

"We are realists... we dream the impossible" - Che



# Fire This Time!

>> *Venezuela's National Assembly: The Constitutional and Political Stakes* ...Page 6

>> *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Venezuela After the Election: Bolivarian Revolutionary Process in Perspective*

... Page 9

## MADURO ES PUEBLO



**"WE WILL GO ON A COUNTER-OFFENSIVE WITH A SINGLE FORCE AND A SINGLE SPIRIT: TRIUMPH, TRIUMPH, TRIUMPH FOR INDEPENDENCE AND THE PEOPLE OF VENEZUELA."**

**- VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT NICOLÁS MADURO**

**PALESTINIANS & JEWS:  
NATURAL ALLIES AGAINST THE  
OCCUPATION OF PALESTINE**

Page 3



## REPEAL REPEAL BILL C-51

**We Must Build a  
Movement to Defeat It!**

Page 28

## BLACK HISTORY MONTH

SPECIAL 8 PAGE SECTION



Page 12

**"WE WILL OVERCOME  
ANY CHALLENGE IN OUR  
ENDEAVORS TO BUILD  
A PROSPEROUS AND  
SUSTAINABLE SOCIALISM."**

**SPEECH BY RAUL CASTRO RUZ**

Page 32

## Tragedy in La Loche Saskatchewan

Page 10



# TURKEY'S DESTRUCTIVE & REACTIONARY ROLE IN THE NEW ERA OF WAR & OCCUPATION

By Janine Solanki

"This is what we call a fact. This is irrefutable proof that Turkish armed forces shell borderline Syrian settlements with large-caliber artillery systems," said Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Major General Igor Konashenkov at a press conference. The Russian Ministry of Defense provided evidence in the form of publicly available video footage.

Syria has suffered greatly under five years of a US fomented civil war, the rise of Daesh (ISIS) taking over territory and committing atrocities throughout Syria, and destructive airstrikes by US-led forces including Canada. Already Syria has seen 250,000 of its people brutally killed, half its population displaced and over four million registered as refugees.

The first strike in the new era of war and occupation came on the heels of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, with the US-led war on Afghanistan. Turkey as member of NATO was quick to prove itself as a trusty ally to imperialist forces, participating in the NATO forces occupying Afghanistan and taking command of NATO forces twice between 2002 and 2005, with upwards of 1,300 Turkish soldiers.

However it was long before this that Turkey opened its doors to the US. Since the 1950's the US has had foreign military bases in Turkey. These bases were instrumental for launching the US invasion of Iraq in 2003. Today the Incirlik airbase, close to Syria's borders, has swelled to over 5,000 troops and is a launchpad for US airstrikes against Syria, all from Turkey's soil and authorized by the government of Turkey.

When the US started fomenting the civil war in Syria in 2011, it was with a "no boots on the ground, we're not really involved" hands off policy. On the surface at least. Behind the scenes the US government orchestrated a growing disaster in Syria with the help of its regional allies, particularly Turkey who shares a long and strategic border with Syria. The government of Turkey willingly lent itself to the needs of US imperialism. The so-called "Free Syrian

Army" was harboured in Turkey and freely conducted operations against Syria from within Turkey's borders. "Syrian rebels", which quickly became an assortment of mercenaries from many different countries, received training, arms and funds in Turkey before being funneled into Syria. These training operations started out covertly and were slowly uncovered. In 2013 US media reported that since 2012 Syrian "moderate rebels" were being trained by the US in Turkey. The Washington Post cited US officials who said that the CIA was preparing to deliver arms to rebel groups in Syria through its bases in Jordan and Turkey.

Let's remind ourselves what the goal of these actions were at the time. Daesh was not on the scene in 2011, 2012 or 2013. The aim was to overthrow the independent and sovereign government of Bashar Al-Assad, a scenario we had already seen in Libya shortly before, and which resulted in chaos and a destruction of the country. But it was through these years that Daesh was able to grow and thrive on the imperialist-created instability in Syria and Iraq.

It's ironic that the same strategy that resulted in the rise of Daesh is the same strategy the US is using, again with Turkey's assistance, to "fight Daesh". On February 19, 2015 Reuters reported "The United States and Turkey signed an agreement on Thursday to train and equip moderate Syrian opposition fighters, and Ankara will provide an equal number of trainers to work alongside their American military counterparts, a U.S. official said."

Beyond Turkey's links to training and arming Daesh and other terrorist groups in Syria, more links between Turkey and Daesh are being discovered. Oil convoy routes have been discovered between Daesh-held territory in Syria and Iraq into Turkey, where Turkey's government turns a not-so-blind eye to the smuggled oil being bought and sold through Turkey to the world market. UK-based news source Al-Araby Al-Jadeed (The New Arab) reported that "IS sells Iraqi and Syrian oil



for a very low price to Kurdish and Turkish smuggling networks and mafias"... "It is then most frequently transported from Turkey to Israel, via knowing or unknowing middlemen..."

With such a dangerous track record, it is no wonder the government of Iraq has been so adamant in protesting Turkey's recent incursion in northern Iraq. On December 4th, 2015 Turkey deployed 150-300 soldiers and up to 25 tanks near Mosul in northern Iraq. After Turkey refused Iraq's demands to withdraw the Iraqi government took the issue to the United Nations Security Council, where Iraq's Foreign Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari declared that Turkey's "violation against the borders of a sovereign neighboring state" constitutes a "hostile act" which is in breach of international norms and regulations. Now two months later Turkey still refuses to withdraw its forces.

The story is a repeat of Turkey's attacks on Syria. Iraq, like Syria, is engaged in a critical fight against Daesh. Why is Turkey launching attacks against sovereign countries that distract from their fight against Daesh? With this track record it's clear that Turkey, with its imperialist backers the United States, are on the side of whoever creates more chaos and instability in the region for imperialist forces to profit from. Now this is Daesh, who continues to be fed by its creators, the US and Turkey. For this crisis to end the US, Canada, NATO, Turkey and all imperialist allies must immediately stop their wars, occupations and interventions, and stop their support for Daesh.

No to War and Occupation! Yes to Self-Determination!

Turkey – Hands Off Iraq and Syria!

Follow Janine Solanki on Twitter:  
@janinesolanki



# PALESTINIANS & JEWS:

## Natural Allies Against the Zionist Occupation of Palestine

By Noah Fine

### The Refuseniks

As this issue of Fire This Time goes to print, a 19-year-old Israeli woman, Tair Kaminer, is preparing to serve multiple prison sentences in Israeli jail. Her crime? Refusing to participate in Israel's military conscription. Military service is mandatory for all Israeli citizens over the age of 18. Service for men is 3 years and women 2 years. Some exemptions are made on the grounds of religious, physical or psychological reasons. However, unfortunately for Tair, being a conscientious objector is not an easy win in the eyes of the Israeli legal system. Tair Kaminer has become part of a popular and growing movement of young Israelis called "Refuseniks". Israeli conscripts that for moral or political reasons object to serving in the Israeli Defense Force (IDF).

Kaminer served previously as an Israeli Scout. She volunteered with children affected by injuries caused by Israel's brutal assaults on Gaza. "The children I worked with grew up in the heart of the conflict and have had extremely difficult experiences from a young age, experiences that caused them to feel hatred, which can be understood, especially when it comes from young children," wrote Kaminer in a statement about her refusal. "I realized I did not want to take part, nor to

contribute to further hatred and fear, and not to take part in the occupation." Tair has become a hero among many sympathizers of the Palestinian cause as well as many Israeli youth who in growing numbers are beginning to question: What are we fighting for?

Since the beginning of October, 2015 a major shakeup has been rocking through occupied Palestine not only in the Gaza Strip but has spread through Palestinians in the West Bank, throughout the refugee camps and inside Israel itself. This shakeup is being called the "Third Intifada" or uprising. The history of the first and second Intifadas can be summed up simply as an uprising of Palestinian people in response to the brutal and dismal conditions created by 67 years of Zionist occupation. The third is no different. Led by young Palestinians both men and women is a response to the complete lack of a possibility for a decent and dignified future for Palestinians.

In 2015 The World Bank reported, "43% of Gaza's 1.8 million residents are unemployed," that number is closer to 60% among youth.

"The ongoing blockade and the 2014 war have taken a toll on Gaza's economy and people's livelihoods," the report continued. You can take the desperation demonstrated in Gaza's unemployment rate and easily extend it to the healthcare system, access to education, electricity, food and on and on. The situation for Palestinians in the West Bank is not much better and is daily getting worse.

So it's no wonder why the Refuseniks like Tair Kaminer don't want to be part of suppression of Palestinians. They are searching for solutions based on humanity. But as Kaminer pointed out in a recent interview, "Whenever they start negotiations between Israel and Palestine there's a problem because we are a more powerful

*continued on page 37*

*Conscientious objector Tair Kaminer is greeted by supporters outside the Tel Hashomer induction base, Ramat.*



*By Nita Palmer*

Nearly fifteen years have passed since the US ousted the Taliban from power in Afghanistan. It was a terrifying time for millions of Afghans as bombs rained down on their war-weary nation. For many Afghans, however, it was also a time of hope - especially for Afghan women.

As NATO troops marched into Afghanistan, we were reminded again and again of the terrible abuses of women's rights committed



by a pseudonym for security reasons) explained: "[people say] 'life under the Taliban was hard enough already, so how can you say that the US occupation was not better than it was under the Taliban?' But they don't know some very important things which the US did in Afghanistan. For example, the government that the US installed which was headed by Hamid Karzai but was composed mainly of warlords and fundamentalists that are no different than the Taliban... These people are actually worse than the Taliban and our people have very bitter memories of these people from the civil war of 1992-1996."

by a doctor during their pregnancies, since this would often involve a long and risky journey to the nearest hospital. Others may have a hospital nearby, but there are no female doctors available to see them, since the few female doctors available often stay in cities, where the security is greater. Despite a push to train more midwives, only 38% of Afghan women have a skilled attendant at the birth of their child, and just 32% give birth in a hospital. While the maternal mortality rate in Afghanistan has decreased, the numbers remain unacceptably high. Four hundred women out of every 10,000 will die during pregnancy or childbirth. By contrast, in

## *The New Era of War and Occupation:*

# No Liberation Under Occupation:

# Afghan Women's Struggle Continues After 15 Years of War

by the Taliban. Women were prevented from working, attending school, or even leaving the house without a male relative. Some were stoned to death for being victims of rape. And of course, women were forced to cover themselves head to toe in burqas which were, in the Western mind, the trademark of Afghan women's oppression.

Despite the dangers of war, many were hopeful that the US/NATO intervention would usher in a new era of progress for Afghan women. The US and NATO countries promised to fight for improvement of women's rights. Reports on the situation in Afghanistan were filled with images of girls attending school and women in Western clothing sitting side by side with their male counterparts in the Afghan Parliament.

However, after fifteen years of occupation, it has become evident that few real gains have been made for women's rights in Afghanistan - and in fact, in many ways women are worse off today than they were under the Taliban. This is not simply the opinion of an outsider looking in, but a sentiment expressed time and again by Afghan women (especially in rural communities), aid workers, and Afghan women's rights activists. In an interview with Los Angeles-based Uprising Radio, Reena, a spokeswoman for the Revolutionary Association of Women of Afghanistan (who

Indeed, while it is important to have women in government, their presence has little impact in a country where the government holds little real power outside of the capital. Besides this, many of the men in parliament hold ties to Afghanistan's notorious warlords, who hold the real power across much of the country. In order to get a real idea of position of Afghan women in society today, one must observe the condition of important basic indicators such as health, education and legal rights for the majority of the female population.

### **Basic Health Care Denied**

The struggle which the majority of Afghan women face is not the struggle to be represented in parliament or to have an equal opportunity to join the police or military forces. It is something far more basic: the struggle for their very right to live. The instability caused by a decade and a half of war has added another threat to the health and survival of Afghan women. Night time raids of homes, bombings, and fighting between militant groups and US/NATO forces has created a lack of security which disproportionately affects women and children.

In the field of health care, for example, the lack of security is a major contributing factor in the country's staggeringly high maternal mortality rate. Many women are never seen

neighbouring Iran, 25 women out of every 10,000 will lose their lives.

Those who do survive pregnancy are often left with permanent and painful injuries as a result of a lack of health care and poor nutrition, among other factors. Lack of proper pre- and post-natal care also results in a high infant mortality rate - 66 babies out of every 1000 will die before reaching their first birthday. While the US and NATO have often celebrated the improvement in infant and child mortality rates over the last decade and a half, a critical analysis of data from the World Bank shows this has little if anything to do with the military mission there. The improvements in this area are exactly on par with other developing countries in the Middle East and Central Asia. The number of Afghan women and children dying from preventable causes remains far too high, much higher than neighbouring countries.

### **Failure of Education**

Much has been made of the improvements to Afghanistan's education system since 2001, particularly for girls. The US Agency for International Development claims that the number of girls in school has risen from almost zero in 2001 to 2.5 million today. The trouble is, evidence on the ground shows that these numbers are totally inaccurate. A 2015 report



on the state of education in Afghanistan by BuzzFeed News found the number of girls attending school to be over counted by almost 40%. As well, it is not entirely true that no girls attended school under the Taliban. Many girls attended schools in private homes, and some NGOs even ran schools which were tolerated by the Taliban as long as they didn't make themselves well-known. This is not to say that the right of girls and women to attend school is not important; it surely is. However, we must also ask what gains are being made in actuality, not just on paper. The fact is that today the security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated so much that it has made it as least as difficult for girls to attend school in some regions now as it was under the Taliban.

Fearing the acid attacks and poisonings targeted at girls' schools, many parents who would otherwise send their daughters to school have opted to keep them home. Poverty is a major factor as well - some young girls are sent to work or beg for their families; other families cannot afford to buy textbooks and supplies for their children. A 2011 report by CARE International found that while 50% of parents wished for their daughters to graduate from university, many were forced to pull them out of school. The biggest factors in girls not completing their education were poverty, insecurity, and early marriage.

The Afghan female literacy rate is just 24% today (CIA World Factbook). This contributes to a lack of women in vital professions such as teaching and medicine, which in turn has further negative effects on women's health and educational outcomes.

The lack of education of girls and women today is a real tragedy for all of Afghanistan in light of the great gains their education could bring to the country. UNICEF found that, "... children of Afghan women with education are less likely to die in infancy and childhood, more likely to be immunized, and more likely to complete primary school than children whose mothers had no education. Among Afghan women, those

who had attended school are more likely to use a method of contraception and have adequate prenatal care than their peers with no education."

### Domestic Violence on the Rise

Another threat to the safety and security of Afghan women is domestic violence. We have heard their stories: Sahar Gul, a child bride from Baghlan Province, who was tortured nearly to death by her in-laws for refusing to enter prostitution. Aisha Mohammadzai, married at fourteen and permanently disfigured by her husband for trying to escape his abuse. Their stories are heart-wrenching and sadly, all too common. In fact, nearly 9 in 10 women report experiencing psychological, physical, or sexual violence in the home.

One might wonder what would possess a parent to force their daughter into marriage at such a young age. While conservative cultural and religious norms certainly play a role, the reality is that many feel they have no choice. Poor families are often forced to sell their daughters into marriage so the rest of the family can survive. Others marry their daughters off young for fear that they otherwise be kidnapped and held for ransom by one of Afghanistan's notorious drug lords, who have become incredibly powerful since the fall of the Taliban.

Rather than decreasing, domestic violence has in fact risen sharply since the occupation of Afghanistan began, with the U N

With the unemployment rate in Afghanistan at around 40%, there is no doubt that the desperate situation which many families face is a contributing factor. In addition, drug production and use has skyrocketed across Afghanistan since 2001, with the country now supplying around 90% of the world's opium. Many women report that the violence started or worsened after their husbands became addicted to drugs.

Unfortunately, there is no way out of this terrible situation for many women. Even if they were able to obtain a divorce - a difficult thing for a woman to do - where would they go? How would they survive? A handful may be able to stay with their families, but for economic and cultural reasons, this is usually not possible. There is very little employment available, least of all for women. Many of the country's widows are forced into begging and prostitution to survive.

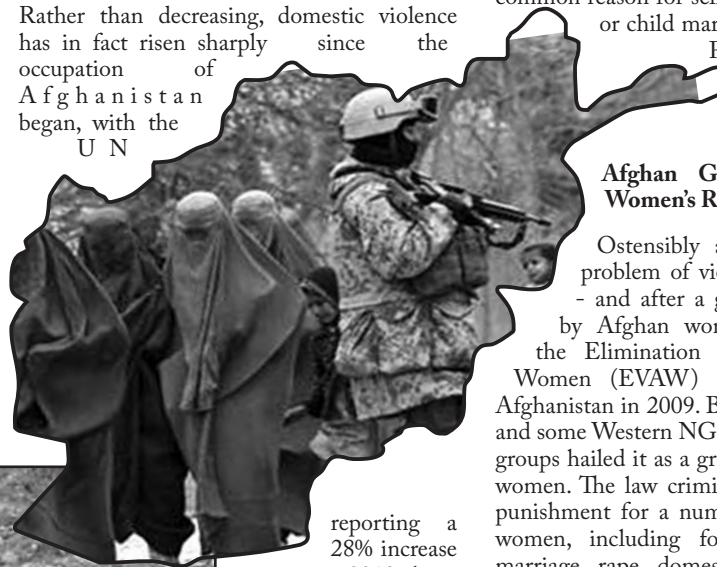
Those who can no longer suffer the abuse often take their own lives. The Afghan health ministry reported 4,136 cases of self-immolation in 2014 alone. Two thousand three hundred of these were women. While poverty, insecurity, and unemployment have caused a sharp rise in suicides among men as well, "Gender-based violence is among the main causes for women's suicides and self-immolation. According to research, the most common reason for self-immolation is forced

or child marriage," UN Population Fund representative for Afghanistan Dr. Annette Robertson notes.

### Afghan Government Revokes Women's Rights

Ostensibly aiming to tackle the problem of violence against women - and after a great deal of lobbying by Afghan women's organizations - the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) law was enacted in Afghanistan in 2009. Both US/NATO forces and some Western NGOs and women's rights groups hailed it as a great success for Afghan women. The law criminalizes and proscribes punishment for a number of crimes against women, including forced marriage, child marriage, rape, domestic violence, and the exchange of women to settle debts. While in principle this law is important, in reality the Afghan government has done little to enforce it. As well, this law was decreed by Hamid Karzai during a parliamentary recess, and, according to Afghan law, still needs to be passed through parliament. When it finally went to parliament in May 2013, it failed to pass in its current form. To date, it has not been passed through parliament, and as a result many justice officials do not apply it

*continued on page 38*



NATO forces in Afghanistan.

reporting a 28% increase in 2013 alone. While some of this may be attributable to an increase in reporting, there are undoubtedly other factors which have caused domestic violence to continually rise. A report by Global Rights Watch found that women whose husbands had no income were more likely to experience violence.

# Venezuela's National Assembly: The Constitutional and Political Stakes

*By Francisco Dominguez\**

A powerful coalition of domestic forces in cahoots with Washington has unleashed an economic war against Venezuela's progressive government since 2012, which, intensified with the premature departure of the late Hugo Chavez in March 2013, and has, as in Allende's Chile, taken its toll on the electoral support for the government thus dealing a severe blow to Chavismo at the election to the National Assembly on 6th December 2015. The opposition won a two-thirds majority: 112 out of 167 MPs. (Due to allegations of vote-buying, the election of three opposition MPs from the state of Amazonas has been contested; the Supreme Court has upheld it and, pending investigation, suspended their swearing in as MPs, thus denying the Right a two-thirds majority; nevertheless this has marginal political and constitutional significance, thus this entire article is written as though Venezuela's Right does enjoy a two-thirds majority.)

