U.S. Rail Workers Delegation Meets with Cuban Railroaders

From April 27 through May 6 a delegation of rail and transit workers, together with other trade unionists, visited Cuba on a fact-finding, solidarity, and friendship mission. The people-to-people delegation included four members of Railroad Workers United (RWU). The delegation met with leaders of the Transportation Union of the Cuban Workers Federation (CTC), participated in the May Day celebration and parade, and toured the country.

The Transportation union covers all transportation workers in the country, and includes nearly 200,000 members. There are 29,000 railroad workers, 82% of whom work directly for the state-owned railroad. Cuba has the 4th largest rail network in North America after the U.S., Canada and Mexico. There are five staff persons on a train crew, two engineers, a conductor and two "assistants" (brakemen). The crews work 15 days on, then 15 off.

The delegation discussed wages, benefits, working conditions, safety and more. The next issue of The Highball will feature a full report from the participants on what they witnessed and what they were able to discover.