

For Cuba, the Die is Cast with Friends Like This

written by Javier Prada | miércoles, 17 de mayo, 2023 1:45 pm



HAVANA, Cuba. - Spanish blogger Paco Nadal told the Spanish daily paper *El País* that he visited Cuba, where his experience had been so good that he was recommending that Spaniards travel to the island, first of all because, even if Cubans are suffering from shortages, tourists will never know about it; and secondly, because if tourists do not travel to Cuba, the situation will get worse for the people.

Among other niceties, Nadal assured his readers that the Cuban government is doing the utmost to make sure that foreign visitors do not notice there is a crisis, and he says it as if it were something to be proud of. Paco Nadal and others who play at being critical while doing favors for the Cuban regime, must be reminded that the ones “doing the utmost” are the Cuban people, although not because they want to.

The regime of Miguel Díaz-Canel has not asked the Cuban people if they prefer that the few agricultural products and the scarce beef that are produced go directly to the tables at the hotels in exchange for a few dollars or euros that will go straight to a military dictatorship that is not investing a single *peso* in improving the quality of life of the population. No one has asked the Cuban people

if they prefer that funds are invested in cars for tourists to rent instead of in ambulances so that each hospital in the country can be equipped, at least, with two working vehicles.

Paco Nadal, who is, apparently, an expert on Cuba, should know that the only way for tourists to help the Cuban people is to seek lodging in private homes, something that the Cuban government tries to prevent using the excuse of shortages and the economic asphyxia that the private sector is suffering, thus making sure that they hoard the largest amount of money possible from each foreign visitor and that all hard currency goes straight into the regime's pockets.

Restaurants, *paladares* and hostels that managed to survive the pandemic, the shortages, the exodus and the scourge of the State on the self-employed, belong mostly to Cubans who are connected to the regime. They are another vehicle for hard currency to end up in the same government pockets.

Island residents who are now considering closing their small businesses due to blackouts and to the fuel crisis are doing so because their business is yielding loses instead of revenue. People have no money, and private transportation gets more expensive every day, even for tourists.

Paco Nadal omits, or ignores, that the regime has not had everything it needs in all the hotels to hide the crisis. It's not just sausages that are missing, and visitors who have stayed in 4-star and 5-star hotels during the month of April attest to that fact.

carne, nada... Realmente PAUPERRIMO.
Como dije, instalaciones de primer nivel, pileta pegada a la playa, una playa sin sombra, o sea, hay 20 sombrillas rotas para un hotel que alberga al menos 2000 personas.
Si hay algo que rescatar en esta experiencia es la atención de todo el personal, desde limpieza, bartender, camareras, mozas, botones, todos absolutamente todos te hacen sentir como en tu casa. Pero todo lo que ellos hacen no alcanza para cubrir el semejante costo que tiene este hotel.
NO VALE UN SOLO CENTAVO DE LO GASTADO.
NO LO RECOMIENDO PARA NADA. NO TIREN SU DINERO A LA BASURA, ES REALMENTE LAMENTABLE EL LUGAR, principalmente la comida y la bebida.

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Fecha de la estancia: abril de 2023

Tipo de viaje: Viaje en pareja

Consejo sobre las habitaciones: No contratar este hotel, dista mucho de lo que realmente te ofrecen en las redes y en las paginas...

Opiniones en Tripadvisor
de turistas que han

visitado varios hoteles
cubanos este mes
(Capturas de pantalla)

The quality of goods and services offered to travelers has decreased plenty. A tourist who comes to Havana has to stand on long lines to extract money from the only automatic teller that works within a one-mile radius, or to fill the tank of his or her rented car.

Paco Nadal came short of asking his compatriots to be patient and give away kindly their vacation savings in exchange for whatever they can find or get in shortage-ridden Cuba, as if the sacrifices made by regular Spaniards could change the poverty in which Cubans barely survive.

Spaniards should know that we, the people of Cuba, gain nothing if they come to visit, so please do us no favors, because the dictatorship will not invest a single euro in our fields, our hospitals, or housing, our water resources, our roads or our thermoelectric plants. The Cuban people do not know -and neither does Paco Nadal- in what the Cuban government has spent all the money earned by the Tourism industry. Prior to 2019, income generated in that sector alone went into the bazillions, but Cuba was in a state of crisis, and had severe infrastructural problems.

Communists always blame someone else, or blame external factors, for the misfortunes that they themselves generate. But all Cubans know that the Trump administration, the pandemic and the war in Ukraine -which, by the way, Cuba supports- only brought to the surface the accumulated ruins of six decades of appalling governance. There is no wiggle-room for deceit; the only thing that works in Cuba is repression and the propaganda machinery with which to manipulate international opinion.

If Spaniards want to come to Cuba because they so desire, they have every right to do so, but not because some blogger has made them believe that Cuba's recovery depends on their money. Cuba needs many things, that's true, but before everything else, it needs freedom and respect for civil rights.

No Spaniard would allow their government to starve them to death in order to feed tourists well or to fatten up its ministers like cattle. Neither would Spaniards

allow that their public health system, weakened by years of neglect, collapse amidst a pandemic while a very high percentage of their nation's budget was spent in the construction of hotels and other amenities for foreigners to enjoy.

Cuba finds itself in deplorable conditions due to a system that is incapable of renewing itself, and also because of opinion-makers like Paco Nadal who does not acknowledge the inhumanity that the Cuban regime creates, and who lends his blog to generate money for that regime. The die is cast for Cuba with friends like him.

ARTÍCULO DE OPINIÓN

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