Ever since there have been a number of rushed and misleading media reports wrongly suggesting that this two-thirds conservative majority can proceed to dismantle and bulldoze all the structures of the Bolivarian state, including the very government led by the elected President Nicolas Maduro. One publication nonchalantly asserted that a "supermajority" would allow the opposition to begin the process of appointing and dismissing Supreme Court judges and convene a convention to rewrite the constitution." ("The coming confrontation", The Economist, Jan 16th 2016.) These assertions may be true but only under very specific constitutional conditions which we seek to explain here, for as long as the 1999 Bolivarian Constitution remains Venezuela's key instrument that informs the legal and constitutional parameters within which any structural change must take place.

## The recall referendum

The constitutional provision that may allow the Right to force the resignation of President Maduro is the recall referendum (Art.72). They already resorted to a recall referendum against Hugo Chavez in August 2004 the then President who won with 59%. The constitution stipulates that it can be forced only once during the term and when half the mandate of the elected official - the President of the Republic in this case - has elapsed. Anybody can force a recall referendum against the President of the Republic provided 20% of the registered voters (which at present is about 4 million)



support it.

The elected official's mandate will be deemed to be revoked "when a number of voters equal to or greater than the number of those who elected the official vote in favour of revocation, provided that a number of voters equal to or greater than 25% of the total number of registered voters have voted in the revocation election, [...] and immediate action shall be taken to fill the permanent vacancy in accordance with the provided for in this Constitution and by law." (Art.72) . (The Constitution of Venezuela is the only one in the world with the constitutional right to recall any elected official once half their mandate has elapsed; it applies to Mayors, MPs, Governors, and the President of the Republic.) Half of

President Maduro's mandate will elapse in April 2016, and thus a recall referendum, if it takes place, will be between April and June 2016.

Were the opposition to collect enough signatures a recall referendum can be successful only if the number of votes against President Maduro is identical to or higher than the number of votes he obtained when elected President in April 2013, that is, 7,587,579 votes. At the 6th December 2015 elections to the National Assembly the Right got 7,707,322 votes, which represents a small increase from their results at the April 2013 presidential election when their candidate, Henrique Capriles, got 7,363,980 votes, that is 343,342 more votes, barely an increase of 4.22%.

At the 6th December 2015 election, the government got 5,622,844 votes. This, when compared to the 2013 presidential election, shows that about 2 million Chavista voters, disgusted with the economic situation, punished the government by abstaining. The 6th December election results for the opposition can be accounted to a large extent by their political capitalization on the terrible economic situation Venezuelans have been facing since the unleashing of the economic war. The ousting of the Maduro government was not on their electoral manifesto, thus they may find it difficult to turn the totality of the 6th Dec. 7,707,322 voters into votes to recall President Maduro in a referendum.

Thus, a recall referendum may or may not be forced this year but if held, it is not a foregone conclusion that the opposition will win it. But if the opposition wins it, this will force presidential elections, which, if the opposition won them as well, the Right will launch a full-on assault on all the social gains made since Hugo Chavez was elected in 1998.

## The current constitutional and legal framework

In the event of a recall referendum not



taking place (or being lost by the Right), the opposition majority in the National Assembly has the constitutional right to undertake many legal initiatives, such as the following (Art.187):

- Issue a vote of no confidence against the Vice President and cabinet Ministers
- Investigate and question public officials
- Have a deciding role in the national budget and debt debates
- Approve an amnesty law
- Select the members of the Supreme Court of Justice
- Approve laws on health, justice and basic goods
- To authorise the appointment of ambassadors
- Convene national referendums on matters of special importance and amendments to the Constitution (Arts.342 and 343)
- Attribute to states or municipalities certain issues that currently fall under national competence
- Authorize (or not) the President to leave the country (for 5 days)
- Elect the President of the National Assembly, and its two Vice Presidents
- Indict Deputies of the National Assembly

(For all of the above, they require a simple majority of more than 50 % of the National Assembly - 84 members)

Additionally, they can:

- Decide that a vote of no confidence in the Vice President or cabinet Ministers should lead to their dismissal, and subsequently dismiss them
- Authorize presidential decrees allowing expanded executive authority (known as "enabling laws")
- Appoint members of the National Electoral Council
- Remove members of the National Electoral Council, provided it is backed by a ruling by the Supreme Court

(For the above they need a qualified majority of 3/5 of the National Assembly - 101 members).

Additionally, they could:

- Remove Supreme Court justices in cases of gross misconduct
- Subject any bills under discussion in the National Assembly to approval by referendum
- Convene a National Constituent Assembly
- Submit international treaties, conventions or agreements to referendums
- Pass and modify any draft organic law (laws which determine the fundamental political principles of a government)

such dismantling can occur.

### Checks and balances

To be constitutional and legal, each one of the possible initiatives listed above that a right wing National Assembly majority can take, must be consistent with the spirit and the letter of the Bolivarian Constitution of 1999, approved by national referendum with over 70% support. Any initiative can be forwarded by either the President of the Republic or by any MP to the Supreme Court for the latter to issue a ruling on its constitutionality. Thus, for example, the constitutionality of any legal initiative to privatise health (Art.84), education



**Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela holds a copy of the country's constitution at a news conference**

(For the above they require a two-thirds majority in the National Assembly - 112 members)

The list above has been widely publicised by sections of the world media, but its reporting has been skewed so as to convey that the end of the Bolivarian Revolution is in sight but especially that the demise of the Maduro government is imminent.

However, most reports have failed to provide the broader legal and constitutional framework within which legislative initiatives aimed at dismantling the Maduro-led government can take place and what constitutional pre-requisites they must fulfil if they are to succeed.

Below, we explain how the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela of 1999 provides the broader legal and constitutional framework within which

(Arts.102 and 103), or existing state enterprise or state institution, or any part thereof, can constitutionally be contested through asking the Supreme Court to issue a ruling on the matter. The same applies to amnesties and other political initiatives, such as votes of no confidence in the President, Vice-President, cabinet ministers and so forth.

Thus a great deal hinges on the Supreme Court. However the removal of Supreme Court judges can take place in cases of gross misconduct. This necessitates a legal process to be instigated through the Citizen Power with evidence to substantiate specific allegations in a process, which due to its complexity, may take months, but which may also be rejected by the Supreme Court itself. There are 32 judges in the Supreme Court, 13 of these were appointed in December 2015, and have a mandate for

*continued on page 35*

# REVOLUTION AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION IN VENEZUELA AFTER THE ELECTION:

*By Alison Bodine*

## Revolutionary Progression and Counter-Revolutionary Regression

On January 5, 2016 a new National Assembly took office in Venezuela. For the first time since the election of the late Comandante Hugo Chavez in 1999, the National Assembly is made up by a majority of counter-revolutionary right-wing politicians who are against the government of the Bolivarian Revolution and President Nicolas Maduro. However, although this new political landscape has brought with it new challenges for the Bolivarian Revolution, it does not mean that the Bolivarian Revolution, and with it the tremendous gains made by poor and working people in Venezuela is over, not by any definition of the word.

In the 17 years of the Bolivarian Revolution, the capitalist class in Venezuela and their imperialist allies have never once abandoned their campaign to overthrow the revolution. Their acts of economic sabotage, violence, coup d'etat and outright violations of the laws, constitution and sovereignty of Venezuela have only increased since the death of Comandante Chavez in 2013. These attacks intensified especially in the months leading up to the National Assembly elections this past December.

In this atmosphere it is no wonder that for many months now mass corporate media has been spelling out the end of the Bolivarian Revolution. Search the internet for news on Venezuela and the first article that comes up is "Venezuela is on the brink of a complete economic collapse," from the Washington Post. Turn on the radio and hear an interview on the CBC program the Current predicting that Venezuela is heading towards becoming a "failed state." These reports express loudly the goal of the U.S. government, their allies and the capitalist class in Venezuela – to force the collapse of government of President Nicolas Maduro and the Bolivarian Revolution and to reverse the important social gains of poor and working people.

In the face of these new attacks, the Bolivarian Revolution is not just sitting idle and watching. Led by President Nicolas Maduro, the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) and the Bolivarian people of Venezuela have set out upon

## Bolivarian Revolutionary Process in Perspective



their own process of reflection, planning, action and mobilization to defend and carry forward the Bolivarian Revolution. As Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said at the closing of the Third Congress of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), December 10, 2015 "We go to new battles in the spirit of Bolivar, and rise up to the challenges, setbacks and pains. And there is one word: We will go on a counter-offensive with a single force and a single spirit: triumph, triumph, triumph for independence and the people of Venezuela."

### The Bolivarian Revolution in Motion

An important part of defending the gains of the Bolivarian revolution has meant calling into action the people of Venezuela that have been carrying the revolution forward. Since the election, this has happened through meetings, debates and discussion happening across the country. Beyond meeting on the streets, the people of Venezuela, from farmers to mothers to electrical workers and teachers, have also continued to mobilize in the streets in support of the government of Nicolas Maduro and the measures that it is taking

to strengthen the gains of the revolution against right-wing attacks.

In order to increase the voice of the people in Venezuela, one of the first actions that the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela took after the elections was to create the National Communal Parliament. On December 16, Diosdado Cabello, President of the outgoing National Assembly, announced the creation of this new body in order to strengthen the influence that Venezuela's local communal governments can have on the legislative branch of government. What the exact role of the National Communal Parliament will be in the coming months in not yet known, but its creation marked another step towards building up the revolutionary counter-offensive against the right-wing in Venezuela.

### Economic Sabotage in Venezuela

Most of the major media headlines today are focused on the struggling economy in Venezuela. Charts explaining the decline in GDP and the high rates of inflation are coupled with pictures of empty grocery store shelves or long lines of people waiting



to purchase basic goods. Now the purpose of this article is not to explain the ups and downs of the Venezuelan economy, or to go through and refute the data on the Venezuelan economy as reported in the major commercial media. I will however, point out one important cause of the economic crisis in Venezuela that is missing from their reporting. Read the articles and they all place the blame for this economic crisis squarely on the shoulders of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and the leadership of the Bolivarian Revolution. Although they may discuss the failing price of oil, which fuels much of the Venezuelan economy (oil revenue accounts for 96% of Venezuela's earnings on exports), they never so much as touch the economic war and sabotage brought on by the U.S.-backed Venezuelan right-wing.

Take for example, the economic and social impact of the smuggling of basic goods out of Venezuela. In the year 2014 alone, the Venezuelan government seized 28,000 tons of food from smugglers attempting to take this vital necessity of Venezuela. If this food were just rice, that would be enough rice to feed 850,000 people for a year.

There is also massive hoarding in Venezuela, a practice wherein food and basic goods are left to spoil in warehouses rather than delivered to stores in Venezuela in order to create scarcity. This illegal and criminal practice is carried out by the richest people in Venezuela who continue to control the majority of the import, production and distribution of food products in the country.

In response to both the economic war and economic crisis, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and the Bolivarian

Revolution have been taking steps to overcome the current economic crisis and strengthen the Venezuelan economy since before the December elections. Now their struggle has intensified and the revolutionary forces in Venezuela are coming up an active opposition to these changes, not only from private companies in Venezuela, but by the new right-wing National Assembly.

The most comprehensive of these actions taken in order to defend the revolution has been the issuing of an Economic Emergency Decree by President Maduro on January 15, 2016. This 60-day decree allows for the President to take emergency economic measures, including "making resources from the 2015 financial year available, assigning extra funds to health, education, food, and housing; designing and implementing measures to prevent tax evasion; and giving the executive the 'authorization to address the causes of the current situation,'" as reported by teleSUR.

President Maduro has also formed the National Council for Productive Economy, which includes government Ministers, members from the public and private sectors of Venezuela, mayors, governors and grassroots organizers. The 45 members of this new council are tasked with providing additional solutions as well as implementing and enforcing the new economic plan laid out by President Maduro in the economic decree thus far in each of Venezuela's main economic sectors: hydrocarbons, petro-chemicals, agriculture, mining, telecommunications, construction, industry, military industry and tourism.

What is the U.S.-backed Right-Wing

National Assembly Proposing?  
"No, no and no, we are not going to permit it, you will have to overthrow me to pass a law of privatization!"  
– President Nicolas Maduro in his State of the Union Address to the National Assembly, January 15, 2016

In contrast to the dynamic response of the government, people and institutions of the Bolivarian Revolution, what has the counter-revolutionary National Assembly accomplished in its first month in office? To start, they removed photos of the late Comandante Chavez as well as Venezuela's national liberation hero Simon Bolivar from the walls of the National Assembly. This telling, but symbolic, action set-aside they have also demonstrated their counter-revolutionary agenda through concrete actions meant to reverse the gains that poor and working people have made in the Bolivarian Revolution.

As one example of this, on January 22, 2016, the right-wing controlled National Assembly voted against President Maduro's Emergency Economic Decree. This Economic Decree was declared constitutional by the Supreme Court, meaning not only that the Economic Decree was upheld despite the opposition of the National Assembly but also meaning that one of the first acts of the new National Assembly was in violation of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, a document ratified by a 72% vote in 1999.

Next, they exposed their agenda to try and turn Venezuela's people-centred social missions into profit making machines. On January 30 legislation aimed at privatizing Venezuela's social housing passed through its first reading in Parliament. As one marcher protesting this legislation explained to [Venezuelaanalysis.com](http://Venezuelaanalysis.com), "The majority opposition assembly is defending the rights of the banks, the construction and property lobbies that have been hit hard."

On top of these specific decisions the right-wing National Assembly has also declared their intention to force the removal of President Nicolas Maduro from office through the mechanism of a recall referendum. I will not go further into this is this article, as it is explained in more detail in the article by Francisco Dominguez also published in this issue of Fire This Time newspaper.

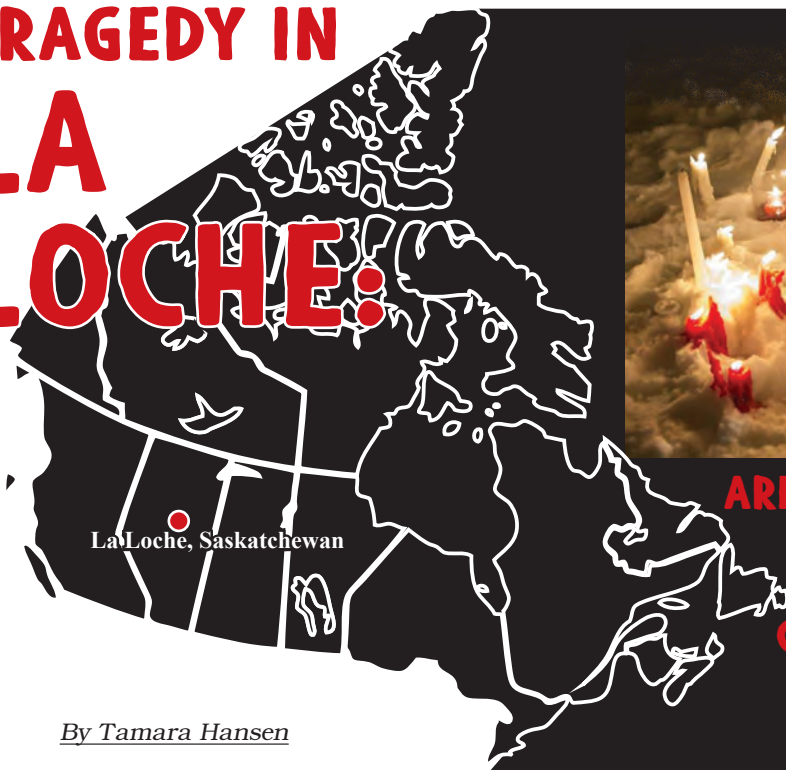
However, even with a majority counter-revolutionary National Assembly now in office, overturning the gains of the Bolivarian Revolution and forcing President Maduro



Venezuela solidarity protestors rallying to demand: Hands Off Venezuela!

*continued on page 27*

# TRAGEDY IN LA LOCHE!



**ARE WE LEARNING AND DO WE UNDERSTAND?  
ARE THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA AND MAINSTREAM MEDIA TRYING TO GROW A CONSCIENCE?**

*By Tamara Hansen*

On January 25 I sat down and read a National Post article titled, “He was not a monster. He was hurting”: La Loche shooting suspect was frequently bullied about his ears”. The article was about the 17 year old alleged high school shooter in La Loche, Saskatchewan. I found the article both deeply refreshing and disturbing. So much so that I had to share it on Facebook. I wrote: “A very interesting article on the high school shooting in La Loche. It seems community members are angry at the lack of health services rather than the shooter, which is a refreshing perspective rarely read in mainstream news. This event is a tragedy from every angle and I do not mean to diminish the horrible nature of this crime. However, there is no move to blame videos games or music or the way he dressed. Many seem to be taking this as a warning that this will happen again if health and social programs continue to get cut in communities across Canada, especially Indigenous communities. This is an important lesson I feel is often missed in these type of awful events.”

After a human tragedy the most common question people will ask is ‘why’? Interestingly, reading media coverage of the high school shooting in La Loche was immediately different. Somehow, from the media coverage, it seemed that many in the community had a deep sense of why this happened. But I started to get uneasy about the picture that was being painted by the articles I read when I watched an interview on CBC’s The National with Wab Kinew, an Indigenous rapper, author, professor and CBC personality. The interviewer Wendy Mesley’s first question seemed to be a common thread in the media relating to the tragedy in La Loche. She asked, “The thing that stuck with me in all of the news coverage was the sort of repeated message from people in La

Loche, some who are related to the victims, even related to the suspect. Almost a sense of understanding of where this could have come from. Is the misery, is the hardship in some of these northern communities that intense, that people can understand where that might have come from?” Kinew responds, “I think it might be more of a reflection on the generosity of spirit of the people in La Loche, than on the social causes. Because to me what happened in La Loche is such a tragedy that we’re never going to find a satisfactory answer and it’s because you can’t rationalize somebody taking so many lives and injuring so many others in this way. But to answer the truthful element in your question, about are the social conditions in the north and in Indigenous communities at a breaking point? I think, yeah, we’ve known for years in this country that Indigenous kids, in particular, face greater barriers and longer odds on the road to be successful. [...] The thing that I encourage everyone in this country to remember is that this is not a northern tragedy, this is not an Indigenous tragedy; this is a Canadian tragedy.”

Kinew’s insight is helpful because it is a warning to not take every journalists interpretation at face value. Could it be that rather than really understanding why one of their youth might commit these terrible crimes, community members were just responding in a different way and with a different mind-set than we are used to? Could it be that they are forgiving people and not interested in “an eye for an eye” justice? Could it be something else entirely?

## **What happened in La Loche?**

On January 22, 2016 a 17 year old arrived at the La Loche Community School. He shot and killed two people, Marie Janvier and

Adam Wood, and injured 7 others. It was later discovered that before coming to the school he had also killed two brothers Drayden and Dayne Fontaine, who were 13 and 17 years old. It was initially reported that the shooter is related to the two brothers, however due to Canada’s Youth Criminal Justice Act, no further information has been released.

La Loche is a community of about 2,600 residents in northern Saskatchewan. It is a predominantly aboriginal community. The community school has about 150 teachers and students.

It has been reported that the young suspect was bullied and harassed in school. It has also been reported that he is facing the following charges: four counts of first-degree murder, seven counts of attempted murder and unauthorized possession of a firearm. Some articles called the incident in La Loche ‘one of the most deadly’ school shootings in Canada’s history, another said it was ‘the most deadly’.

## **How La Loche different than other school shooting tragedies?**

First, this incident took place in the north of Canada in a mostly Indigenous community. It is easy for a lot of people in Canada, especially white Canadians, to write this off as a northern or Indigenous problem as Wab Kinew mentioned. Also, because the community is so isolated, it is not treated the same as if this happened in Vancouver, Montreal or Toronto – the logic seems to be that if there are copy-cat shootings they will probably be by another disenfranchised and alienated young Indigenous person, probably on some reserve somewhere. This might seem pessimistic, but if you read the comments





LASIA KRETZEL/CKOM NEWS

**L: Community members hold vigil for victims.**

**R: La Loche victims: teaching aide Marie Janvier, 21, teacher Adam Wood, 35, Drayden Fontaine, 13, and Dayne Fontaine, 17.**

sections in these online articles the sympathy for the community of La Loche or the sense of fear that this could happen soon anywhere else in Canada, simply isn't there.

