



Other editions: [Mobile](#) | [News Feeds](#) | [E-Newsletters](#) | [Text Alerts](#)

Find it: [Subscribe](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Cars](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Apartments](#) | [Shopping](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Dating](#) | [Coupons](#)



SEARCH ALL

All Local News Calendar Jobs More »



SPONSORED BY:



HOME NEWS SPORTS OBITUARIES OPINIONS PHOTOS & VIDEOS OHIO NEWS ENTERTAINMENT WEATHER CLASSIFIEDS CUSTOMER SERVICE



Comment, blog & share photos
[Log in](#) | [Become a member](#) | [Search people](#)

POWERED BY YOU AND THE

Congressional Black Caucus is blind

NAT HENTOFF • APRIL 23, 2009

[Post a Comment](#) [Recommend](#) [Print this page](#) [E-mail this article](#) [Share](#)

During their April visit to Cuba, members of the Congressional Black Caucus laid flowers at a Havana memorial to Martin Luther King Jr. Said Fidel Castro (CNN, April 8): "I value the gesture of this legislative group. The aura of Martin Luther King is accompanying them." After meeting Castro, Congressman Bobby Rush, D-Ill., exclaimed: "This is the dawning of a new day! In my household, he (Castro) is known as the ultimate survivor."

ADVERTISEMENT

Exclusive: Colon Detox...

Scientific study of the top free cleansing products on...

[ColonReview.com](#)

"Say Goodbye to Wrinkles"

Read How a mom combined 2 products and made her wrinkles...

[KimsSkinBlog.com](#)

Seroquel XR® Information

(quetiapine fumarate). Find Support Information & See...

[SEROQUELXR.com](#)

To others of us who honor King, there is a barely surviving black Cuban disciple of King (and Gandhi) whom the Caucus visitors did not meet because he has been in a Castro brothers' cage for many years, and was off limits to them. He is Dr. Oscar Elias Biscet, and he is among those designated by Amnesty International as "prisoners of conscience" in Cuban gulags.

Another visiting Caucus member, Emanuel Cleaver of Missouri, said (New York Post, April 11): "We've been led to believe that the Cuban people are not free, and they are repressed by a vicious dictator, and I saw nothing to match what we've been told." A government tour can lead you to believe anything.

Cleaver also said of Raul Castro: "He's one of the most amazing human beings I've ever met." (New York Post, April 11). The international human rights organizations - which have repeatedly pleaded with the Castros to release the blind physician - also find Biscet amazing in a vitally different sense.

Before he was arrested during Fidel's 2003 mass crackdown of dissenters (an event infamously known as "Black Spring") and sentenced to 25 years in prison, Biscet had been put away on occasion for planning to organize small groups in private homes to work nonviolently for democratic rights.

Since 2003, Biscet, often brutalized and denied medical care for digestive and other ailments, has occasionally been thrown into a 3-foot-wide underground "punishment" cell with no access to light and a toilet in the floor. His highest crime of caged disobedience against the state has been to protest vicious treatment of fellow prisoners from his cell. Yet, in a message slipped out, he maintains: "My conscience and spirit are well."

In a cruel irony, the Caucus visitors laying flowers at the King memorial appear utterly unaware of this inspiration to many silenced Cubans in Castroland, although Biscet has been internationally covered by reporters, including myself. Nor were these visiting admirers of Fidel and Raul seemingly aware that a biography of Martin Luther King Jr. - seized during the 2003 crackdown raids on independent libraries - was, among other

subversive books, ordered burned by Castro's judges in one-day trials.

Another Cuban follower of King is Iris Garcia, the founder of the Rosa Parks Women's Civil Rights Movement. She and her husband, Afro-Cuban dissenter Jose Luis Garcia Perez, are on a hunger strike trying to bring justice to a family member in a Castro cage.



NAT HENTOFF (Columnist)

More Opinion Headlines

- [We still can make more improvements to save Earth](#)
- [College seniors are ready for evasive action](#)
- [CIA torture is a teachable moment, not a cause for legal action \(1\)](#)

Text Alerts

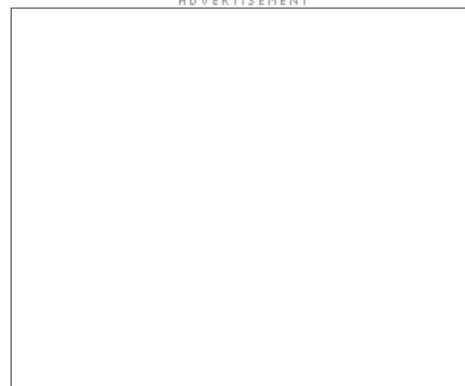
Get breaking news alerts from the Coshocton Tribune and Times Recorder sent to your phone.

Enter your phone number:

[Continue](#)

T & C | Privacy | Cancel Alerts
Powered by 4INFO. Standard Messaging Rates or other charges apply. To Opt-out text STOP to 4INFO (44636). For more information text HELP to 4INFO (44636). Contact your carrier for more details.

ADVERTISEMENT



ADS BY PULSE 360

[Get Listed Here](#)

Top 3 Colon Detox Cleanses Reviewed

We reviewed the top cleanse brands. Don't get ripped off.

Perez, himself often assaulted for disloyalty, told the Washington Post (April 9): "The authorities in my country have never tolerated that a black person (could dare to) oppose the regime." As I and others have reported, this racism in Cuba is one of the forbidden topics among American idolaters of Castro.

New Pulitzer prize-winning columnist Eugene Robinson of the Washington Post, who has made 10 reporting trips to Cuba, writes (April 14) that the Congressional Black Caucus delegation was either naive or disingenuous "not to notice ... or acknowledge that Cuba is hardly the paradise of racial harmony and equality it pretends to be."

If these Black Caucus members - so lauded by Fidel for being accompanied by King's "aura" - had asked him and Raul for permission to look around Cuba on their own, they would have heard considerable evidence from Afro-Cubans about their lower status in Michael Moore's paradise.

However, adds Eugene Robinson, "maybe they were too busy looking into Fidel's eyes."

Raul Castro, following the Black Caucus visit and Obama's policy changes, says he is willing to talk with Obama on "anything," including human rights and prisons. Well, how about including Biscet in the conversation once he's released? And Raul, if Fidel agrees, isn't it time to finally let the International Committee of the Red Cross into your prisons?

In 2007, President George W. Bush gave Biscet the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

President Obama, why not invite him to the White House?

Nat Hentoff is a nationally renowned authority on the First Amendment and the Bill of Rights. He is a member of the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press, and the Cato Institute, where he is a senior fellow.

[ColonReview.com](#)

"Say Goodbye to Wrinkles"

Read How a mom combined 2 products and made her wrinkles vanish...
[KimsSkinBlog.com](#)

My Wrinkles Are Gone!

Learn How a Mom Combined 2 Products to Easily Get Rid of Her Wrinkles.
[www.SuzanSkinSuccess.com](#)

In Your Voice | READ REACTIONS TO THIS STORY

Hide Comments ▲

You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Login](#) | [Register](#)

1000 characters left



Partners: [Jobs: CareerBuilder.com](#) [Cars: Cars.com](#) [Apartments: Apartments.com](#) [Shopping: ShopLocal.com](#) [Homes: Homefinder.com](#) [Dating: eHarmony](#)

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Sports](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Opinions](#) | [Photos & Videos](#) | [Ohio News](#) | [Entertainment](#) | [Weather](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Customer Service](#) | [Site Map](#)

[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [About Us](#) | [Subscribe](#)

Copyright ©2009 Coshocton Tribune
Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) , updated March 2009.