—"We are sailing in a sea of difficulties. We have been in this sea for some time, but the shore is far away."

In that way, Cuban President Fidel Castro candidly acknowledged last December that his revolution had fallen on hard times.

At the time, there were reports of increased street crime, worker absenteeism and black market activities. In addition, pamphlets and posters denouncing the regime began to appear in Havana. There also has been a dramatic rise in the number of Cuban "boat people" arriving in the United States.

But nothing has dramatized popular disaffection for the regime quite so strongly as has the appearance of thousands of Cubans seeking political asylum on the grounds of the Peruvian Embassy in recent days.

The inundation of the embassy was touched off a week ago when a Cuban policeman was killed in cross fire while

six Cubans seeking asylum were trying to crash their bus onto the embassy grounds. The refugees came in droves a few days later when the government withdrew its security guards from the embassy and announced that those seeking asylum would be allowed to leave.

In truth, U.S. officials say, economic difficulties have spread throughout the Caribbean over the past few years. And, as Castro points out, Cuba, despite its difficulties, is well ahead of the rest of the Caribbean in health care and education.

On the other hand, no Caribbean country has received foreign assistance on the scale that Cuba has been receiving from the Soviet Union—currently about \$8 million a day.

But Soviet aid has not offset a number of problems affecting the Cuban economy. In a speech to the Cuban National Assembly last winter, Castro said that much of the country's tobacco crop had been wiped out by disease. In

addition, "plant rot" was threatening Cuba's vital sugar harvest. The U.S. economic embargo also is frequently blamed for Cuban economic troubles.

Cuban officials admit, however, that these factors are not entirely to blame for Cuba's economic plight. Castro's brother, Raul, in an unusually frank speech last fall, also criticized Cuba's workers for "lack of discipline and control, irresponsibility, negligence and cronyism."

Some U.S. officials also believe that the sense of economic frustration in Cuba may have been intensified since relatives from the United States began visiting the island.

More than 100,000 Cuban-Americans visited Cuba last year, the overwhelming majority enjoying a higher standard of living than the average Cuban.

According to the officials, who asked not to be identified, the success stories recounted by the visiting relatives no doubt had a considerable impact on



Fidel Castro

Castro's subjects who, with the revolution in its 22nd year, still have to put up with long lines and strict rationing to meet even their most fundamental needs.

## News In Brief

### Judge fines striking unions

NEW YORK (AP)—A judge fined New York's striking bus and subway unions \$1 million Tuesday, saying the city is "hanging on the brink of disaster" as the eighth day of the strike was marked by the worst traffic snarls yet for millions of commuters.

Justice John Monteleone of state Supreme Court in Brooklyn warned the leaders of the unions that even harsher penalties were yet to come unless they ordered their men back to work.

"No, not until we have reached a reasonable contract," was the sidewalk response of Transport Workers Union chief John Lawe.

"My responsibility to the membership is to go back to the table and try to get them a decent wage package, which I intend to do as soon as I get back to the hotel."

The Traffic Department, counting 250,000 cars coming onto the island of Manhattan, called Tuesday's traffic jams "the highwater mark so far."

### Shah ready to leave hospital

CAIRO, Egypt (AP)—The deposed Shah of Iran is in excellent condition and is to leave his Nile-side hospital today, one of his Egyptian doctors said Tuesday.

The convalescing shah has remained secluded in his suite at the Maadj military hospital since he underwent surgery to remove his cancerous spleen 12 days ago.

Tests following the surgery showed that cancer had spread to his liver but doctors said he would be treated with drugs.

There was no word on where the shah's quarters would be after his discharge from the hospital.

President Anwar Sadat has said the former monarch would permanently live in Egypt.

### Carter shifts attention to peace talks

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Jimmy Carter, shifting gears from the Iranian stalemate, held talks Tuesday with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat aimed at pumping new life into slow-moving negotiations over self-rule for more than 1 million Palestinian Arabs.

As the two leaders began their discussions, diplomatic sources were skeptical that an agreement on an autonomy plan could be wrapped up during the Sadat visit and the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin next week.