Generally, after these all-too-common types of high school killings, we are used to reading article after article labelling the shooter as crazy or deranged, hearing calls for more gun restrictions and retribution for the families against the perpetrator. Not in La Loche. The families of the two people killed at the school, Marie Janvier, a teacher's aide, and Adam Wood, a teacher, have both spoken out.

Marie Janvier's obituary has many beautiful stories about this 21-year old woman who clearly touched many lives. But considering that Marie was violently killed, the end of the obituary is the most beautiful and revealing, "Marie, we know you would want us to focus on the positives and to be good to each other, this we will do in your memory. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to La Loche Community School - Dene Building." Here the family is asking for donations to be made to the very institution where their daughter was killed. Not for armed guards at the doors, or metal detectors – some of the ideas we've often read about after other high school shootings. This family wants students in the community to continue their education and believes that being "good to each other" is what would have been most important to their daughter.

A statement from the family of Adam Wood carried a similar message, explaining, "Rather than looking for someone to blame, or coming up with outsider opinions of reasons why this occurred, we must stop and listen to the voices of La Loche. [...] The leaders and members of the community know what types of support and changes are needed. Our responsibility as a nation is to listen and respond to create lasting systemic change."

The family of the two brothers who were killed have been quoted. According to the Toronto Star, "friends of Alicia Fontaine, the mother of the two brothers who were shot and killed

in their home, say she has been telling people that she can never hate the alleged suspect. "No words will bring my babies back,"

According to the Globe & Mail, "the killings have hit hard in the close-knit town. At a Sunday service at Our Lady of the Visitation Roman Catholic Church, the slain boys' grandparents wanted the archbishop to ask the community to forgive the shooter and pray for him and the victims."

It is probably best not to try to draw big conclusions from these statements, as one of the mainstream media's problems with this case is the liberties they have taken to interpret the community's wishes and feelings. However, all of those responses again have a very different tone than what we are accustomed to and I feel it is a needed perspective in understanding the tragedy.

**Prime Minister Justin Trudeau responds**

Parliamentarians bowed their heads in a moment of silence for the victims of the La Loche shootings in the House of Commons on Monday January 29, 2016. That same day, Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was in La Loche and in a statement proclaimed that, "the federal government will be there, not just now [in the] difficult time, but in the weeks, months, and indeed years to come, as we look to grieve, to heal, and to move beyond, and thrive." These words are hard to criticize yet, because the Trudeau government has only been in power for 3 months, however the Liberal Party's track record since the foundation of Canada has been the same disaster for Aboriginal people as the Tories. Additionally, Trudeau did not make any concrete pledges to help the community or explain how his plans are different than the 200 years of failed and criminal government policy towards Indigenous people in Canada.

Prime Minister Trudeau continued, "The tragedy that this community went through should serve to highlight challenges that don't just exist here but across the country. So while

we grieve and support this community, we also think of communities like it across the country." I agree we need to also be thinking around communities across the country, but thought and talk are cheap. Where is the plan of action?

**The mainstream media responds**

The mainstream media, or bourgeois media, has also had a different approach to this story.

First, almost every article about the high school shooting mentions something about how this event is opening a bigger discussion in Canada. Things like, "[it] sparked a discussion about the need for more social services in northern communities," or "the killings have also renewed criticism of the lack of provincial mental-health services in the North." This is to let us know what media and government are looking for the roots of the tragedy – but are a lack of social services really the deepest root?

The mainstream media is using this story to report not only on La Loche, but problems on many reserves and rural Indigenous communities in Canada, writing about: hard drugs and gangs, astronomical suicide rates, local stories of untimely deaths, a lack of mental health services, addiction problems, a lack of activities for youth and adults, the impact of new technology, a detachment from traditional culture and language, overrepresentation of Indigenous people in Canada's prison system, the legacy of residential schools, some even talk about the harm of colonization and the outdated and harmful Indian Act (a law in Canada that established a guardian/ward relationship between the government of Canada and Indigenous people). Generally this seems like good journalism. Trying to reach to the depths of an issue, not just blame the shooter, or his community but to understand how the community got to be where it is.

The second difference in the media tone is that it is continually criticizing itself. Many

*continued on page 36*

## FEBRUARY BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month has been co-opted and hijacked by government institutions and the mainstream media. Every February they share images and words from a series of handpicked black leaders, stripped of any historical relevance or any spirit of revolutionary black struggle.

Fire This Time newspaper wants to counter the mainstream watered down account of the struggle for black liberation in the U.S. and internationally. In this issue we honor the revolutionary legacy of black liberation leaders that have fought for black rights and for the rights of all oppressed people and nations around the world.

We have chosen excerpts from the speeches of five black revolutionary leaders Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr, Thomas Sankara, Patrice Lumumba and Maurice Bishop, all five were forced to make the most valuable sacrifice for humanity - their lives.

*Arranged and edited  
by Azza Rojbi*



### SPEECH BY MALCOLM X

*Malcolm X (1925–1965) is a revolutionary black liberation leader in the United States. Below is an excerpt from Malcolm X speech *The Ballot or the Bullet* delivered on April 3, 1964, at Cory Methodist Church in Cleveland, Ohio.*

Whether you're educated or illiterate, whether you live on the boulevard or in the alley, you're going to catch hell just like I am. We're all in the same boat and we all are going to catch the same hell from the same man. He just happens to be a white man. All of us have suffered here, in this country, political oppression at the hands of the white man, economic exploitation at the hands of the white man, and social degradation at the hands of the white man.

Now in speaking like this, it doesn't mean that we're anti-white, but it does mean we're

anti-exploitation, we're anti-degradation, we're anti-oppression. And if the white man doesn't want us to be anti-him, let him stop oppressing and exploiting and degrading us. Whether we are Christians or Muslims or nationalists or agnostics or atheists, we must first learn to forget our differences. If we have differences, let us differ in the closet; when we come out in front, let us not have anything to argue about until we get finished arguing with the man. If the late President Kennedy could get together with Khrushchev and exchange some wheat, we certainly have more in common with each other than Kennedy and Khrushchev had with each other.

If we don't do something real soon, I think you'll have to agree that we're going to be forced either to use the ballot or the bullet. It's one or the other in 1964. It isn't that time is running out—time has run out!

1964 threatens to be the most explosive year America has ever witnessed. The most explosive year. Why? It's also a political year. It's the year when all of the white politicians will be back in the so-called Negro community jiving you and me for some votes. The year when all of the white political crooks will be right back in your and my community with their false promises, building up our hopes for a letdown, with

their trickery and their treachery, with their false promises which they don't intend to keep. As they nourish these dissatisfactions, it can only lead to one thing, an explosion; and now we have the type of black man on the scene in America today—I'm sorry, Brother Lomax—who just doesn't intend to turn the other cheek any longer. Don't let anybody tell you anything about the odds are against you. If they draft you, they send you to Korea and make you face 800 million Chinese. If you can be brave over there, you can be brave right here. These odds aren't as great as those odds. And if you fight here, you will at least know what you're fighting for.

...No, I'm not an American. I'm one of the 22 million black people who are the victims of Americanism. One of the 22 million black people who are the victims of democracy, nothing but disguised hypocrisy. So, I'm not standing here speaking to you as an American, or a patriot, or a flag-saluter, or a flag-waver—no, not I. I'm speaking as a victim of this American system. And I see America through the eyes of the victim. I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare.

... Let the world know how bloody his hands are. Let the world know the hypocrisy that's practiced over here. Let it be the ballot or the bullet. Let him know that it must be the ballot or the bullet.

When you take your case to Washington, D.C., you're taking it to the criminal who's responsible; it's like running from the wolf to the fox. They're all in cahoots together. They all work political chicanery and make you look like a chump before the eyes of the world. Here you are walking around in America, getting ready to be drafted and sent abroad, like a tin soldier, and when you get over there, people ask you what are you fighting for, and you have to stick your tongue in your cheek. No, take Uncle Sam to court, take him before the world.



[W]here the government fails to protect the Negro he is entitled to do it himself. He is within his rights. I have found the only white elements who do not want this advice given to undefensive Blacks are the racist liberals. They use the press to project us in the image of violence.

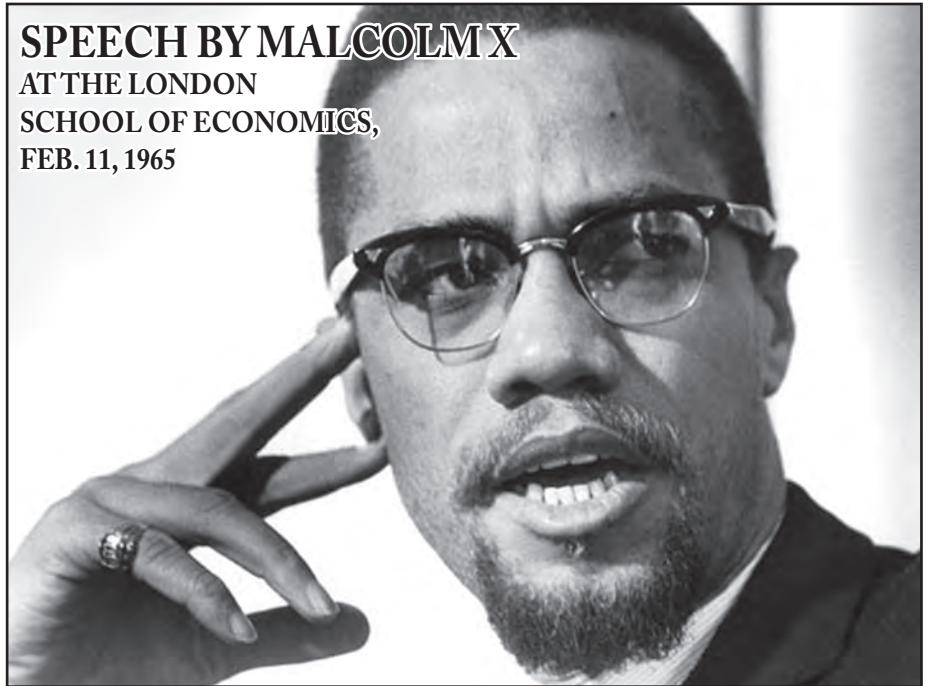
There is an element of whites who are nothing but cold, animalistic racists.<sup>1</sup> That element is the one that controls or has strong influence in the power structure. It uses the press skillfully to feed statistics to the public to make it appear that the rate of crime in the Black community, or community of nonwhite people, is at such a high level. It gives the impression or the image that everyone in that community is criminal.

And as soon as the public accepts the fact that the dark-skinned community consists largely of criminals or people who are dirty, then it makes it possible for the power structure to set up a police-state system. Which will make it permissible in the minds of even the well-meaning white public for them to come in and use all kinds of police methods to brutally suppress the struggle on the part of these people against segregation, discrimination, and other acts that are unleashed against them that are absolutely unjust.

They use the press to set up this police state, and they use the press to make the white public accept whatever they do to the dark-skinned public... They have all kinds of negative characteristics that they project to make the white public draw back, or to make the white public be apathetic when police-state-like methods are used in these areas to suppress the people's honest and just struggle against discrimination and other forms of segregation.

A good example of how they do it in New York: Last summer, when the Blacks were rioting—the riots, actually they weren't riots in the first place; they were reactions against police brutality.<sup>2</sup> And when the Afro-Americans reacted against the brutal measures that were executed against them by the police, the press all over the world projected them as rioters. When the store windows

**SPEECH BY MALCOLM X  
AT THE LONDON  
SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS,  
FEB. 11, 1965**



were broken in the Black community, immediately it was made to appear that this was being done not by people who were reacting over civil rights violations, but they gave the impression that these were hoodlums, vagrants, criminals...

But this is wrong. In America the Black community in which we live is not owned by us. The landlord is white. The merchant is white. In fact, the entire economy of the Black community in the States is controlled by someone who doesn't even live there. The property that we live in is owned by someone else. The store that we trade with is operated by someone else. And these are the people who suck the economic blood of our community.

And being in a position to suck the economic blood of our community, they control the radio programs that cater to us, they control the newspapers, the advertising, that cater to us. They control our minds. They end up controlling our civic organizations. They end up controlling us economically, politically, socially, mentally, and every other kind of way. They suck our blood like vultures.

And when you see the Blacks react, since

the people who do this aren't there, they react against their property. The property is the only thing that's there. And they destroy it. And you get the impression over here that because they are destroying the property where they live, that they are destroying their own property. No. They can't get to the man, so they get at what he owns. [Laughter] This doesn't say it's intelligent. But whoever heard of a sociological explosion that was done intelligently and politely? And this is what you're trying to make the Black man do. You're trying to drive him into a ghetto and make him the victim of every kind of unjust condition imaginable. Then when he explodes, you want him to explode politely! [Laughter] You want him to explode according to somebody's ground rules. Why, you're dealing with the wrong man, and you're dealing with him at the wrong time in the wrong way...

And just as you see the oppressed people all over the world today getting together, the Black people in the West are also seeing that they are oppressed. Instead of just calling themselves an oppressed minority in the States, they are part of the oppressed masses of people all over the world today who are crying out for action against the common oppressor.

SPEECH BY MARTIN LUTHER KING



*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) was a leader in the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. Below is an excerpt from Martin Luther King speech "Beyond Vietnam" delivered on April 4, 1967 at the Riverside Church in New York City. In this important speech Martin Luther King connects the war the imperialist ruling class was conducting in Vietnam to the war against Afro-American and other oppressed people in the United States, like the restriction of democratic rights, poverty, and racism.*

Since I am a preacher by trade, I suppose it is not surprising that I have seven major reasons for bringing Vietnam into the field of my moral vision. There is at the outset a very obvious and almost facile connection between the war in Vietnam and the struggle I, and others, have been waging in America. A few years ago there was a shining moment in that struggle. It seemed as if there was a real promise of hope for the poor -- both black and white -- through the poverty program. There were experiments, hopes, new beginnings. Then came the buildup in Vietnam and I watched the program broken and eviscerated as if it were some

idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war, and I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic destructive suction tube. So I

was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.

Perhaps the more tragic recognition of reality took place when it became clear to me that the war was doing far more than devastating the hopes of the poor at home. It was sending their sons and their brothers and their husbands to fight and to die in extraordinarily high proportions relative to the rest of the population. We were taking the black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them eight thousand miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem. So we have been repeatedly faced with the cruel irony of watching Negro and white boys on TV screens as they kill and die together for a nation that has been unable to seat them together in the same schools. So we watch them in brutal solidarity burning the huts of a poor village, but we realize that they would never live on the same block in Detroit. I could not be silent in the face of such cruel manipulation of the poor.

My third reason moves to an even deeper level of awareness, for it grows out of my

experience in the ghettos of the North over the last three years -- especially the last three summers. As I have walked among the desperate, rejected and angry young men I have told them that Molotov cocktails and rifles would not solve their problems. I have tried to offer them my deepest compassion while maintaining my conviction that social change comes most meaningfully through nonviolent action. But they asked -- and rightly so -- what about Vietnam? They asked if our own nation wasn't using massive doses of violence to solve its problems, to bring about the changes it wanted. Their questions hit home, and I knew that I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today -- my own government. For the sake of those boys, for the sake of this government, for the sake of hundreds of thousands trembling under our violence, I cannot be silent. For those who ask the question, "Aren't you a civil rights leader?" and thereby mean to exclude me from the movement for peace, I have this further answer. In 1957 when a group of us formed the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, we chose as our motto: "To save the soul of America." We were convinced that we could not limit our vision to certain rights for black people, but instead affirmed the conviction that America would never be free or saved from itself unless the descendants of its slaves were loosed completely from the shackles they still wear. Now, it should be incandescently clear that no one who has any concern for the integrity and life of America today can ignore the present war. If America's soul becomes totally poisoned, part of the autopsy must read Vietnam. It can never be saved so long as it destroys the deepest hopes of men the world over. So it is that those of us who are yet determined that America will be are led down the path of protest and dissent, working for the health of our land.





## SPEECH BY PATRICE LUMUMBA

*Patrice Lumumba (1925–1961) was a Congolese independence leader, African anti-colonial revolutionary and the first democratically elected leader of the Congo. He dedicated his life to fighting colonialism, exploitation and injustices. Lumumba played a critical role in Congo's fight for independence from Belgium. Below is Patrice Lumumba's letter to his wife from Thysville Prison.*

My dear wife,

I am writing these words to you, not knowing whether they will ever reach you, or whether I shall be alive when you read them.

Throughout my struggle for the independence of our country I have never doubted the victory of our sacred cause, to which I and my comrades have dedicated all our lives.

But the only thing which we wanted for our country is the right to a worthy life, to dignity without pretence, to independence without restrictions.

This was never the desire of the Belgian colonialists and their Western allies, who received, direct or indirect, open or concealed, support from some highly placed officials of the United Nations, the body upon which we placed all our hope when we appealed to it for help.

They seduced some of our compatriots, bought others and did everything to distort the truth and smear our independence.

What I can say is this—alive or dead, free or in jail—it is not a question of me personally.

The main thing is the Congo, our unhappy people, whose independence is being trampled upon.

That is why they have shut us away in prison and why they keep us far away from the people. But my faith remains indestructible.

I know and feel deep in my heart that sooner or later my people will rid themselves of their internal and external enemies, that they will rise up as one in

order to say 'No' to colonialism, to brazen, dying colonialism, in order to win their dignity in a clean land.

We are not alone. Africa, Asia, the free peoples and the peoples fighting for their freedom in all corners of the world will always be side by side with the millions of Congolese who will not give up the struggle while there is even one colonialist or colonialist mercenary in our country.

To my sons, whom I am leaving and whom, perhaps, I shall not see again, I want to say that the future of the Congo is splendid and that I expect from them, as from every Congolese, the fulfilment of the sacred task of restoring our independence and our sovereignty.

Without dignity there is no freedom, without justice there is no dignity and without independence there are no free men.

Cruelty, insults and torture can never force me to ask for mercy, because I prefer to die with head high, with indestructible faith and profound belief in the destiny of our country than to live in humility and renounce the principles which are sacred to me.

The day will come when history will speak. But it will not be the history which will be taught in Brussels, Paris, Washington or the United Nations.

It will be the history which will be taught in the countries which have won freedom from colonialism and its puppets.

Africa will write its own history and in both north and south it will be a history of glory and dignity.

Do not weep for me. I know that my tormented country will be able to defend its freedom and its independence.

Long live the Congo!  
Long live Africa!

Thysville prison



## QUOTES BY MAURICE BISHOP

*Maurice Bishop was the central leader of the New Jewel Movement (NJM) and the anti-imperialist, revolutionary Prime Minister of Grenada, a small island of 100,000 people in the Caribbean. He was in office between March 1979 and October 1983.*

*Below is series of important quotes from Maurice Bishop taken from the volume of his speeches, "In Nobody's Backyard".*

"Revolutionaries do not have the right to be cowards. We have to stand up to fight for our country because, the country is ours. It does not belong to anybody else"  
 "When will imperialism learn? Yes, they can kill our bodies but they can never kill the spirit of a people fighting for their liberation, they can never kill the spirit of a people fighting for their country and

fighting to push their country forward."

"As we have said so often, imperialism never rests and so we must continue to be on our guard, continue to be vigilant, continue to expand and strengthen our revolutionary People's Militia. We must keep our eyes open for new tricks, for new variations of the enemy's plan, for new devious twists and turns on the propaganda, and on the economic and the military fronts."

"And as the international capitalist crisis intensifies, it generates increased imperialist aggression, spearheaded by the most reactionary circles of imperialism's military-industrial complexes who feel that the solution to this crisis in the build-up of arms, the provocation of wars and the creation of tension spots around the world, the Caribbean region being no exception."

