

## SAD TIDINGS



SANDY POLLACK (1948-1985)

Political activist Sandy Pollack was one of 32 people killed in a Cubana Airlines accident in Havana on January 19, 1985. The plane, bound for Managua, crashed shortly after take off.

Sandy was a founder of the U.S. Peace Council, and spent the last six years of her extraordinarily fruitful and productive life as its director of international solidarity. At her death, she was a member of the National Council of the Communist Party, USA, and served on its International and Peace and Solidarity Commissions.

The only daughter of Dr. Cecelia and Harry Pollack, Sandy grew up in a politically active household in Queens, New York, and as a teenager became involved in school and community issues. At Boston University, she participated in the movement against the Vietnam war, and was a member of Students for a Democratic Society. Later, she joined the Young Workers Liberation League, and in 1968, became a member of the Communist Party, USA. Once again in New York, she played a key role in building the national campaign to free Angela Davis.

Sandy first visited Cuba in 1969, and over the years was recognized as a leader in the U.S. movement in defense of the Cuban revolution. She served on the national committee of the Venceremos Brigade, which sent several thousand Americans to Cuba in defiance of the U.S. blockade; and each year since 1972, she helped organize the celebrations of Cuba's revolutionary holiday, July 26th.

Sandy co-founded Tricontinental News Service, which broke the information blockade on the developing countries by offering their story to the U.S. media. Her continued insistence on addressing this pressing need led her, a decade later, to become the first U.S. reporter in the liberated zones of El Salvador.

As a natural outgrowth of her Cuba work, Sandy became deeply involved in the Chile solidarity movement following the coup, in the movement supporting independence for Puerto Rico, and in the defense of revolutionary Grenada. Most recently,

her work became central to the anti-interventionist movements in support of the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions. In each case, she combined serving on the leadership committees with doing the kind of nuts and bolts day-to-day work of which lasting movements are made. She was one of the full-time staff organizers of the historic June 12, 1982 peace demonstration in New York City. Her organizing efforts insured significant U.S. delegations to dozens of world peace and solidarity meetings.

Sandy did not take on new issues by dropping old ones. She seemed to expand to make room for new and urgent tasks, over-extending and overworking herself beyond reason, but driven by a passion and a sense of responsibility that made her an effective organizer. Working in the broadest of coalitions, she won wide respect for her emphasis on unity and her ability to find the common denominator underlying conflicting agendas.

Photo: Sandra Levinson



MARGARITA LEJARZA (1950-1985)

Margarita Lejarza, a young Cuban woman of enormous spirit and commitment, died on January 17 in Miami of complications from AIDS, which she contracted as a result of blood transfusions received three years ago following an automobile accident. She was 34.

At her funeral in Havana, Guillén Zelaya, Vice-President of ICAP, said that "from adolescence, Margarita dedicated her life to the revolution." But Margarita's road to revolutionary commitment was not typical.

She was 11 when she came to Miami from Havana in 1961 with her parents. Her father's textile business had been nationalized by the Cuban government; her mother, a teacher, disagreed with the educational reforms proposed by the new government, and both, although anti-Batista, were frightened by the rumors that the government, not the parents, would have ultimate control over young children. Margarita's 8-year-old cousin, Angel Eduardo, painted a farewell notecard for her, an airplane dropping bombs on the Miami *gusanos*; she answered him with a letter: "I received your card and I didn't very much like the plane dropping bombs on the *gusanos* because I am not a *gusana*, understand?"

## ELIZABETH MOOS (1890-1984)

In exile in Miami, Margarita knew very few North Americans; she and her family lived and socialized almost exclusively with other Cubans, and her politics became as ingrown as theirs. The little girl who had loved Fidel and Camilo in Cuba became an outspoken anti-Castro anti-communist. Gradually, however, Margarita became alienated from the Cuban community in Miami; still anti-communist, she found the Miami Cuban community hypocritical, all talk and no action. Margarita's father died in 1970 which cut her off more from the Cuban exile community. She went to the university in Tallahassee where she met people from the Venceremos Brigade and became involved in the anti-war movement.

In 1971 she left for New York, where she hoped to find an atmosphere more conducive to her rapidly changing political outlook. She began to work for Liberation News Service, became involved in organizing the first Cuban Film Festival in New York, and in 1973 came to work for the Center for Cuban Studies for two years. She organized a musical group of young Cuban exiles, "Tierra Colorada," where her lovely singing voice found expression. She became a founder of the magazine *Areito* and of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, and worked constantly to improve relations between the United States and Cuba from her perspective as a member of the Cuban exile community in the United States.