Carter and Sadat met alone for 70 minutes and then went to the Cabinet room where they were joined by advisers for an additional 20 minutes.

American officials shed no light on the discussions. "I do not expect to have any readout," Jody Powell, the White House press secretary, told reporters.

## Health insurance forum

The Health Consumer Organization of Orange and Chatham counties will sponsor three forums on health insurance beginning tonight at 8 in 231 Rosenau Hall.

A discussion of existing health insurance coverage in North Carolina will open the series tonight, followed by a debate on national health insurance on April 16 and a presentation on prepaid health plans on April 23.

"Our basic purpose is to help the local residents obtain information that will help him or her to make intelligent decisions on health insurance," said Betsy Carey, president of the Health Consumer Organization.

Tonight's forum will feature several area health officials including Richard Donnan of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina and Joyce Bynum, patient relations manager at N.C. Memorial Hospital.

Carey said many questions involving health insurance will be discussed. "How do commercial policies compare with Blue Cross and Blue Shield, and can the state Department of Insurance really help you with a complaint about health insurance," she said.

Admission is free and the last 30 minutes of each forum will be reserved for questions and comments from the audience.

## strippers

anything like Paris. It was much worse than this.

"I continue to watch the show. Each man does three numbers. One man comes out dressed as Clark Kent, strips down to a Superman suit and then finally down to a G-string. I'm getting a little bored."

A woman next to me explains that she and her friends came to the show only for the novelty of it. "Believe it or not, we're all business professionals with incomes over \$30,000 a year," she says. "My husband doesn't know I'm here. I told him I had to go to a business meeting."

"I think if you examined the family values of the women in the room you'd find they're very unassuming," she says. "Women have been exploited for so long, it's interesting to see how they react when the shoe's on the other foot."

It's getting hard to see through the cigarette smoke, but I can make out the figure of a blonde who has managed to pin one of the previous strippers against the wall.

Michael is to perform next, and I sit up in my seat with interest because I hear women around me whispering that he's the best. He seems an unlikely stripper. He has told me earlier that he's a student planning to do graduate work and he's married, although his wife now is living abroad. He says he's saving the money he earns here to buy a ticket to visit her and then to buy a typewriter to do his term papers.

"I'm really a very shy person," he tells me. "But I've always had fantasies about doing

## Washington

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"Most people were kind of grumbling—saying they'll give all the money to New York and the other big cities and none will be left for smaller towns," Town Council Member Marilyn Boulton said.

Kawalec said at least one N. C. senator was not very receptive to local concerns.

"Jesse Helms was downright rude," she said. "He said, 'Oh, so you've come to Washington looking for money. Well, good luck.'"

Following trooping off to Washington with

their colleagues, Howes and Carrboro Mayor Robert Drakeford each made another trip to Washington. As a member of the league's committee on economic development, Howes testified before the Senate subcommittee on Housing and Urban Affairs. Drakeford, who holds membership on many national boards and is a frequent visitor to the capital, spoke before the House Appropriations Committee. Drakeford said he tried using his visits to the city to lobby for money for Carrboro.

## coliseum

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Barbee said he believed North Carolinians are in favor of a new state coliseum. "It seems to me as sports-minded as the people of North Carolina are, they would like to have an arena where they can go and watch a game," he said. He expressed concern about the small number of people who are able to attend sporting events.

Barbee said the commission is merely conducting a feasibility study and does not have the authority to propose a bill in the General Assembly.

Swofford said the status of the proposed facility would have no effect on the University's building of a new coliseum in Chapel Hill.

The UNC Board of Trustees voted March 21 to approve plans for a \$21 million student athletic center to be built on the southern

fringe of campus between Manning Drive and Mason Farm Road.

The new center will seat 18,000-22,000 people and can be used for a variety of sports events, including indoor tennis, wrestling and gymnastics, as well as men's and women's basketball.

Before the University can proceed with its plans for the athletic center, it must receive approval from the UNC Board of Governors. After the plans have gone through the University approval process, UNC officials will present the plans to the Chapel Hill Town Council in May. The University cannot build the center without a special use permit from the town.

No state money will be used to fund the new center. Money will be raised by the University through private contributions and endowments.

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