"Destabilisation is the name given to the most recently developed (or newest) method of controlling and exploiting the lives and resources of a country and its people by a bigger and more powerful country through bullying, intimidation and violence. In the old days, such countries – the colonialist and imperialist powers – sent in gunboats or marines to directly take over the country by sheer force. Later on mercenaries were often used in place of soldiers, navy and marines. Today, more and more the new weapon and the new menace is destabilization. This method was used against a number of Caribbean and Third World countries in the 1960s, and also against Jamaica and Guyana in the 1970s. Now, as we predicted, it has come to Grenada. Destabilisation takes many forms – there is propaganda destabilization,

when the foreign media, and sometimes our own Caribbean press, prints lies and distortions against us; there is economic destabilization, when our trade and our industries are sabotaged and disrupted; and there is violent destabilization, criminal acts of death and destruction...

As we show the world – clearly and unflinchingly – that we intend to remain free and independent; that we intend to consolidate and strengthen the principles and goals of our revolution; as we show this to the world, there will be attacks on us."

"The right of freedom of expression can really only be relevant if people are not too hungry, or too tired to be able to express themselves. It can only be relevant if appropriate grassroots mechanisms rooted in the people exist, through which the people can effectively participate, can make decisions, can receive reports from the leaders and eventually be trained for ruling and controlling that particular society. This is what democracy is all about."

"We don't just speak about their kind of limited human rights but we talk about the human rights that the majority has never been able to enjoy, the human rights that they believe only the minority is entitled to: the human rights to a job, to decent housing, to a good meal when the day comes, to be able to form and to join a trade union, to be able to ensure that you can live a life of dignity and decency. All of these human rights have been the human rights for a small minority over the years in the Caribbean and the time has come for the majority of the people to begin to receive those human rights for the first time."

"It took several hundred years for feudalism to be finally wiped out and capitalism to emerge as the new dominant mode of production and it will take several hundred years for capitalism to be finally wiped out before socialism becomes the new dominant mode."



## SPEECH BY THOMAS SANKARA



*Thomas Sankara (1949–1987) was an anti-imperialist and revolutionary leader who led a Revolution in Burkina Faso in the 1980s. His ideas and leadership example continue to inspire millions of people in Africa and all around the world to seek an end to the misery and injustice created by capitalism and imperialism. The following excerpt is from “The revolution cannot triumph without the emancipation of women” speech, which he held to a rally of several thousand women in Ouagadougou, the capital city of Burkina Faso, commemorating International Women’s Day on March 8, 1987.*

The weight of the centuries-old traditions of our society has relegated women to the rank of beasts of burden. Women suffer doubly from all the scourges of neocolonial society. First, they experience the same suffering as men. Second, they are subjected to additional suffering by men.

Our revolution is in the interests of all the oppressed and all those who are exploited in today’s society. It is therefore in the

interests of women, since the basis of their domination by men lies in the way society’s system of political and economic life is organized. By changing the social order that oppresses women, the revolution creates the conditions for their genuine emancipation.

The women and men of our society are all victims of imperialist oppression and domination. That is why they wage the same struggle. The revolution and women’s liberation go together. We do not talk of women’s emancipation as an act of charity or because of a surge of human compassion. It is a basic necessity for the triumph of the revolution. Women hold up the other half of the sky.

Forging a new mentality on the part of Voltaic women that allows them to take responsibility for the country’s destiny alongside men is one of the primary tasks of the revolution. At the same time, it is necessary to transform men’s attitudes toward women.

Up until now, women have been excluded from the realm of decision making. The revolution, by entrusting responsibilities to women, is creating the conditions for turning loose their fighting initiative. As part of its revolutionary policy, the CNR [National Council of the Revolution] will work to mobilize, organize, and unite all the active forces of the nation, and women will not lag behind. Women will be an integral part of all the battles we will have to wage against the various shackles of neocolonial society and for the construction of a new society. They will take part in all levels of the organization of the life of the nation as a whole, from conceiving projects to making decisions and implementing them.

The final goal of this great undertaking is to build a free and prosperous society in which women will be equal to men in all domains.

However, we need a correct understanding of the question of women’s emancipation. It does not signify a mechanical equality between men and women. It does not mean acquiring habits similar to those of men, such as drinking, smoking, and wearing trousers. Nor will acquiring diplomas make women equal to men or more emancipated. A diploma is not a passport to emancipation.

The genuine emancipation of women is that which entrusts responsibilities to them and involves them in productive activity and in the different struggles the people face. Women’s genuine emancipation is one that exacts men’s respect and consideration. Emancipation, like freedom, is not granted but conquered.

It is for women themselves to put forward their demands and mobilize to win them. For that, the democratic and popular revolution will create the necessary conditions to allow Voltaic women to realize themselves fully and completely.

After all, would it be possible to eliminate the system of exploitation while maintaining the exploitation of women, who make up more than half our society?



By Monica Moorehead\*

*“According to [Karl] Marx, the state [comprised of armed bodies of men and women such as police; prisons; courts, etc.] is an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another; it is the creation of ‘order,’ which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between classes. ... The state is, therefore, by no means a power forced on society from without. ...*

*“Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it has split into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, these classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, it became necessary to have a power, seemingly standing above society, that would alleviate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of ‘order’; and this power, arisen out of society but placing itself above it, and alienating itself more and more from it, is the state.”*

These quotes come from the pamphlet “The State and Revolution: Class Society and the State,” published almost a century ago by Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the first successful socialist revolution in the former Soviet Union. Lenin based much of his writings on the groundbreaking book, “The Origin of the Family, Private Property and State” by Frederick Engels, who collaborated with Karl Marx in writing “The Communist Manifesto.”

When it comes to the current epidemic of racist police violence and state terror sweeping the U.S., Lenin’s writing on the state is just as applicable today as when it was written on the eve of the Russian Revolution nearly 100 years ago.

Police brutality isn’t a new phenomenon inside the U.S. or in any society divided into the haves nots and the haves, the oppressed and the oppressor, workers and bosses. This type of repression comes in many forms, including racial profiling, frame-ups, beatings, torture, mass incarceration and more. But in the current political climate, it has been the killings by the police of young Black and Brown people that have taken center stage — and rightfully so.

**Resisting police murders**

The Black Lives Matter movement, launched in 2012 via social media by Black women and trans women in response to the murder of 17-year-old Trayvon Martin by wannabe cop vigilante George Zimmerman in Sanford, Fla., continues to lead the heroic resistance

against

that has once again made national news. Rice was carrying a toy gun when two white officers shot him mere seconds after they drove up beside him. Within the next four minutes not only didn’t the police provide any medical aid to Rice, who lay on the ground bleeding to death, but they physically attacked Rice’s sister who tried to comfort him, followed by Rice’s older brother and mother. The excuse given by the cops for killing this child? They “feared for their lives.”

Over a year later on Dec. 28, a secretive Cuyahoga County grand jury issued no criminal indictments against the cops, one of whom had a longstanding reputation for “a dangerous loss of composure” and being “emotionally unfit” before joining the Cleveland Police Department.

**Racism and class**

The New York Times published an editorial on Dec. 29, “Cleveland’s Terrible Stain,” stating, “Tamir Rice of Cleveland would be alive today had he been a white 12-year-old playing with a toy gun in just about any middle-class neighborhood in the country on the afternoon of Nov. 22, 2014.

“But Tamir, who was shot to death by a white police officer that day, had the misfortune of being black in a poor area of Cleveland, where the police have historically behaved as an occupying force that shoots first and asks questions later. To grow up black and male in such a place is to live a highly circumscribed life, hemmed in by forces that deny your humanity and conspire to kill you.”

The police not only behave as an occupying force in the Black community, but ARE an armed occupying force in many U.S. urban areas, very similar to Israeli occupying forces in Gaza and the West Bank.

The police killings of Black



police violence with militant shutdowns of malls, traffic and even airports, like in Minneapolis on Dec. 23.

This movement made a global impact with the rebellion in Ferguson, Mo., that erupted in August 2014 with the fatal police shooting of 18-year-old Michael Brown. The names of the victims whose lives have been tragically cut short by police violence are mainly unknown. However, some victims, such as Eric Garner, John Crawford III, Laquan McDonald, Walter Scott, Freddie Gray and Sandra Bland, have become household names because of cell phone video recordings revealing what led to their deaths.

It is the case of Tamir Rice, however, the 12-year-old African-American youth, fatally shot in a Cleveland park on Nov. 22, 2014,



NEW YORK



people reinforce institutionalized racism, rooted in the legacy of slavery and Jim Crow. Tamir Rice is the modern day Emmett Till, the 14-year-old African American lynched 60 years ago in Mississippi.

Some Harvard medical scientists are urging that the police killings of Black people be officially deemed a public epidemic — and for good reason.

### Police war against Black America

According to the mappingpoliceviolence.com website, at least 336 Black people were killed by the police in 2015 out of 1,152 killed overall. Black people are three times more likely to be killed by the police than whites per 1 million people. Thirty-three

the courts, prisons and physical violence upon oppressed people, who are super-exploited by poverty and low wages; substandard housing, education and medical care; gentrification; and mass incarceration and joblessness disproportionate to the general population.

When someone like Tamir Rice is heinously gunned down by police, it is not just the immediate family that is traumatized, but it is the entire community. The clear message with police killings is that any Black person is expendable, especially in the midst of a permanent capitalist economic crisis.

### From mass struggle to revolution

Under capitalism, the predominant form of class rule, the police as a force cannot be

The movement must agitate for disarming the police, which is part and parcel of the overall demand for community control of the police. It shows a level of understanding that the real aim of the police is not to protect and serve, but to terrorize and oppress the workers and oppressed as a class.

And just as the police cannot be reformed, neither can the capitalist system, which plunders the earth for resources, exploits workers' labor and destroys people's lives to make profits. The interests of the workers and bosses are on opposite ends of the spectrum, and therefore there can be no compromise or mediation, which is why the state is needed.

As long as capitalism exists, the police will exist, along with other forms of repression.



percent of unarmed Black people were killed compared to 18 percent of unarmed whites.

The website reveals that in 14 U.S. cities only Black people were killed by police, including Baltimore and St. Louis. These statistics are alarming, considering the fact that Black people comprise no more than 13 percent of the general U.S. population.

Also revealed is that in cases involving more than 1,000 killings in 2015, 98 percent of the officers were not charged with a crime.

A large percentage of those killed by the police suffer from mental illnesses. Last July alone, 120 people with some form of disability were killed by cops, including five Black women, most notably Sandra Bland in Texas, as well as two Indigenous women, all in police custody.

This harkens back to Lenin on the role of the state, which is not just about individual cops killing Black people or any person of color with impunity, but about the general role of the state to exert social order. This includes

reformed because the super-rich class needs this repressive force to protect its profits out of fear of rebellion by the masses against deteriorating conditions.

All the laws and the courts, which include the judges, prosecutors, grand juries and more, exist to protect the police no matter their criminal behavior. The statistics mentioned above confirm this reality. The police are not workers because they are alienated from the rest of society — the majority of whom are workers and oppressed who are forced to sell their labor power in order to survive.

While it is important for the progressive sectors to continue to show the utmost solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement on a daily basis, especially when a police atrocity occurs, it is also the duty of the movement to help generalize the struggle. It is an important development that many young whites, attracted to the Occupy Movement which was repressed several years ago by the police, have joined the ranks of the Black Lives Matter struggle.

This situation cries out for a socialist revolution that will get rid of the capitalist system root and branch. There is no other way out of this archaic morass in the long run.

Socialism, as an economic system, will allow the workers of all nationalities and skills to produce for the needs of the people, not to make profits for greedy bosses. Under socialism, police will not exist to oppress the masses because the masses will be running society, not the tiny minority of billionaires and millionaires. In socialist Cuba, the police exist to protect the gains of the revolution, not to repress the people.

Under socialism, Black children like Tamir Rice and all children will have their human needs met, from the cradle to the grave, free from violence and want.

\*Monica Moorehead is the 2016 Workers World Party presidential candidate in the US.

Article reprinted from Workers World  
[www.Workers.org](http://www.Workers.org)

# Mining Corporations & Abuse of Rights & Environment

## From BC: mining operations & export of an extractive worldview

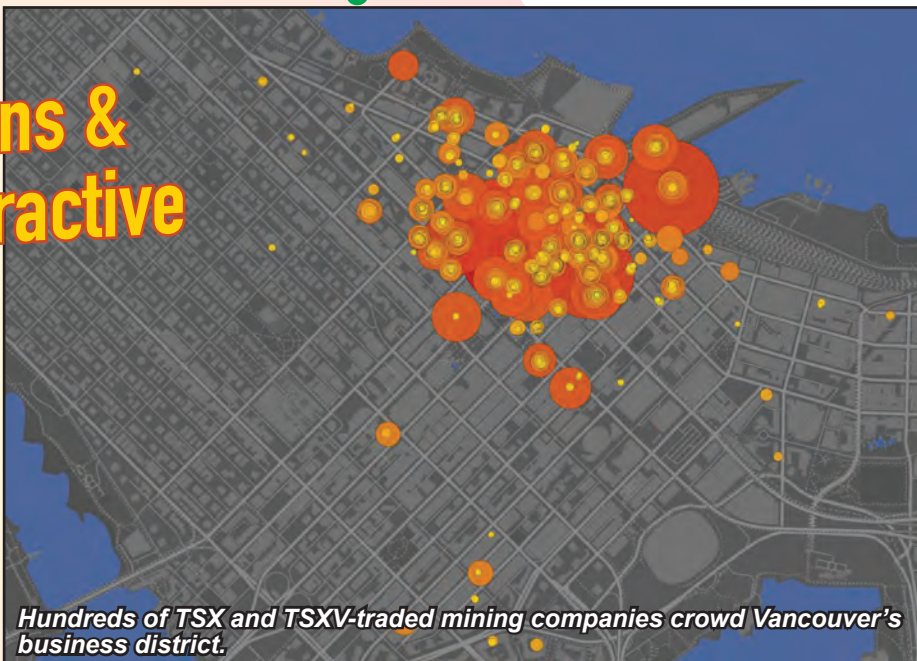
By Sam Stime\*

This primer is the first in a series of articles on the international mining sector, its many links to Vancouver, and how our struggles for social justice in the metropolis are inseparably linked to the indigenous land defenders fighting dispossession, assimilation, and the mega-mines that level mountains and pollute the home waters. Upcoming articles will address legislation that privileges the mining industry, diplomatic support for projects lacking consent by local peoples, and the people's movements that are demanding transformation over marginal change.

### Vancouver as headquarters of the world's mining industry

The vast majority of the world's mining and mineral exploration companies are headquartered in Canada. Eighty percent of the world's mineral exploration companies call Vancouver home, and of the roughly 1400 mining-sector companies raising capital on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) and Venture Exchange (TSXV), over half of them register their corporate headquarters in Vancouver.

Some of these companies operate in Canada. Diamonds near Yellowknife, coal in the Kootenays, oil in Fort McMurray,



**Hundreds of TSX and TSXV-traded mining companies crowd Vancouver's business district.**

and gold in the Yukon, BC, Nunavut, and Quebec. With BC's free entry system of claiming the subsoil, addressed in more detail below, vast swaths of the province are nominally under exploration.

And taking advantage of unrestricted diplomatic support in their adventures abroad, most Vancouver-based mining companies operate in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. In his book *Imperial Canada Inc.* (2012, Talonbooks), Alain Deneault explains that most of the world's extractive companies are headquartered in Canada because (1) loosely regulated stock exchanges have encouraged speculation, (2) generous tax incentives are in place for mining/exploration companies, (3) the reputation of mining companies takes priority over the free speech of critics, journalists, and academics, (4) domestically, federal and provincial authorities act as public relations and enablers of mining and oil & gas projects, rather than as regulators in the public interest (5) internationally, Canadian diplomats are marshalled on behalf of the private sector, enacting "economic diplomacy" with no regard for the behavior of the companies, and (6) there is no mechanism for victims of companies' crimes abroad to seek justice in Canadian courts.



**The agricultural community of San Juan Bosco says no to a Canadian mine.**

### Transnational mining

After the years of violence, dispossession, and genocide in Guatemala, Canadian transnationals ignore indigenous peoples' own claims to the land and visions of development. The miners successfully maneuver lucrative gold, silver, and nickel projects around mechanisms of political accountability and ignore local courts.

Currently, Canadian and Guatemalan investigators are evaluating Vancouver-based Tahoe Resources' responsibility in ordering mining security to fire on protesting local farmers outside the gates of the Escobal Mine in San Rafael las Flores. The BC Supreme Court has refused to hear the case, though, denying justice to the seven men shot ([tahoecontrial.net](http://tahoecontrial.net)).

Elsewhere in Guatemala, Goldcorp's highly contested Marlin Mine are poisoning the water and fracturing adobe homes, while grassroots groups like the San Miguel Defense Front (FREDEMI) and Plurijur lawyers are taking the case to international courts ([plurijur.blogspot.ca](http://plurijur.blogspot.ca)).

At the entrance to Radius Gold's (now US-based KCA's) illegally operating El Tambor Mine, the iconic La Puya resistance has sustained a years-long peaceful opposition. And Toronto-based HudBay is currently being sued in Ontario's Supreme Court for its complicity in shootings, murder, and gang rapes of Q'eqchi' indigenous Mayan people who refuse to be dispossessed of their land.

From Mexico to Chile to Papua New



Guinea to Eritrea, communities testifying to similar crimes by Canadian miners face steep challenges in their quest for justice, either at home or in Canadian courts.

### The 2014 Mount Polley tailings dam disaster

Abroad, to communities confronted with a proposed mine, project proponents conjure white-washed images of Canadian mining expertise, and grossly misrepresent the benefits and costs to local people.

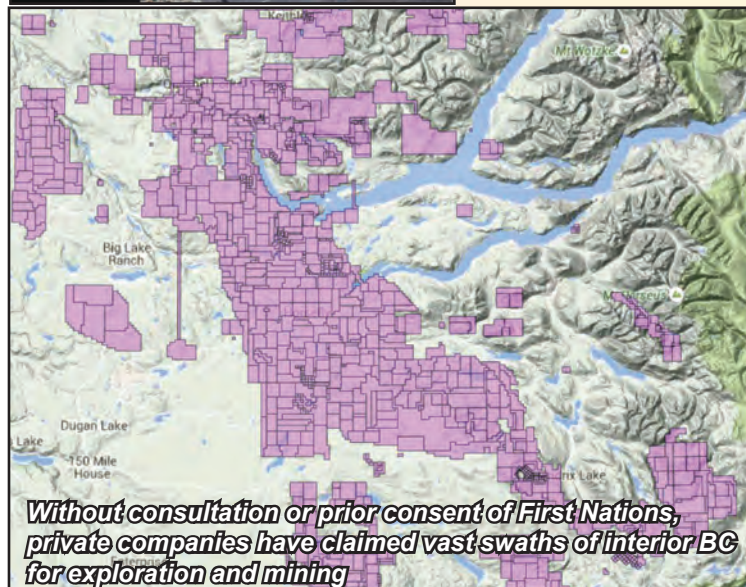
In unceded Secwepemc territory in BC, Vancouver's Imperial Metals has been operating the Mount Polley mine. Containing heavy metals at toxic concentrations, mine waste -- called "tailings" -- was dumped for years into an improperly constructed storage facility.

Predictably, after years of irresponsible management, in 2014 this storage facility burst, releasing a flood of toxic water and heavy metal-laden sludge, estimated at 25 million cubic meters (enough to bury 500 soccer fields ten metres deep), to salmon-bearing creeks and lakes. Eighteen months after the mining disaster, there are yet no arrests, no fines, and no litigation.

Although most of the material has remained where it spilled, provincial regulators



**Grand Chief Stewart Phillip surveys the Mount Polley mine one year after the disaster**



**Without consultation or prior consent of First Nations, private companies have claimed vast swaths of interior BC for exploration and mining**



**One year after the disaster, ceremony and a vigil outside the Mount Polley mine**

have allowed Imperial Metals to resume production and to discharge mine effluent to the aquatic environment, and also to proceed with the highly-contested Red Chris Mine, in Tahltan territory in northern BC.

