



# Cuba: The New Travel Restrictions

The new regulations appended to the Trading with the Enemy Act to govern travel to Cuba may have been designed to send a diplomatic "signal" to Castro over Cuban policy in Central America, but their main effect has been to create an atmosphere of fear among academics, students, and activists who want to visit the island and find out for themselves what life there is like.

Unexpectedly, the rules also have aroused the ire of sports fans in Puerto Rico, who apparently will be denied permission to follow their teams to the Pan American Games in Cuba this July, and have infuriated a small but growing group of fishermen, hunters, and scuba divers in the U.S. who have been vacationing there in recent years.

Individual U.S. citizens are now liable to fines of \$50,000 and 10 years in prison for traveling to Cuba without specific permission in violation of the Trading with the Enemy Act, unless they fit into certain prescribed categories. The regulations took effect last Saturday, May 15.

Meanwhile, the main traffic—Cuban Americans visiting their families back home, journalists and filmmakers, businessmen, government officials—continues. Individuals engaged in narrowly defined "professional research" are still permitted to go, although the understanding is that professional research precludes students.

The rules won't conceivably have much effect on the flow of hard currency to Cuba. Of the approximately 2000 people who have been making the trip each month, 60 per cent are Cuban Americans, and they are still allowed to go back and forth. The rules do not apply, so far, to foreign subsidiaries of U.S. corporations doing business with Cuba. (Such trade, variously estimated at up to \$200 million a year, will con-

tinue under specific government licensing provisions.)

The main purpose of the regulations obviously is to intimidate U.S. citizens, but it's hard to see how the government can actually stop them from going. Presumably a U.S. citizen could travel to Mexico or Canada without a passport, then buy a ticket for cash to Havana, and, having made the trip, could return to the U.S. without Customs knowing about it. To enforce the new regulations, Customs would have to begin to inspect passports on the Canadian and Mexican borders, a task which would necessitate a major change in open-border rules, and cost much money. The Treasury Department, which administers the Trading with the Enemy Act, won't say how it intends to carry out enforcement, except that it will rely on informers and information passed on by friendly immigration officials in other countries.

It is unclear at this point what the reception in the U.S. will be for those individuals still allowed to travel to Cuba—whether, for instance, they will be subject to special interrogation.

Tourism is a potentially immense business in Cuba, and over the last few years a small number of travel agencies have been sending groups to the island for scuba diving, sports fishing, pigeon- and dove-hunting. Groups of bird-watchers and railroad buffs have also gone. Until recently, couples were traveling from Miami to Havana for weekends for a \$120 round-trip rate. Credit card companies had begun to set up operations. All of this has now stopped, because no travel agency wants to face indictment under the Trading with the Enemy Act for sending down a group of scuba divers. Many of these voyagers, incidentally, came from the Reagan heartland—the Southwest—Houston, Texas, being a major point of departure.