When the Carter Administration dropped the ban on travel to Cuba, she worked in Washington, D.C. with one of the travel agencies organizing trips to Cuba. She returned to Cuba herself several times, and to a reunion with her cousin, to whom she could now prove that indeed she was not a *gusana*.

A few years ago, Margarita decided to return to Miami. She knew that her political work would be riskier and much more difficult there, but she wanted to be with her mother. She and Maria had remained extremely close despite their political differences. Margarita had always been grateful for Maria's understanding of her commitment, and after 20 years in the U.S., Maria was now more in agreement with Margarita's work than disagreement. In Miami, Margarita worked with one of the travel agencies that chartered flights to Havana, did research and writing on the Cuban exile community, worked with the Miami solidarity organization LACASA, and contributed day and night to the ongoing struggle to change attitudes toward Cuba.

Ill and often hospitalized during the last year of her life, Margarita did not stop working. According to Maria, Margarita's spirit seldom flagged. She asked to be cremated and to be buried in Cuba. Maria brought Margarita's remains to Cuba where, on February 8, with family and friends present, she was buried in the Pantheon of Revolutionary Emigrants in Havana's Colón Cemetery. Margarita, committed, compassionate, revolutionary, deserved no less.

(Maria Lejarza asks that contributions in Margarita's name be made either to the Latin American-Caribbean Solidarity Association, LACASA, P.O. Box 380306, Miami 33138; or to the Health Crisis Network Inc., P.O. Box 521546, Miami 33152. Please specify that your contribution is for the "Margarita Lejarza Fund." You may also send the contributions for one of these two groups to the Center and we will forward it.)

(Contributions in Sandy's name should be sent to the U.S. Peace Council, 7 East 15th St., New York, N.Y. 10003.)

Elizabeth Moos, 94-year-old educator and political activist, died December 30, 1984. One of the most remarkable women of her generation, Elizabeth's primary concern was education—education of children as active and concerned citizens, and education of all people as a basis for world peace.

She was a founder and director of Hessian Hills School in Croton-on-Hudson, New York (1925-41), a private primary school which was part of the progressive education movement. In her 50's, she earned a Master's Degree in Slavic Literature at Columbia University's Russian Institute while working with the National Council of American-Soviet Friendship. When almost 70, she enrolled in the Bank Street School of Education to take advanced courses. She was active in Henry Wallace's 1948 campaign for the presidency; she was active in the campaign to defend Ethel and Julius Rosenberg; she led tours to the Soviet Union and China into her mid-80's; she was still demonstrating at peace rallies and passing out leaflets against U.S. involvement in Nicaragua throughout the last years of her life.

Elizabeth was full of energy, brooked no nonsense, didn't engage in small talk—she was a person who wanted to get down to business because "I don't have much time and this has got to get done." The little time she referred to had nothing to do with her age, but with her dozens of activities.

In 1973, when the Center for Cuban Studies had been partially destroyed in a terrorist bombing, Elizabeth volunteered to help put the place in order, to paint, make repairs—and when no one wanted to climb atop a tall ladder to paint the window frames, Elizabeth, then 83 years old, matter-of-factly clambered up the ladder and painted, to the amazement of a younger volunteer in his 70's. Elizabeth participated in a Center-sponsored tour of Cuba's educational facilities in 1975, took voluminous notes on the trip and hoped to publish a pamphlet on education in Cuba (she had written on education in the Soviet Union and in China). The fact that the pamphlet didn't get published was the Center's fault, not Elizabeth's. As late as 1984, she visited the Center to say that she thought it was "just dreadful, an awful shame" that we hadn't ever obtained the up-to-date statistics she needed for the pamphlet.

At a memorial service for Elizabeth in Riverside Church on January 26, 1985, many of her friends spoke of her physical beauty, her directness, her energy, her amazing capacity for physical work, her consistency to political principles. Peace activist Amy Swerdlow gave a fittingly beautiful epitaph for Elizabeth when she commented that "Elizabeth was the least elitist person that I ever met. She treated all people and all work with equal respect. . . . She never gave way to despair, never lost hope and belief in the effectiveness and goodness of people and political struggle."