### Systemic problems in Canadian mining codes

From Canada's beginnings as a resource extraction colony, its provinces' mining codes give undue priority to resource extraction activities above all other land uses. For example, while only 13% of BC is considered off-limits to mining, it is given top priority in the rest of the province. Under the existing "free entry" system -- a vestige of bygone values of conquering the supposedly empty lands of the west -- mineral rights are obtained by simply claiming them, and can be accessed and mined whether or not the surface rights holders give consent.

Such legislation enables mining companies to access the subsoil beneath First Nations,' privately owned, and municipally-controlled land in a way that they would be unable to access in other countries. Though cracks in this system are being made, provincial legislation does not even require that First

Nations give their free, prior, and informed consent to a proposed project. Miners enjoy great privilege in Canada, access and protections that they are keen to carve out for themselves in other countries as well.

To do so, they're pushing federal agencies and trade missions to

lobby resource-rich countries' governments to retool their extractive sector legislation to reflect the privilege they receive here. Recently, the UBC & SFU-based Canadian International Resources Development Institute (CIRDI), was funded over \$40M by the federal government with the mandate of advising governments on mining policy, legislation, and regulatory implementation ultimately beneficial to Canadian transnational miners. Founded in 2013 and partnered with mining companies and industry associations, it's already at work in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Mongolia, Ethiopia, and elsewhere.

### What is being done and What is to be done

Canadian civil society and students at the host universities already hail CIRDI as a significant federally-funded boon for the mining companies, at the cost of the voices, well-being, and inclusion of those directly affected by mega-projects. The website stoptheinstitute.ca hosts critical information on CIRDI, and advocates for its complete overhaul or closure.

Since Vancouver is the world headquarters of the mining and mineral exploration industries, we, here, have a great responsibility to those directly affected by these companies' projects. Civil society organizations are rallying for both technical and substantive transformation. And most directly, First Nations are challenging these extractive projects: asserting their role as stewards and protectors of the land, and occupying their traditional unceded territory.

Look for the upcoming articles in this series on mining to explore how to support the front-lines stewards of the land and how you can take action toward mining reform in BC.

*\*Sam Stime recently finished his graduate studies in environmental engineering at the University of British Columbia. During the last couple of years while a student, he has been working with the collective of students from SFU and UBC on the campaign to close the extractive industries institute hosted at the universities.*



# THE MANUFACTURE OF CUBAN POLITICAL REFUGEES

By Manuel Yepes\*

The United States is conducting massive raids to deport migrants from Mexico and Central America; and the fact that there are already two million people deported by the government of Barack Obama (462 000 last year, i.e., 265, per day) has been barely reported by the corporate media in the United States and other countries in the continent where the media dictatorship imposed by Washington is felt.

This is in contrast with the much-repeated news that about seven thousand Cuban migrants were left stranded in Costa Rica while traveling to the United States, drawn by the opportunities available under the Cuban Adjustment Act. Since 1966, this law has promoted the irregular migration of Cubans to the United States with a view to attracting Cuban talent, and as a contribution to the hostile propaganda campaign against the island that Washington has been holding for more than half a century.

This issue is discussed at the Cubainformación website, based in Spain. Its coordinator, José Manzaneda, points out that, unlike the usual migrants, those eligible under the Adjustment Act receive from the US government social aid, papers and residence documents that automatically converts them into "political refugees".

"The cynicism of this double migratory game by Washington becomes even more evident when it is the UN agencies themselves who classify these people as economic migrants. In addition, the International

Organization for Migration has recognized what the Cuban government has repeatedly said: these Cubans left the country in a legal and regular way, they can keep leaving and they will continue leaving the country to achieve their goals as the economic migrants they are."

"It is understandable that among those planning to migrate to the United States under the privileged conditions of the Cuban Adjustment Act there was panic when, on December 17, 2014 the Presidents of Cuba and the United States announced their intention to normalize relations between their nations beginning with the restoration of diplomatic links."

This announcement raised among them the fear that the Adjustment Act would be quickly repealed because of its totally



abnormal content. Many of them chose to speed up their emigration plans.

In the great scandal of the Cuban exiles stranded in Central America there is only one responsible source: the sick US hostility against Cuba. However, there are many damaged and humiliated.

Several countries in Central America have suffered imperial arrogance. They have seen their security violated or threatened because of a problem that is not specifically theirs, but that contaminates them with the always dangerous and harmful effects of the human and drug trafficking gangs that swarm the area.

The news about the fate of the Cubans highlighted the contrast between the humiliating discrimination the US applies to its Latin American neighbors while granting "privileges" to the Cubans for their independence. Even The New York Times termed the immigration privilege to Cubans as "an absurd US policy" and called for its repeal.

Finally, there is a question that no media seem willing to answer: why Cuban migrants do not fly directly to the US from their country, as it has been proven that they have the money to do so? They also complied with all the legal requirements established under Cuban immigration laws.

But the response would completely expose the cynicism of the White House. This is because the United States had denied all these people a legal entry visa or, somehow had made them

assume that it would not be granted with the necessary speed to take advantage of the Adjustment Act.

Some of these people stated that to finance the trip they had sold their homes, cars and other goods to gain access to the US paradise granted to them under the Cuban Adjustment Act, which is not offered to any non-Cuban citizen in the universe.

But the astonishing thing is that if these people travel 5,500 kilometers, pay thousands of dollars to coyotes, and risk their lives to enter the United States illegally, then they are eligible for the status of "refugees" and would be granted residency. This is, shocking, Machiavellian and Kafkaesque, says Manzaneda.

January 22, 2016

[www.englishmanuelyepe.wordpress.com](http://www.englishmanuelyepe.wordpress.com)

A CubaNews translation. Edited by Walter Lippmann.

[www.walterlippmann.com](http://www.walterlippmann.com)

\*Manuel E. Yepe, is a lawyer, economist and journalist. He is a professor at the Higher Institute of International Relations in Havana. He was Cuba's ambassador to Romania, general director of the Prensa Latina agency; vice president of the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television; founder and national director of the Technological Information System (TIPS) of the United Nations Program for Development in Cuba, and secretary of the Cuban Movement for the Peace and Sovereignty of the Peoples.



# UNA FÁBRICA DE REFUGIADOS POLÍTICOS CUBANOS

\* EN ESPAÑOL \*

*Por Manuel Yepe\**

Que Estados Unidos esté realizando redadas masivas para deportar a migrantes de México y Centroamérica, y que ya sean dos millones y medio las personas deportadas por el gobierno de Barack Obama (462 mil el pasado año, es decir mil 265 al día), apenas se ha informado por los medios corporativos de Estados Unidos y de otros países del continente donde se hace sentir la dictadura mediática que impone Washington.

Ello contrasta con la tan reiterada noticia de que unos siete mil migrantes cubanos quedaron varados en Costa Rica cuando viajaban a Estados Unidos, atraídos por los ofrecimientos de la llamada Ley de Ajuste Cubano que promueve, desde 1966, la emigración irregular de cubanos hacia Estados Unidos con vistas a la captación de talento cubano y como aporte propagandístico a la campaña hostil contra la Isla que lleva a cabo Washington hace más de medio siglo.

Así lo indica en el sitio digital Cubainformación, basado en España, su coordinador José Manzaneda, quien apunta que, a diferencia de los migrantes habituales, los acogidos a la Ley de Ajuste reciben de Estados Unidos ayuda social, papeles y documentos de residencia que les convertirán automáticamente en “refugiados políticos”.

“El cinismo de este doble juego migratorio de Washington se hace aún más evidente cuando son los propios organismos de Naciones Unidas quienes catalogan a estas personas como migrantes económicos y la Organización Internacional para las Migraciones ha reconocido cuánto el Gobierno de Cuba ha repetido que estos

cubanos salieron de manera regular, pueden seguir saliendo y van a seguir saliendo del país para lograr sus objetivos como migrantes económicos que son”.

Se comprende que, entre los aspirantes a emigrar a Estados Unidos en las privilegiadas condiciones de la Ley de Ajuste, cundió el pánico cuando el 14 de diciembre de 2014 los Presidentes de Cuba y Estados Unidos anunciaron la intención de normalizar relaciones entre sus naciones comenzando por el restablecimiento de los vínculos

diplomáticos.

Esto hizo surgir en ellos el temor de que dicha Ley de Ajuste estaría llamada a ser prontamente derogada por su contenido totalmente anormal y muchos de ellos optaron por acelerar sus planes de emigración. En el gran escándalo de los emigrados cubanos varados en Centroamérica hay un solo responsable – la enfermiza hostilidad de Estados Unidos contra Cuba-, pero son muchos los perjudicados y humillados. Han sufrido la prepotencia imperial varios países de América Central que han visto violada o amenazada su seguridad a causa de un problema que no es específicamente de ellos pero que les contamina con la acción siempre peligrosa y nociva de las bandas de traficantes de personas y narcóticos que pululan en el área.

Las noticias sobre la suerte de los cubanos pusieron de relieve, por contraste, la humillante discriminación que aplica Estados Unidos a sus vecinos latinoamericanos mientras “privilegia” a los cubanos por su independencia. Incluso el The New York Times calificaba el privilegio migratorio de Cuba como “un absurdo de la política estadounidense” y pedía su

derogación.

Por último, hay una pregunta a la que ningún medio parece dispuesto a responder: ¿por qué los migrantes cubanos no vuelan directamente a EEUU desde su país, dado que –como se ha podido comprobar– tienen dinero para hacerlo? Ellos cumplen los requisitos legales que fijan las leyes migratorias cubanas. Pero la respuesta dejaría al

descubierto por completo el cinismo de la Casa Blanca, dado que Estados Unidos les había denegado la visa de entrada a todos ellos o de alguna manera les había hecho suponer que no se la concedería con la prontitud necesaria para aprovechar la vigencia de la Ley de Ajuste.

Algunos declararon que, para costearse el viaje, vendieron sus casas, automóviles y otros bienes con tal de acceder al paraíso

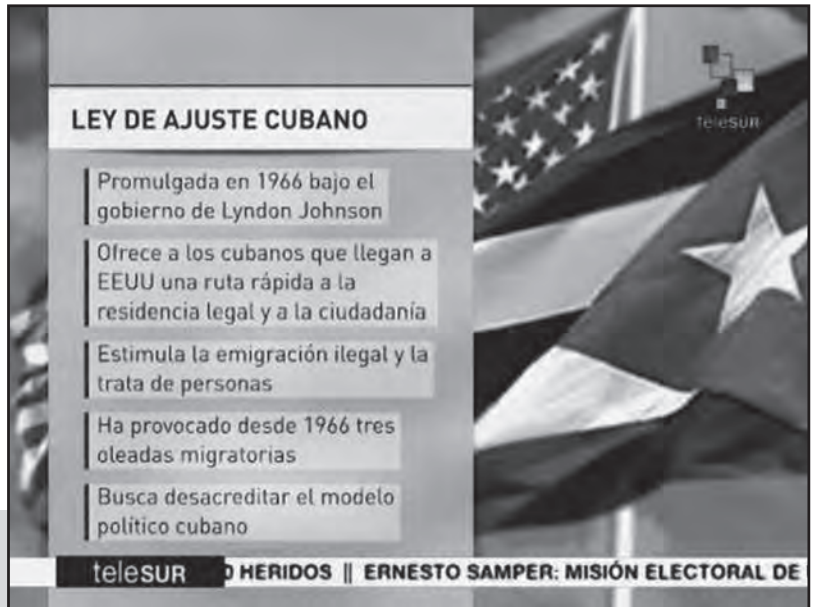
estadounidense que les aseguraba la Ley de Ajuste, que no le es ofertado a ningún ciudadano no cubano del universo.

Pero lo insólito es que si estas personas recorren 5.500 kilómetros, pagan miles de dólares a los coyotes y arriesgan su vida para entrar ilegalmente a Estados Unidos, entonces sí pueden aplicar por el estatus de “refugiados” y les sería concedida la residencia. ¡Algo alucinante, maquiavélico y kafkiano!, dice Manzaneda.

Enero 22 de 2016

*\*Manuel E. Yepe Menendez es periodista y se desempeña como Profesor adjunto en el Instituto Superior de las Relaciones Internacionales de La Habana.*

[www.manuelyepe.wordpress.com](http://www.manuelyepe.wordpress.com)



# ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION:

## Water Crisis, Capitalist Crisis!



By *Macarena Cataldo*

*“Water must be an essential human right because it bears directly on the development of life of all beings on the planet and is a fundamental component in the mobilization of all productive processes.”*

- Bolivian President, Evo Morales

Regardless of a lack of financial resources or advanced technology, developing countries like Bolivia have been fighting to provide free access to clean tap water for the majority of their people. While the reality in advanced industrial capitalist countries like the U.S., who enjoy sophisticated technology and huge financial resources, seems to be completely different. In the last decade, the United States has been experiencing a crisis of high prices and low quality of water in urban communities. The quality of water has been affected by the lack of technical support and government financing to maintain healthy and high quality conditions in water treatment

plants and water pipe net systems. Many governments claim they lack the money for improving the quality of water services. Nonetheless, for many years now the majority of people have been forced by government, city administrations and municipalities to pay high prices for their low quality water. Furthermore hundreds of thousands of low income and poor people cannot afford the cost of water, which has resulted in huge debts to various government institutions. Those who paid the high price are no better off, since the water quality remained low and a lot of times not consumable.

Flint, Michigan is the most terrifying example of this situation. Flint is a clear example of how the capitalist system disregards the quality of life and health, especially that of working and poor people.

### What happened in Flint, Michigan?

The population of Flint is 100,000 people, including 9,000 children under the age of 6 years old. Flint is one of the poorest cities in the United States. Black people represent more than 50% of the city. Around 40% of people in Flint live below the poverty line due to a loss of jobs in the auto industry, namely General Motors.

In April 2014, the mayor of Flint undemocratically decided to save money on water. They had been

purchasing water from Lake Huron as well as the Detroit River, however the city decided to buy water from a cheaper source, mainly from Flint River.

The switch would have initially saved millions of dollars per year for the city of Flint, but the water from Flint River corroded the ageing pipes, increasing levels of lead (and other pollutants) in the tap water. This caused severe health problems for the people of Flint, especially its children.

### Flint: political and technical negligence

The Flint authorities changed the water source without any careful investigation and analysis about the chemical properties of the Flint River waters. This happened regardless of the fact that the drinking water administration and other experts knew that corrosion control is one of the most important aspects of the management of any drinking water system.

In addition they violated a federal law, which says that water systems with lead pipes must use an additive to seal the metal, which will prevent leaching into the water. Sean Kammer, assistant to the city administrator, explained that adding this anti-corrosive costs between \$80 and \$100 per day, and the city of Flint decided not to spend that money. Then, as mentioned, the Flint River water, which is slightly more acid than the Huron Lake water started to corrode the lead pipes in Flint. In the first month after the water switch, Flint citizens began reporting a big difference in water quality. They reported brown colored water, water that was more abrasive and they complained of nausea. However, the authorities didn't pay attention to the people's complaints. Sadly, the people of Flint continued to







pay for this toxic water, and they even paid the highest rates in the US, around \$150 a month.

The question everyone is asking is, how could the environmental health authorities not notice this big disaster? In theory, they play an important role in managing water, which includes inspection and control of drinking water systems. However, they just played against the people. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) carried out water testing in a tricky way in order to decrease the levels of lead, and the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) statistically modified the results to keep the values under EPA standards and regulations.

When the governor's office finally discovered the toxicity of the water, they decided to keep quiet about it and covered up the extent of the damage being done to Flint's residents.

However, the reality was completely different for General Motors (GM) than it was for individual citizens. When GM accused the Flint River water of corroding their car parts, the Governor quickly spent \$440,000 to reconnect General Motors to the Lake Huron water, while keeping the rest of Flint on the Flint River water. This fact clearly shows how to the capitalist system, the profits of big corporations such as General Motors are more important than the life and health of people. In Flint this especially impacted children, who had to drink lead-filled water daily.

On January 5, 2016 a state of emergency was finally declared, but until today it has not resulted in any serious measures to address health issues or a real solution for Flint's drinking water problem.

### The effects of Flint's toxic water

According to MLive Michigan News the water in 26 family homes in Flint were found to be contaminated with lead at a level of almost 10 times what is permitted (150 parts per billion (ppb)), while the limit for drinking water is 15

ppb). According to the MLive article, the highest lead reading in a Flint home registered 4,000 ppb and that was documented by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It is important to understand here that 5,000 ppb is considered toxic waste. Kerry Wheeler, a Flint mother with an 11 year old child declared to the media, "Nobody should have to be living like this."

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha says, this disaster will have a "multigenerational impact." The concentration of lead in the blood of the children is 2 and 3 times higher than before the switch. "In five years, these kids are going to have cognition problems. Seven to 10 years, they're going to have behavioural problems." An unknown number of older children and adults will also suffer lead damage. According to guidelines for drinking water, being exposed to lead can produce several health effects, such as neurodevelopmental defects, impaired renal function, hypertension, impaired fertility, mortality and adverse pregnancy outcomes. In addition, infants, children and pregnant women are very sensitive and more susceptible to lead exposure.

The number of cases in Flint of Legionnaires Disease has increased tenfold since the switch to the river water. 80 people have come down with it, and at least 10 have died. In the five years before using the river water, not a single person in Flint had died of Legionnaires Disease. Plumbing system problems, such as those in Flint, can cause water stagnation and provide a suitable environment for the proliferation of Legionella. Physicians have also discovered at least six different toxins in the blood of Flint's citizens, which could cause additional health problems.

### Governor Snyder gotta go! Capitalism gotta go!

The civil organizations are already fighting to provide clean water for Flint and they are asking to dismiss Governor Snyder. The poisoning of people in Flint was a consequence of the way capitalism works, where profit comes before the needs of people and we see a disregard for human life and Mother Nature. The poisoning of people in Flint, was not something inevitable, but was indeed entirely preventable. The case of the city of Flint is not the first time a community has been poisoned by capitalism's disregard for human beings and the environment. In 2010, 400 children died in Nigeria from lead poisoning, a problem directly linked with gold mining.

The tragedy in Flint is not an isolated incident. Hundreds of disasters like Flint are happening around the world unknown and unreported to the public. The capitalist system's disregard for nature and the environment is an ongoing trademark. The fact is that we will never completely be able to stop the damage to the environment caused by the capitalist mode of production, which is toxic and destructive in its own nature. In order to save our planet from capitalist degradation we have no option but come together and end to this unjust, criminal and toxic system.

What happened in Flint could happen anywhere that a city or municipal government is in financial trouble and hoping to save a few dollars. We must stand with the people of Flint in their demands for justice and clean water. We are ALL Flint!

Macarena Cataldo on Twitter: @makufy



## Organizing, Educating & Mobilizing to #StopWar:

A Month of building an antiwar movement with Mobilization Against War & Occupation



By Janine Solanki

In Canada antiwar politics is not something widely reflected in people's daily news, their twitter feeds or facebook walls, or dinnertime conversation. Yet, if you look at the situation around the world today, we are living in a world defined by a new era of war and occupation. From Iraq to Afghanistan, Libya to Syria, Yemen, Iran and Palestine to Ukraine, Venezuela and Cuba, these are just some of the countries facing a constant barrage of war, occupation, military intervention, covert operations, foreign destabilization and meddling, and sanctions at the hands of imperialist forces. For Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) here in Vancouver, Canada, and for antiwar organizations around the world, it is our task to use all of our resources, creativity and energy to make antiwar issues reach the headlines, trend on social media and be a topic of everyday conversation.

On Friday January 15 MAWO organized a public forum titled "Saudi Arabia Hands Off the Middle East and North Africa", opening a discussion on the role that Saudi Arabia plays in the new era of war and occupation. While it is common knowledge that Saudi Arabia commits heinous human rights violations against its own citizens and denies women the most basic of rights, what is less known is Saudi Arabia's role in war mongering throughout the Middle East and North Africa. As the US expands their war drive in the region, they are utilizing their close ally Saudi Arabia to do their dirty work. Forum participants heard from speakers Mamdoh Ashir, an Iraqi-Canadian and Muslim community activist, MAWO executive committee member and Tunisian social justice activist Azza Rojbi and Fire This Time newspaper political editor Ali Yerevani. The event concluded with a lively discussion amongst the participants and speakers.

From education to action, on Friday January 22nd MAWO held its monthly antiwar rally and petition campaign. The rally focused on demanding "US/UK/Canada/France/NATO No to War on Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Afghanistan!" as well as "Saudi Arabia Hands Off the Middle East and North Africa!" and "Open the Borders: Stop War & Occupation, Not Refugees!"

From month to month MAWO continues to organize, education and mobilize to end this new era of war and occupation. We encourage all peace-loving people to join MAWO's events and actions and to get involved! While the mainstream media reflects pro-war propaganda, we have the truth on our side and the desire of people around the world for peace and an end to these brutal war and occupations. For more information on MAWO events and actions check out [www.mawovancouver.org](http://www.mawovancouver.org)

No to War and Occupation! Yes to Self-Determination!

## The Struggle to Lift the U.S. Blockade on Cuba Continues!



By Noah Fine

On January 17, 2016, the 5th monthly protest demanding the U.S. Government immediately end its cruel and inhuman blockade against Cuba took place in front of the U.S. Consulate in Vancouver. More than 30 people participated in the action organized by the Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade-Vancouver (FCAB-Vancouver). The group is responding to the urgent need of Cuba to see the U.S. blockade lifted. However they are not alone. Voices from around the world have made their demand clear: The time is now! Lift the Blockade!

Since 1962, the U.S. blockade has caused Cuba damages totaling over 1.2 trillion dollars and counting.

For these reasons, more and more people have become vocal in their opposition to the U.S. blockade. In fact, the United Nations (UN) in October of 2015, voted 191 in favor with only 2 opposed to Cuba's resolution demanding and end to the Blockade. The 2 opposing votes came from the usual suspects, Israel and the U.S. itself.

However, it seems almost the entire world's opinion has not been enough to end the U.S. blockade. With this in mind, the organizers and participants of the FCAB-Vancouver protest gathered once again chanting, "Lift! Lift! Lift the Blockade!" in front of the U.S. Consulate.

Included in the program of speakers at the monthly action were activists from Ottawa-Cuba Connections, a group that alongside Vancouver organize monthly protests in front of the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa. Members of the group spoke live over the phone from their action. Concluding the protest was Tamara Hansen, coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC).

The Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade-Vancouver (FCAB) encourages all people who support Cuba's right to self-determination to join them in their monthly campaign in front of the U.S. Consulate in Vancouver to demand:

END THE U.S. BLOCKADE ON CUBA!  
RETURN GUANTÁNAMO TO  
CUBA NOW!

## Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign



By Sarah Alwell

On January 5th 2016 the newly elected National Assembly took office in Venezuela with the right-wing and counter-revolutionary opposition holding a majority in parliament for the first time in 17 years. That's because 17 years ago, with the election of the late Comandante Hugo Chavez and the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) in 1998, Venezuela began a revolutionary process for the peace and dignity of its people and to overturn the exploitation and poverty imposed by the Venezuelan ruling class and reinforced by the government of the United States.

Now it is more important than ever for peace loving people in Vancouver, and around the world, to stand beside the people of Venezuela and their President Nicolas Maduro to fight back and demand an end to foreign imperialist intervention in Venezuela – and the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign in Vancouver is doing just that.

On January 5th Fire This Time organized two actions on the streets of downtown Vancouver to demand "Hands Off Venezuela!" and echo the cry of millions of Venezuelans "Maduro is Our President!"

At 4pm, as the winter evening began to grow darker, the beautiful colours of the Venezuelan flag billowed in front of the U.S. Consulate as activists and supporters gathered to call for an end to U.S. intervention. Marching up and down the sidewalk picket signs in tow, handing out information to passers by and chanting at the top of their lungs; the spirit and hope for a better future, inspired by the bolivarian revolution, could not be missed.

Later that evening, protesters marched up to the steps of the Vancouver Art Gallery, one of the busiest sections of downtown Vancouver, to continue their display of support and outreach and to let passers by know that in Venezuela... the struggle continues!

The next actions will be held on February 5th with a protest action at 4pm outside the U.S. Consulate to demand "U.S. Hands Off Venezuela!" Followed by an info table and petitioning session at 5pm at the Vancouver Art Gallery.

President Maduro and the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) are mobilizing together with many diverse social movements across the country to defend the Bolivarian Revolution. From here in Vancouver, Canada, peace-loving people must unite to do the same to build a broad, united and strong movement in solidarity with the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela!

For more information about Venezuela please read articles written by Francisco Dominguez and Alison Bodine contained in this issue of Fire This Time (V10 I2).





from office is not an easy battle. To begin with, the National Assembly is only one of Venezuela's five branches of government, which also includes the Executive, the Judicial, the Electoral and the Citizen branches. Within this distribution of power there is also the fact that according to the Venezuelan Constitution, all laws passed in Venezuela can be subject to Constitutional review. In this way, even if a law to privatize housing, it might be rejected as being in violation of the Venezuelan Constitution, which guarantees the people of Venezuela the right to housing.

This doesn't mean, however, that the counter-revolutionary right-wing will continue to play by the rule of law and constitution in Venezuela. Throughout their history they have again and again shown their willingness to break the law and use violent means to achieve their desired goals, for instance, in the April 2002 coup d'état against President Chavez, a coup which the Venezuelan people overturned in less than 48 hours. And all along the way they have had the support of the world's largest imperialist power, the United States government.

**U.S. Hands Off Venezuela!**

On the day that the right-wing National Assembly took their seats, the U.S. State Department sent a message of support, "The National Assembly can serve an important function in advancing and promoting a national dialogue focused on addressing the social and economic challenges facing the Venezuelan people."

The tone of this message is no surprise when the party with the most seats in the National Assembly today is Primero Justicia, a political party that has received funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) ever since it was formed. It is also no surprise given the U.S. government's constant attacks on Venezuela over the last 17 years of the Bolivarian Revolution. These attacks have included the financing

and backing of the violent opposition, sanctions, military actions off the coast of Venezuela, as well as psychological operations like U.S.-based radio and TV programs intended to convince the people of Venezuela to overthrow their revolutionary government.

With the election of the counter-revolutionary National Assembly attacks by the U.S. government and their allies are only going to increase.

in Venezuela, these attacks by the U.S. government and their allies are only going to increase.

**Poor and Working People in Canada Must Support Venezuela!**

On the final day of 2015 the revolutionary government of Venezuela delivered its 1 millionth home through their social housing mission. Since it was created in 2011 the "Great Housing Mission" has provided safe and dignified housing for low-income people and families in Venezuela. After 1 million homes the project it still going strong towards the goal of providing affordable housing to 40% of people in Venezuela. Wouldn't you say this is a great achievement given the political and economic battles taking place in the country today?

It is this achievement for poor, oppressed and working people in Venezuela and more that we are defending when we march together in Vancouver, Canada

and around the world demanding "U.S. Hands Off Venezuela!"

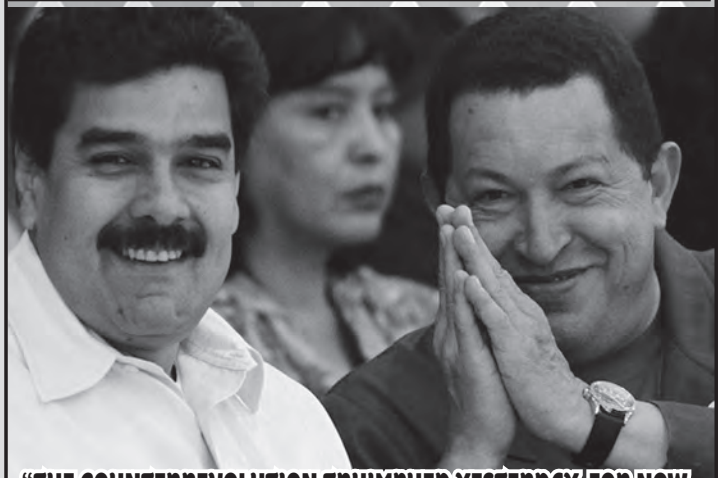
As the United States closest neighbours we have an even greater responsibility to fight for an end to imperialist intervention in Venezuela and demand that the people of Venezuela be allowed to continue to carry the Bolivarian Revolution forward free from foreign meddling!

Although we do not know the exact path that the counter-revolutionaries will take on their mission to destroy the Bolivarian Revolution, we know that our brothers and sisters need our solidarity and action more now than ever. We must work to build a stronger and more united movement in solidarity with Venezuela, one that can bring together workers, students, immigrants, elders, poor and oppressed people across Canada and the whole world!

**U.S. HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!  
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE VENEZUELA!  
LONG LIVE THE VENEZUELAN BOLIVARIAN  
REVOLUTION!**

*Alison Bodine on Twitter: @Alisoncolette*

**In Venezuela the Struggle Continues!  
¡En Venezuela la lucha continúa!**



**"THE COUNTERREVOLUTION TRIUMPHED YESTERDAY, FOR NOW...  
UNITY SHOULD BE THE MAIN AIM..." -PRESIDENT MADURO**

**2 EVENTS  
FRIDAY FEBRUARY 5**

**1>> PROTEST ACTION:  
U.S. HANDS OFF VENEZUELA!  
4-5pm**

**U.S. Consulate  
1075 West Pender at Thurlow Street**

**2>> INFO TABLING & PETITION  
MADURO IS OUR PRESIDENT!  
5-6:30pm**

**Vancouver Art Gallery  
Robson at Howe Street Downtown Vancouver, Canada**



**Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice (FTT)  
WWW.FIRETHISTIME.NET**

# REPEAL REPEAL BILL C-51

**We Must Build  
a Movement  
to Defeat It!  
JOIN US** ▶

*By Thomas Davies*

“Didn’t the Liberals say they were going to do something about that?”

As someone who for the past 47 Mondays has participated in a weekly picket demanding the repeal of Bill C-51, I’ve spoken with hundreds of people and heard a lot of things. The vast majority agree with us, and to be perfectly honest, I can count on two hands the number of people I’ve met who support Bill C-51. Lately though, since the election of the Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party, we’ve met a lot of people surprised Bill C-51 still exists. This is because despite the fact that the Liberal Party had promised “fixing” Bill C-51 would be a priority once elected, almost three months after taking office they have said very little about it. What little they have said continues to be vague and non-committal.

In the meantime, the biggest attack on our democratic and human rights in decades continues to be a law and continues to enable secret violations of our rights by government agencies, the police and the secret police. How exactly are they using it? I couldn’t tell you, it’s secret, and that’s a big part of the problem.

The good news is that the broad network of organizations and individuals who opposed Bill C-51 when it was rammed through Parliament by the Conservatives (while the Liberals also voted in favour) has continued to organize and is refusing to be distracted from its main demand of, “Repeal Bill C-51 Now!”

## **Liberals Continue to Stall**

We should not forget how vast Bill C-51 is. It’s 62 pages long, and while there are so many problematic elements, a recent statement by the Canadian Civil Liberties Association reaffirming their demand of a repeal of Bill C-51 outlines some of the major issues,



47th weekly picket in Vancouver demanding “Repeal Bill C-51”, Monday Feb:1



“We argued that privacy rights would be threatened by an exponential increase in personal information sharing across government agencies and foreign actors, without safeguards or accountability mechanisms.

We questioned CSIS’s [Canada’s secret police] extraordinary new powers to take covert action, and, incredibly, to seek judicial warrants pre-authorizing its agents to violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

We warned that the new criminal offences of promoting and advocating terror would chill legitimate dissent; that lower thresholds on already exceptionally broad powers, such as preventive arrest, would further undermine due process rights; and that the procedural flaws in the new Secure Air Travel Act would unfairly restrict Canadians’ mobility rights.

In our view, all of this amounted to overboard, unnecessary, dangerous, and unconstitutional legislation. Although we asked the government repeatedly, not once did we receive specifics on how any part of C-51 could have prevented the attacks of 2014, or on why pre-existing legislation was insufficient to protect us.”

Given that all of this continues to be law, it has been infuriating for many that government statements about Bill C-51 have been few and far between since the Liberals were

elected. Despite being a supposed “priority”, all we have been told is that the new Minister of Public Safety, Ralph Goodale will be working with Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould to deal with what the Liberals call the “problematic” aspects of Bill C-51. Liberal MP David McGuinty will apparently be leading a future Parliamentary oversight committee.

## **Why a Parliamentary Oversight Committee is Not Enough**

What little the Liberals have promised does not address our fundamental concerns about the rights violations enabled by Bill C-51. It is true that Canada is the only country among the eerily named “Five Eyes” group of spy partners which includes Canada, Britain, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand, that does not have Parliamentary Oversight Committee for its security agencies. However, if anything the record of these countries and their committees show that they are anything but a guarantee for our rights.

Minister Goodale goes to Paris and London for advice on balancing rights and security?

That’s great, the French government passed a new law this year which allows intelligence agents to plant cameras and recording devices in private homes and cars as well as to intercept phone conversations without



judicial oversight. The country has also been under a 3 month government imposed State of Emergency which enable to the police the right to set curfews, limit the movement of people and forbid mass gatherings. Security services and the police can also conduct house searches at any time without judicial oversight and enforce house arrest. Is this our model?

Britain's Intelligence and Security Committee of Parliament is often referred to as the standard for government oversight committees. Yet it was former US National Security Agency contractor Edward Snowden who revealed that British spies are running an online surveillance operation so vast that it gathers more information than even US spies! What was the committee doing while this was going on?

### What's This About Public Consultation?

It's a bit strange that Minister Goodale would think he'd need to take a long flight over the Atlantic to get advice about Bill C-51. Organizations and individuals across Canada have been making it clear from many different perspectives for over a year now. Over 311,000 people have signed the online petition demanding the immediate repeal of Bill C-51, making it one of the most popular petitions in the history of Canada. The Guardian newspaper also reported, "No legislation in memory has united such a diverse array of prominent opponents as the proposed legislation...The campaign to stop Bill C-51 grew to include virtually every civil-rights group, law professor, retired judge, author, editorialist and public intellectual in Canada."

So it's pretty insincere for the Liberals to play dumb and act like the public hasn't already made it clear that Bill C-51 is one of the most hated laws in the history of Canada and needs to be repealed. If they want to do a public consultation about balancing rights and security, fine, but there's nothing stopping them from using their majority in parliament to repeal Bill C-51 and start a fresh, honest conversation. Leaving Bill C-51 and all of its human rights violations in place, especially those limiting free speech, while saying you want an open consultation doesn't make any sense.

In the same vein, as organizations like Openmedia.ca and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association point out, there is no real use in trying to amend Bill C-51. It's a rotten law forced through by a rotten government with rotten intentions. There have already been 12 new broad anti-terrorist laws passed in Canada since September 11, 2001. The responsibility is with the government to convince the public any new laws are necessary, not ours to convince them that they aren't. They have not convinced us.

### Building the Movement to Repeal Bill C-51 Continues

The Working Group to Stop Bill C-51, which has organized those 47 weekly pickets, will continue to do so until Bill C-51 is repealed. We are currently building toward a major action for the "51st Picket Against Bill C-51" on February 28th. On February 27th we will also be hosting an all day conference to bring the many forces opposed to Bill C-51 together to discuss moving forward to Repeal Bill C-51.

Across Canada groups continue to organize their own actions demanding a Repeal of Bill C-51, and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Journalists for Freedom of Expression are continuing their charter challenge of Bill C-51 in Ontario's Superior Court of Justice. After a post-election slowdown, Bill C-51 and those demanding its

repeal are again making headlines across the country.

So when I'm standing with other supporters and our petition in front of a skytrain station in Vancouver and someone stops and says, "Didn't the Liberals say they were going to do something about that?" I'm always ready to answer, "Yes they did say a few things, but no they haven't done anything. If you'd like to sign this petition and get involved in the movement opposing it, we can make sure they have no choice but to repeal it!" So, with many others across Canada, we will continue educate, organize and mobilize until we win the repeal of Bill C-51! Join us!

Follow Thomas Davies on Twitter:  
@thomasdavies59

**MONDAY FEB 15 4pm**  
**REPEAL BILL C51 BANNER DROP!**

**MONDAY FEB 22 4pm**  
**50th Repeal Bill C51 Picket**  
Waterfront Skytrain Stn Vancouver

**MONDAY FEB 29 4pm**  
**51st Repeal Bill C51 RALLY**  
Cambie Skytrain Stn @ Broadway, Vancouver

**MONDAY FEB 15 4pm**  
**47th Repeal Bill C51 Picket**  
Rupert Skytrain Stn Vancouver

**MONDAY FEB 8 4pm**  
**48th Repeal Bill C51 Picket**  
New Westminster Skytrain Stn

Hey Justin Trudeau...  
**REPEAL BILL C-51**

**2016 ALL DAY CONFERENCE**  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28

**Session 1**  
What is the State of Bill C-51 Today?

**Session 2**  
Building a Movement Against Bill C-51

For location and for updates go to:  
[www.facebook.com/RepealBillC51](http://www.facebook.com/RepealBillC51)

For over one year now, people across Canada as well as major human rights, legal, media and civil liberties organizations have made their voice clear, "REPEAL BILL C-51 NOW!" Already over 311,000 people have signed an online petition demanding the repeal of Bill C-51, making it one of the most popular petitions ever in the history of Canada.

As the pressure on the Liberal government increases regarding Bill C-51, it continues to be important to demonstrate loudly and clearly that we will not accept even an amended attack on our democratic and human rights. The Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 has organized more than 46 consecutive weekly pickets against Bill C-51, and we invite you to join us. We need to continue to educate, organize and mobilize to demand the immediate repeal of Bill C-51!

Organized by: Working Group to Stop Bill C-51  
@StopBillC51 | stoppolicestatebillc51@gmail.com

# ¡Venceremos!



# We Will Win!

## Venezuela Gov't and Grassroots Plan Expanding Urban Agriculture

January 30, 2016 (teleSUR English)

Venezuela launched Saturday a national conference on urban agriculture, aimed to boost the productivity of small scale crops in major cities like Caracas.

The conference is the first of its kind in Venezuela, and will include government officials and representatives of grassroots organizations. President Nicolas Maduro is also expected to attend.

The president has said improving urban agriculture will support his government's aim to bolster the broader economy.

"If we want a society that is viable, progressive, socialist and humanist, then we need ... productive cities," Maduro stated.

The conference included an exhibition of crops obtained through urban agriculture, as well as workers and training given by experts and producers.

Under Maduro's predecessor Hugo Chavez, the Venezuelan government began promoting urban agriculture as a way to improve food sovereignty.

The initiative focused on developing organoponicos – a system of urban, organic agriculture developed in Cuba.

In 2013, Maduro vowed to double the number of organoponicos units nationwide. Earlier that same year, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization recognized Venezuela for more than halving hunger within its territory.

According to Venezuela's official figures, the socialist government has invested US\$142 billion dollars in food programs over the last 10 years, resulting a drop in malnutrition to 5 percent for close to 14 percent in 1992.

## US to pay Iran \$1.7bn in debt, interest

January 17, 2016 (PressTV)

US Secretary of State John Kerry says that Washington is slated to repay Iran a \$400 million debt, along with an additional \$1.3 billion in interest.

Kerry made the announcement on Sunday, adding that the payments date back to the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, according to the AFP.

The news comes only a day after President Barack Obama signed an executive order, lifting US economic sanctions on Iran.

The repayment, arranged after an international legal tribunal, is separate from the tens of billions of dollars in frozen assets that Tehran can now access.

Iran and the P5+1 - the United States, France, Britain, Russia, China and Germany - finalized the text of the JCPOA in Vienna, Austria, on July 14, 2015.

Under the agreement, limits are put on Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for, among other things, the removal of all nuclear-related economic and financial bans against the Islamic Republic.

## Correa: Continue Fighting for 'Justice, Freedom, Sovereignty'

January 28, 2016

Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa closed Wednesday's heads of state meeting at the fourth Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, or CELAC, with a call for member countries to continue fighting for "justice, freedom and sovereignty."

"CELAC continues fighting the attacks in Latin America, like the U.S. blockade on Cuba or the attacks against Venezuela that have been labeled by the U.S. as a threat to its homeland security," he said Wednesday.

The meeting, held in Quito, Ecuador, brought together 22 presidents from across Latin America and the Caribbean to discuss questions of regional importance, such as food security and the fight against organized crime and corruption.

As a result of these discussions, several key declarations were ratified by CELAC members including the declaration to end the U.S. blockade against Cuba, to defend the Malvinas Islands, to support the peace process in Colombia, to prohibit nuclear testing and to support policy to protect migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Other highlights included Haiti's call for a CELAC electoral mission to help manage the country's political crisis.

Unity and regional integration was a central theme of the summit with Chilean President Michelle Bachelet arguing, "We have to promote a collective understanding, which is capable of overcoming differences that can arise among us with regards to different ideas, development models and subregional differences."

Bolivian President Evo Morales likewise stated "The purpose of CELAC always has been and always will be to work towards liberating the region both economically and politically."

President Correa concluded the heads of state meeting by passing the pro tempore presidency of CELAC to the president of the Dominican Republic, Danilo Medina.

CELAC will continue until Jan. 29.



# Subscribe to Fire This Time!

NAME

ADDRESS




EMAIL

PHONE (optional)

For a one year subscription,  
12 issues, make cheque  
payable to: "Nita Palmer"

Send along with form to:  
PO Box 21607  
Vancouver BC  
V5L 5G3

Canada \*SPECIAL OFFER\* \$10  
USA \*SPECIAL OFFER\* \$15  
International \$30  
Cuba & Venezuela FREE!

NEWS  
direct from **CUBA**



**SUBSCRIBE!**

DIARIO  
**Granma**

**NEWSPAPER**

SEND YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, PROVINCE/  
STATE, COUNTRY AND POSTAL/ZIP  
CODE WITH THE EQUIVALENT OF \$40.00  
USD (FOR 52 WEEKS) BY POSTAL OR  
ELECTRONIC BANK TRANSFER TO:

EDICIONES CUBANAS, APARTADO 6260,  
C.P. 10699, CIUDAD DE LA HABANA, CUBA.

IN THE UNITED STATES OR ANYWHERE ELSE  
IN THE WORLD, GO TO THE PATHFINDER  
WEBSITE AT:

[WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM](http://WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM)

## Distribute Revolutionary Change in Your Area!

For distribution of Fire This Time  
in your area, across BC, and  
internationally, please contact:

Thomas Davies  
Publicity and Distribution  
Coordinator

Phone: (778) 889-7664

Email: [firethistimecanada@yandex.com](mailto:firethistimecanada@yandex.com)



**CUBADEBATE**

Contra el Terrorismo Mediático  
Against Terrorism in the Media

<http://en.cubadebate.cu>

<http://www.cubadebate.cu>

**JUVENTUD  
rebelde**

<http://www.juventudrebelde.cu>

<http://www.juventudrebelde.co.cu>

Want to  
Travel  
to **CUBA!**?

JOIN THE 2016 CHE GUEVARA  
VOLUNTEER WORK BRIGADE  
TO CUBA!

Adventure • Volunteering • Fun  
( & a whole lot of dancing! )

To register contact BC Brigade Coordinators  
Tamara Hansen 778-882-5223 and  
Thomas Davies 778-889-7664  
[www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade](http://www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade)

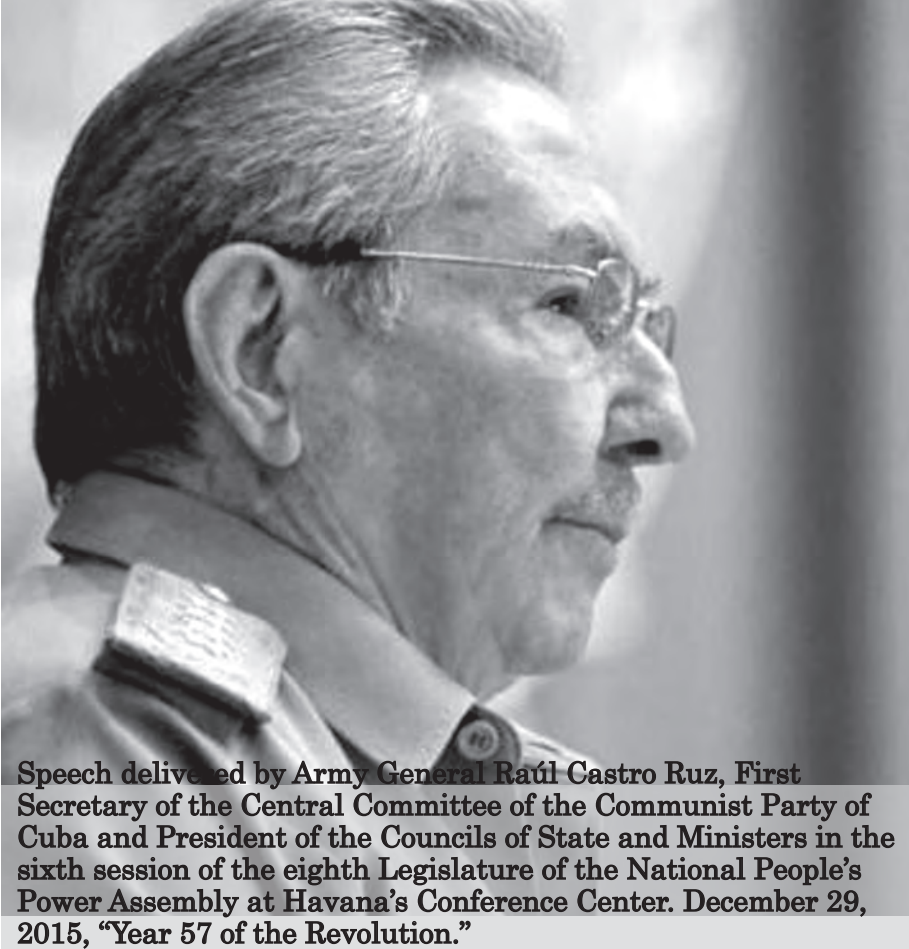
I ♥ Cuba t-shirt



**T-shirts \$20**

Available from:  
Vancouver Communities in  
Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC)  
[www.vancubasolidarity.com](http://www.vancubasolidarity.com)  
[vancubasolidarity@gmail.com](mailto:vancubasolidarity@gmail.com)

# Raúl Castro Speaks



**Speech delivered by Army General Raúl Castro Ruz, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba and President of the Councils of State and Ministers in the sixth session of the eighth Legislature of the National People's Power Assembly at Havana's Conference Center. December 29, 2015, "Year 57 of the Revolution."**

Comrades all:

A year of intensive work and positive results for our country is about to end. We have been quite busy during the last few days: The Council of Ministers met on the eighteenth to discuss, among other issues broadly covered by the media, the performance of the national economy this year as well as the economic plan and budget proposed for the year 2016, which were approved today by this Assembly. On Saturday last, the twelfth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party analyzed the economic situation and, as part of the preparations for the Seventh Congress of the Party, it discussed the proposed Conceptualization of the Cuban Economic and Social Model of Socialist Development as well as the fulfillment of the Objectives approved at the First National Conference of the Party held in January of 2012.

As usual, our deputies, during their work in different commissions, have broadly debated these economic issues, which has allowed me

to highlight only some aspects.

Despite the impact of the international economic crisis, worsened in our case by the effects of the US blockade, which remains unchanged, as well as the external financing restrictions which have been further tightened during the second semester, the GDP grew by 4 per cent this year, which is undoubtedly a good result in the midst of these circumstances. All production sectors have recorded a positive growth, although some failed to meet the plan. The growth rates achieved in social services are similar to the ones recorded last year.

The number of visitors increased to three and a half million, the highest figure ever since the country decided to bet on the development of tourism. The fact that these results are achieved despite the fact that Cuba is still the only country in the world that is banned for US tourists should not be ignored.

However the financial restrictions that we

have continued to face, the commitments entered into during the different processes to reschedule our debt with foreign creditors have been honored and the trend towards the progressive recovery of our economy's international credibility has been reinforced.

The most recent concrete evidence of such trend was the important multilateral agreement reached on December 12 at the French capital with Cuba's 14 creditor countries that belong to the Paris Club Ad Hoc Group, which made it possible to resolve an old problem, taking into account the reality and possibilities of the Cuban economy.

This agreement marks the beginning of a new stage in Cuba's economic, commercial and financial relations with the countries that are part of this mechanism, since it facilitates the access to medium and long term financing, which are most necessary for the investments foreseen in our development plans.

I reiterate the willingness of the Cuban government to honor the commitments resulting from this and other agreements achieved during the re-scheduling of our debt with other States and their private sector.

I should also remind you of the strategic scope of the agreement signed with the government of the Russian Federation for the financing, under favorable terms, of four 200 megawatts power generators and the modernization of our steel industry.

Next year the GDP will continue to grow but at a lesser pace -2 per cent-, due to the expected financial restrictions associated to the drop in the revenues from traditional export products as a result of the reduction of their prices in the international market as it is the case, for example, with nickel.

Furthermore, while the downward trend in oil prices benefits us and the import of foodstuffs, raw materials and manufactured products has been reduced, it is also true that as from this very year 2015, the mutually advantageous relations that had existed with several countries, particularly with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, that has been subject to an economic warfare intended to reverse the popular support to its Revolution, have also been affected.

In a situation like this, there's no room whatsoever for defeatism, as Fidel has always taught us. The history of our Revolution is full of glorious episodes staged in coping with difficulties, risks and threats.



It is now our task to maximize our reserves of efficiency; concentrate our resources in those economic activities that generate export revenues and contribute to replace imports; make the investment process all the more efficient and increase investments in infrastructure and the production sector, while prioritizing the sustainability of power generation and an increased efficiency in the use of energy sources.

At the same time, we should reduce any cost that is not indispensable and make the best use of the resources available in a more rational way and with a vocation to develop the country.

Despite the limitations, the social services that are being provided to all Cubans free of charge will be maintained at levels that are similar to those of recent years.

We will now discuss some foreign policy issues.

In my remarks of July 15 last at the closing ceremony of the Fifth Session of the National Assembly I said, and I quote: "We realize that an imperialist and oligarchic offensive has been launched against the revolutionary and progressive processes in Latin America, which will be resolutely confronted by our peoples", end of quote.

We are sure that the Bolivarian and Chavista Revolution will attain new victories under the leadership of comrade Nicolás Maduro Moros, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in the face of the continued destabilizing charge of the right forces, encouraged and supported from abroad.

We are confident of the commitment of the Venezuelan revolutionaries and people -most of whom support the ideals of Bolívar and Chávez- to the legacy of the unforgettable President Hugo Chávez Frías.

We strongly believe that the Venezuelan people as well as the civic and military unity, as they did back in 2002 to prevent the consolidation of a coup d'état against President Chávez, will not permit that the achievements attained by the Revolution are dismantled and will know how to turn this setback into a victory.

While reiterating Cuba's solidarity, which will always accompany the homeland of Bolívar,

we call on an international mobilization to defend the sovereignty and independence of Venezuela and put an end to the foreign interference in its internal affairs.

In Brazil, the oligarchy spares no efforts to attempt to overthrow President Dilma Roussef through a parliamentary coup. May our solidarity and support go to her and to the brother people of Brazil in the struggle that is being waged to defend the social and political achievements attained during these 13 years of leadership of the Workers' Party.



*President Raúl Castro with President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela at the May Day Celebrations in Havana, Cuba*

History shows that whenever the right wing is in power, it does not hesitate to dismantle social policies, benefit the rich, re-establish neo-liberalism and apply cruel shock therapies against workers, women and youths. Decades of military dictatorships in Latin America and new methods of destabilization against progressive governments have taught us that imperialism and the right forces do not renounce violence either to impose their interests.

In the midst of this risky and complex regional context, it is essential to defend unity within the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) as an indispensable, legitimate unitary and diverse mechanism of political coordination and integration, which made it possible for the first time to gather under a common purpose all 33 States of Our America.

The Proclamation of Latin America and the Caribbean as a Zone of Peace, signed by all heads of State and Government at the Second CELAC Summit held in Havana in January of 2014 is a solid foundation to develop relations between our countries and at the international level.

We feel optimistic over the progress achieved

in the peace talks between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army, a process that is much closer than ever to an agreement that will put an end to the armed conflict that has bled that nation for more than half a century. We will continue to exercise our impartial role as guarantors and as hosts of that process.

Next month, Cuba will be presiding over the Association of Caribbean States, with a firm and invariable commitment to the cause of unity and integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

As has been reported by the national and foreign media, there are thousands of Cubans currently stranded in Costa Rica. They arrived in that nation from other countries of the region with the purpose of travelling to the United States. In their journey, these persons, who departed from Cuba legally, have become victims of unscrupulous smugglers and criminal bands that do not hesitate in jeopardizing the lives of Cuban migrants.

Since the very beginning of this situation, our government has been in touch with the governments of the region in order to find a quick and appropriate solution, as was also requested by Pope Francis, taking into account the difficult circumstances facing these citizens. Cuba has reiterated its commitment in favor of a legal, orderly and safe migration, as well as the right of Cuban citizens to travel and migrate and return to their home country, in compliance with our migration laws.

As was stated in the Declaration of the Revolutionary Government published on December 1st, the "wet foot/dry foot" policy, the Cuban Medical Professional Parole Program and the Cuban Adjustment Act continue to be the principal encouragement to an irregular migration from Cuba to the United States.

Latin American and Caribbean migrants also deserve fair and humane treatment. The abusive and discriminatory practices, the violation of their human rights, the separation of families and the cruel detention and deportation of unaccompanied children should cease.

With regard to a different issue, as we advised early on, the policy of unilateral sanctions against Russia and the tightening of the

siege imposed by NATO on the Russian borders, have only favored a climate of greater instability and insecurity in the region.

The humanitarian crisis generated by the waves of refugees to the European continent, due to the existence of conflicts and poverty derived from the unjust international economic order and the non conventional wars and destabilizing actions of NATO in Northern Africa and the Middle East, has continued to worsen. Europe should take up its responsibility and guarantee respect for the human rights of these persons as well as contribute to the eradication of the causes of this phenomenon.

We reiterate the right of the Syrian people to find an honorable solution to their problems with the participation of the legitimate authorities of that nation, without any foreign interference, while preserving their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In September last we received Pope Francis with admiration, respect and affection, precisely in the year when we commemorate the eightieth anniversary of uninterrupted relations between the Holy See and Cuba. We appreciate his prayers in favor of peace and equity, the eradication of poverty, the protection of the environment and his reflections on the causes of the main problems that currently affect humanity.

During the year that is about to conclude, the bilateral political dialogue with several countries was strengthened, which was evidenced in the visits paid to Cuba by 184 foreign delegations, 25 of them presided over by Heads of State or Government, from all regions of the world.

In September last, we attended, like most of the Heads of State and Government of the planet, the United Nations Summit for the adoption of the Agenda 2030, which approved a new framework for sustainable development, with the purpose of reducing extreme poverty, hunger, diseases, inequality between genders, lack of access to education, basic infrastructure and the degradation of the environment.

The commitments and actions of the industrialized world continue to be insufficient. Only by constructing a new international economic order and a different global financial architecture will it be possible for the countries of the South to meet the goals and objectives that have been approved. The international community has continued to reject the US blockade in several fora, particularly at the United Nations Summit and the high level segment of the UN General Assembly, which I was able to attend, and during which tens of Heads of State and Government called for an end to the blockade.

On October 27 this year, 191 UN member States supported the Cuban resolution, a gesture that is deeply appreciated by our people, which shows that the world does not forget that the blockade still exists.

We have reiterated to the US Government that in order to normalize bilateral relations, the blockade should be lifted and the territory usurped by the Guantánamo Naval Base should be returned to Cuba, as I explained in my declaration before the Council of Ministers on the 18th, in which I also reaffirmed that no one should expect Cuba to abandon the cause of independence or renounce the principles and ideals for which several generations of Cubans have struggled during one and a half centuries.

In order to advance in this process, the right of every State to choose the economic, political and social system it wishes, without any interference whatsoever, should be respected. We will never accept the imposition of any condition that is harmful to the sovereignty and the dignity of our Homeland.

The most important thing now is for President Barack Obama to resolutely use his broad executive powers to modify the implementation of the blockade, which will give some sense to what has been achieved so far and will make it possible to attain sound advances.

Hardly one and a half months ago we commemorated the fortieth anniversary of the independence of Angola and the beginning of "Operation Carlota" which made us remember the internationalist contribution made by our people to that heroic deed worked out by Angolans, Namibians and Cubans, which changed, once and for all, the political map of Southern Africa and accelerated the end of the opprobrious Apartheid regime.

We particularly appreciate the African Unity solidarity towards Cuba and reiterate our support to its development program Agenda 2063. We will continue honoring our cooperation commitments.

This semester, progress was made in the negotiation of a Political Dialogue and Cooperation Agreement between Cuba and the European Union, as well as in our bilateral relations with its member States. In February next year I will pay an official visit to France to reciprocate the visit paid by President Francois Hollande.

Finally, comrades, a few hours ahead of the arrival of the year 58 of the Revolution, I want to convey to all Cubans well-deserved congratulations and the strong belief that we will overcome any challenge in our endeavors to build a prosperous and sustainable socialism.

Thank you very much.

## OUR HERITAGE



**Evelyn Reed**

Revolutionary leader and  
women's revolution theorist

The underlying source of women's oppression, which is capitalism, cannot be abolished by women alone, nor by a coalition of women drawn from all classes. It will require a worldwide struggle for socialism of the working masses, female and male alike, together with every other section of the oppressed, to overthrow the power of capitalism which is centered today in the United States...

First, even though the full goal of women's liberation cannot be achieved short of the socialist revolution, this does not mean that the struggle to secure reforms must be postponed until then. It is imperative for Marxist women to fight shoulder to shoulder with all our embattled sisters in organized actions for specific objectives from now on. This has been our policy ever since the new phase of the women's liberation movement surfaced a year or so ago, and even before.

As Marxists we have a more realistic and hopeful message. We deny that women's inferiority was predestined by her biological makeup or has always existed. Far from being eternal, woman's subjugation and the bitter hostility between the sexes are no more than a few thousand years old. They were produced by the drastic social changes which brought the family, private property and the state into existence.

This view of history points up the necessity for a no less thoroughgoing revolution in socio-economic relations to uproot the causes of inequality and achieve full emancipation for our sex. This is the purpose and promise of the socialist program, and this is what we are fighting for.

*Excerpt from "Women: Caste, Class or Oppressed Sex" 1970*



continued from page 7

12 years. The preconditions to remove Supreme Court judges are as follows:

*Justices of the Supreme Tribunal of Justice may be removed by the National Assembly by a qualified two-thirds majority of the members, after granting the interested party a hearing; in cases involving serious misconduct already characterized as such by the Citizen Power, on such terms as may be established by law. (Art.265).*

"Citizen Power is exercised by the Republican Ethics Council, consisting of the Ombudsman, the General Prosecutor and the General Comptroller of the Republic." (Art.273). Citizen Power is an independent body charged with ensuring probity in the activities of public officials and organs and can instigate investigations and punishment of actions that undermine public ethics and administrative morals (Art.273-283).

The same applies to the members of the National Electoral Council, the body charged with the responsibility to organise all elections, in an electoral system that has been labelled "the best in the world" by the key spokesperson of the U.S. Carter Center, former President Jimmy Carter. Indeed, the same applies to every crucial state institution in Venezuela, including the Ombudsman. In this regard, the constitutional provision is very clear since Art.266 stipulates that the Supreme Court has the power

*to rule as to whether or not there are grounds for impeaching the Vice President of the Republic; members of the National Assembly or the Supreme Tribunal of Justice itself; Ministers; the Public Prosecutor; General Prosecutor; General Comptroller of the Republic; the People Defender; Governors; general officers and naval admirals of the National Armed Forces; or the heads of Venezuelan diplomatic missions.*

Additionally, the President of the Republic has the right (Art.214) to return for reconsideration or amendment any legislative initiative taken by the National Assembly, and if the National Assembly insists, he has the obligation to either promulgate it or he can send it to the Supreme Court for ruling on its constitutionality. The same applies to National Assembly proposals to reduce presidential terms. Besides, there is the popular referendum (Art.71) to decide on matters of national importance that can be called by the President of the Republic, the National Assembly by a simple majority, or by the request of 10% of registered voters, known as Consultative Referenda. Identical requirements exist for the Abrogative Referendum (Art.74), which can be

undertaken in order to abrogate or rescind a law.

Herman Escarrá, probably Venezuela's most prestigious constitutionalist expert, recently asserted that there are robust constitutional and legal mechanisms to ensure that the Right in the National Assembly is unable to use its overwhelming majority to carry out unconstitutional acts, with the Supreme Court, the Public Prosecutor, and Citizen Power being the key to this. There is no state organ of public power that can undertake any kind of action that cannot be subjected to constitutional scrutiny in Bolivarian Venezuela. Thus Escarrá concluded, "there is democratic governance in Venezuela". However, this will only be so from now if the opposition operate and act within the Constitution's parameters. Unfortunately, with their overriding objective to overthrow the government, over the last 17 years, Venezuela's Right, with the support of Washington, have respected the rules of the game only when it suits them but have broken them when it does not. The new President of the National Assembly, an old regime politician who, upon taking over, promised "to get rid of the Maduro government in six months." Thus, there are huge and many political battles ahead in Venezuela.

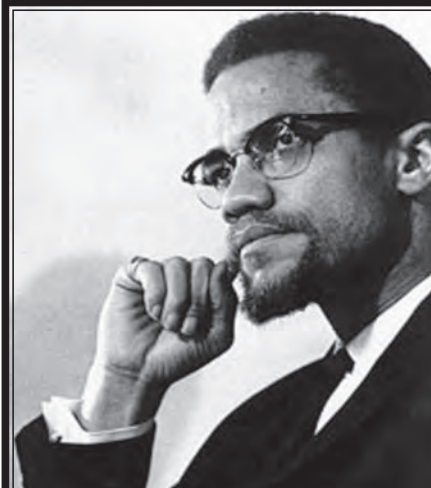
### Conclusion

The huge Right Wing majority in Venezuela's National Assembly has been mistakenly interpreted as having the constitutional power to dismantle the whole Bolivarian institutional and constitutional edifice that has been built over the last 17 years. This can be accomplished only if (a) it forces and wins a recall referendum against President Maduro, and/or, (b) it convenes a Constituent Assembly, which will involve the election of MPs to the Assembly, for which it will need to win a majority and start the whole process from scratch.

The constitutional and political issues discussed above - and the legitimacy and constitutionality of legislative initiatives undertaken by the conservative majority in Venezuela's National Assembly - will be thrown into sharp relief when and if, following their deeply neo-liberal convictions, they seek to water down, undermine, reverse, or abolish any of the highly progressive gains of Chavismo since 1998, such as free and universal health care and education, good quality affordable housing, national control over the nation's natural resources, and so forth.

*\*Francisco Dominguez is the secretary of Venezuela Solidarity Campaign (VCS) UK*  
[www.venezuelasolidarity.co.uk](http://www.venezuelasolidarity.co.uk)

## "By Any Means Necessary..."



### MALCOLM X SPEAKS

*Revolutionary Black Liberation Leader in the U.S.  
1925-1965*

This was mass murder in the Congo, of women and children and babies. But there was no outcry even from the white liberals, even from your "friends." Why? Because they made it appear that it was a humanitarian project. They said that the planes were being flown by "American-trained anti-Castro Cuban pilots." This is propaganda, too. Soon as you hear that it's American-trained, you say, "Oh that's all right, that's us." And the anti-Castro Cubans, "Oh that's all right too, 'cause if they're against Castro, whoever else they're against that's good, 'cause Castro is a monster." But you see how step-by-step they grab your mind?

And these pilots are hired, their salaries are paid by the United States government. They're called mercenaries, these pilots are. And a mercenary is not someone who kills you because he's patriotic. He kills you for blood money, he's a hired killer. This is what a mercenary means. And they're able to take these hired killers, put them in American planes, with American bombs, and drop them on African villages, blowing to bits Black men, Black women, Black children, Black babies, and you Black people sitting over here cool like it doesn't even involve you. You're a fool. They'll do it to them today, and do it to you tomorrow. Because you and I and they are all the same.

They call it a humanitarian project and that they're doing it in the name of freedom. And all of this, these glorious terms, are used to pave the way in your mind for what they're going to do.

*Excerpt from Malcolm X speech at the Ford Auditorium on February 14, 1965.*

articles contain journalists and editorials reminding people of the media's short memory and shortcomings when covering Indigenous issues. "If it bleeds it leads, the saying goes," "When journalists make the long trek north, it's often as complete outsiders with a quick-hit news mentality and rarely a holistic perspective on the problem," "Tuesday was a day of banding together in La Loche, but banding against the media. Many in the small northern community said they feel national reports have misrepresented the community," "I've left town but I'll never forget Kiandra, and I hope the rest of Saskatchewan, and Canada doesn't either," "We fail to ask: How did La Loche become like this?" and finally, "The small Dene community of La Loche, Sask., is exhausted. [...] the media descended on the community. Now La Loche residents say it's time for the media to go home." These or similar comments could be found in articles on CBC, Yahoo News, Global News, Huffington Post Canada, APTN, the National Post and the Globe & Mail. The common thread? That the mainstream media is not doing a good job and is not trusted by Indigenous communities. But what is the purpose of so many bourgeois news articles hawking this same idea?

The third difference in the mainstream media is that even more articles seem to be trying to put a positive spin on everything, writing about future hopes of the community. A few headlines such as, "Hope for La Loche", "In La Loche, signs of hope after Prime Minister's visit", "What 3 residents wish for La Loche's future" and "A familiar pain, a persistent hope" demonstrate this well.

The following quote from an article in the Globe & Mail titled "A familiar pain, a persistent hope" seems to weave all of these tendencies to highlight- Indigenous community problems, the media blaming itself and hope - all in one go. They wrote, "La Loche rarely makes provincial or national headlines, but when it does, there tends to be violence, fires or suicide attached to the story. People here have been dying by suicide at an alarming rate for years. In the community centre, there are photos of deceased young men and women on a suicide-prevention poster; six faces are from last year alone. The crime rate is about eight times the provincial average. Access to mental-health services and addictions treatment is limited and unpredictable. Jobs are scarce. To make matters worse, residents last year were forced to evacuate amid unprecedented wildfires in the region. This is not the only La Loche. The Globe and Mail has spoken with dozens of community members and local leaders,

including many who say their hometown is being unfairly portrayed as a hopeless place where only terrible things happen. The violent crime rate has dropped 50 per cent over the past decade. Millions of provincial dollars have been put toward addressing the housing shortage, with 11 rental units currently under construction. Bingo money and corporate contributions are funding the construction of a much-anticipated youth centre. People are connected to their culture, speaking Dene and trapping. They take care of one another."

So I am left wondering what is going on? Have the government of Canada and mainstream media grown a conscience? Is it really a great time of change and hope for Indigenous people in Canada? Is the bourgeois media finally going beyond the headlines and making an effort to really educate the people of Canada about the legacy of discrimination, racism and injustice faced by native people in Canada?

It seems the community of La Loche doesn't think the media has turned over a new leaf,



Stanley Mission held a special candlelight vigil for the victims of La Loche.

otherwise why would they be kicking the media out of their community only 9 days after this tragedy?

**Why is all of this deep and critical talk not a solution?**

While many of these mainstream articles talk about ending unfair government policies or recognize that many of these struggles and problems come from the government's own policies of assimilation (and two even spoke about the crimes of colonization), they still fall short. On the surface the reporters are doing their jobs, digging into the deeper issues and trying to go beyond the headlines, even being self-critical about their ways.

But with all of this, doesn't it just reinforce the idea that this is an Indigenous problem? While Trudeau promises that progress will be made, is this just about telling non-Indigenous people in Canada, this isn't about "you guys", this is "their" problem. Let us work on it, you go about your daily lives now.

There is still nothing here really recognizing the

criminal nature of the government of Canada in its dealings with Indigenous people. While we can mention report after report or the need to listen more to Indigenous communities - no one is fundamentally questioning how a so called "democracy" and industrialized country can have made so little advance in so long.

I do not speak for Indigenous communities and nations in Canada, I am speaking as a non-Aboriginal person who grew up in Canada being told that this country was something to be proud of, that we are amongst the most equal and the most free. I am tired of non-Indigenous people being lied to by the government and told to leave this issue alone because it is too complex. I am tired of hearing other non-Indigenous people in Canada repeat those racist lies without even trying to put themselves in the shoes of the people of these nations, without listening to them or caring to understand.

How has the government been able to underfund Aboriginal education, child services and communities for so long? How has the government been able to delay the settlement of land claims and treaties while giving corporations free-reign to drill, mine and decimate the land? How has the government been able to maintain its "guardian/ward" relationship with Indigenous people rather than working with Indigenous people on a nation-to-nation basis? How is it still the government of Canada who gets to decide who is a "status Indian", not the nations and communities themselves? How can the government and journalists talk about "hope" in such an 'I have a distant dream' kind of way like the things Indigenous people are asking for are so impossible?

It is not up to non-Indigenous people in Canada to tell Indigenous people what they need. However, we can echo the demands of Aboriginal people to the government of Canada, as well as the provinces and territories. I think we can also agree that communities needing to organize bake sales for mental health or any life-saving social programs is not acceptable in the 21st century - the government is obligated to provide proper funding and compensation to these communities, with no strings attached. We can demand that First Nations, Inuit and Metis people be allowed to decide their own futures, also with no strings attached. This means that the government of Canada recognize the right of Indigenous nation in Canada to self-determination.

Tamara Hansen on Twitter: @THans01



continued from page 3

state...we control them.”

### International Frustration to Palestinian Problem

At the end of January, discussions heated up on the topic of the Palestine-Israeli conflict at the United Nations (UN). This debate began as it was announced that Israel had again illegally approved the construction of 150 new settlements on Palestinian land in the West Bank. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon spoke out criticizing Israel's actions. Ban Ki-moon's comments provoked a typically ignorant and arrogant response from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who claimed the comments "give a tail wind to terrorism." The Secretary General took to an opinion piece in the New York Times to clear up his position stating, "Israeli settlements keep expanding. The government has approved plans for over 150 new homes in illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank. Last month, 370 acres in the West Bank were declared "state land," a status that typically leads to exclusive Israeli settler use... As oppressed peoples have demonstrated throughout the ages, it is human nature to react to occupation."

### Cuba a Real Friend of Palestine

However Ban Ki-moon's lip service towards the Palestinian cause is nothing new and the Palestinians long time friend Cuba was at hand to point out that fact. "Why does this entity not fulfill its responsibilities? What are they waiting for? Who are they trying to protect by not taking action? Why, when there is a clear violation of peace and security, do they not take concrete actions?" responded Cuba's Ambassador to the U.N. Ana Silvia Rodriguez. "The persistent opposition by the United States, through their veto powers, has prevented this organization from making a decision with regards to Palestine," She concluded during

discussion.

Both Kaminer and Cuba hit the nail on the head with their comments. As of September 2015, 136 of 193 member countries of the UN recognize a state of Palestine and at this very moment France is considering adding itself as a member country in favor. So why has nothing happened? As Palestine has a long time friend in Cuba so too does Israel have its long time backer and pay roller the U.S. With the U.S.'s advice and support every major resolution against Israel has been blocked by veto by the U.S. Every major negotiation has fallen apart. The much anticipated "Two-State Solution" has become ever more distant even in the eyes of some of its advocates. Israel has shown over the almost 70 years of occupation, bombing, illegal construction and the apartheid wall that a Palestinian state is not possible and not an option for the Zionist occupiers.

### Which Way Forward?

However there is hope. Tair Kaminer and many in a generation just like her are looking for a new way forward. This sentiment among young Jews living in Israel could prove to be a pivotal turn in the Palestine-Israeli conflict. Tair witnessed herself the pain, suffering and hopelessness imposed on Palestinian people by the Zionist occupation. She made a choice to go to jail rather than be a part of it. Kaminer has proven exactly what the Zionists and their friends in the U.S. ruling class have tried to hide: That Jews and Palestinians can get along, that Jews and Palestinians can sympathize with



Israeli bombing of Gaza, 2014.



each other. That indeed perhaps they could live together!

If the above statement could be true, then what is the problem? The State of Israel. The Zionist occupation built on the destruction of Palestine is the main block towards peace for both people. In fact upon the realization that Palestinians and Jews could live side-by-side we could propose an alternative to the "Two-State Solution". How about a "One-State Solution"! It could be a democratic and secular country called Palestine. With the right of return for all Palestinians expelled from their land, all citizens could have their right to vote and determine the future of their country. Sound familiar?

South Africa went through a similar process of reconciliation. Although certainly there are enormous social problems that need to be solved in South Africa, what was once thought to be impossible, Black and White South Africans living more or less peacefully and equally, has begun to become a reality. Someone who knew this was South African liberation leader Nelson Mandela who once said, "We know too well that our freedom is incomplete without the freedom of the Palestinians." The same could be said for Tair Kaminer and the rest of people especially youth living in Israel. Palestinian liberation from Israeli Zionist occupation is a liberation for us all.

Let's unite and demand an end to the occupation of Palestine by Israel! All together in one state with equal rights! Unity and not division could be our solution!

Follow Noah Fine on Twitter:  
@noahfine



Young Palestinian women make up a large part of the third Intifada.





**Thousands of women have become widowed as result of the war and occupation of Afghanistan, forcing many women to live in absolute poverty and beg in the streets to survive.**

in relevant cases. In fact, a 2013 UN report found that EAW law was only applied in 17% of cases.

Furthermore, the corrupt and conservative US-backed Afghan government has in the meantime passed other laws which restrict women's rights and in fact make it nearly impossible to apply many aspects of the EAW law. The Shia Personal Status Law passed in 2009, which was widely criticized for effectively legalizing spousal rape in Shia households.

In 2014, the Afghan government made a small but significant change to the criminal code which makes it difficult to prosecute in cases of domestic abuse, rape, and forced marriages. The law prevents relatives from being ordered to bear witness against the accused. Since much of the violence against women occurs in the home where only other relatives could witness it, women bringing charges against their husbands or other family members would find it almost impossible to have someone corroborate their story.

As well, it is all but impossible for an Afghan woman to apply for a divorce, even if she were to take the risk. In order to obtain a divorce, women require an ID card - however, they must have the consent of their husband or father in order to obtain one. Eighty percent of rural Afghan women have no ID. Also, while men have the right to divorce their wives for any reason, Afghan women can only divorce their husbands in cases of violence or where the basic necessities of life are not provided. If a woman requests a divorce due to violence, she must have two witnesses.

The struggle for equal rights for women under the law has been one step forward, two steps back. As well, the total lack of government control over much of the country means that justice is administered not by government officials but by local warlords or the Taliban in the areas which they control. As a result,

any change which could be considered even a minute amount of progress does not apply to the majority of Afghan women.

### **US Responsible for Destruction of Women's Rights**

To look at the situation in Afghanistan today, one might wonder if there is any hope for Afghan women. Certainly the media has portrayed

Afghan women as helpless victims and Afghan men as cruel beasts. But the story of Afghans

as a backwards people who need the 'help' of the US and NATO occupiers to bring them into the 21st century is one of the most clever and terrible lies ever told. To truly understand the extent of the tragedy which has befallen Afghan women, we must take a brief look at their history.

Afghan women gained the right to vote in 1919 - just a year after women in Canada. The early and mid twentieth century saw a series of slow but steady gains for women's rights. By the 1970s, women were walking around Kabul freely and attending university classes alongside men. By the 1980s, they filled many of the country's important professional positions. Progress was slower in the rural areas to be sure, but widespread literacy programs had been established to educate men and women alike.

As former US President George W. Bush noted in December 2001, "Before the Taliban came, women played an incredibly important part of [Afghan] society. Seventy percent of the nation's teachers were women. Half of the government workers in Afghanistan were women, and forty percent of the doctors in the capital of Kabul were women. The Taliban destroyed that progress."

George Bush is very correct in his observations - however, he conveniently left out an important fact - that is, who was behind the Taliban's rise to power. The Taliban grew out of the remnants of the Mujahadeen - a group of radical Islamist fighters

whom the US sponsored and trained to fight the Soviet Union during their occupation of Afghanistan. Even the textbooks used by the Mujahadeen (and later the Taliban), such as "The Alphabet for Jihad Literacy" were secretly produced by the US Agency for International Development. This curriculum promoted violence, hatred, and many of the social ills which exist in Afghanistan today.

The cruel reality for Afghan women today is that the US, which is claiming to promote women's rights in Afghanistan today is the very entity responsible for destroying their gains in the first place by imposing war and occupation on Afghan people.

### **No Liberation Under Occupation**

After 15 years of occupation, the US, the wealthiest and most powerful countries in the world have utterly failed to bring any meaningful improvement to the lives of Afghan women. After the photo-ops are over, many girls' schools sit empty. Clinics have no staff to serve female patients. As we have learned from women's activists in the country, many Afghan lawmakers are simply warlords dressed in suits. The small improvements which have been made do not extend to the majority of women who live in rural Afghanistan, and even these improvements should be credited more to NGOs working in the country than to foreign occupation.

Upon learning the dirty history of the US in Afghanistan, it becomes clear that this is not just a matter of corruption or ineptitude on the part of those in charge of the mission. While they have played lip service to the cause of human and women's rights, they have at every turn supported those who oppose these rights.

The ideology of the Taliban was never the real problem for the US - the US helped to foster this ideology in the first place! The claims of supporting human rights, women's rights, and democracy in Afghanistan were never more than an clever tactic to put a human face on



**Covered in coal dust, an Afghan girl grabs spilled charcoal in Kabul. Children, instead of going to school, are often seen picking up scraps of wood and coal for small wages to help feed their families.**



an inhuman and unpopular war. The real objective of the US in Afghanistan was to turn the country into a base of operations in order to maintain their military, political, and economic control of the region, thereby gaining the upper hand over regional competitors such as China and Russia. Despite talks of “troop withdrawal” and “non-combat mission”, the fact is that the US and NATO plan to maintain a permanent presence in Afghanistan. The large embassy, bases, and other infrastructure they have built in the country are evidence of this.

Liberation cannot be brought to women at gunpoint. If any improvement is to be made to the lives of women in Afghanistan, it must come from Afghans themselves. The past 15 years have proven that the US and their allies are not capable of improving the women's situation in Afghanistan, and indeed, have done much to make it worse.

As Reena, RAWA spokesperson stated in her interview with Uprising Radio, “[o]ur people need to be united. They have to break the barriers of the divisions that the US occupation has brought upon Afghanistan. They need to fight the foreign occupiers. Afghanistan has a glorious history of driving out foreigners whenever they have tried to take over Afghanistan. This is the only way.”

### There is Hope: Afghan Women Organize

Amidst the horror and sadness in which most Afghan women live, there is hope, however. Many Afghan women have become aware of their rights thanks to the dogged work of aid groups and women's organizations. Some are taking the brave steps to organize and protest for their rights, even in such a dangerous atmosphere.

The fact that Afghan women are increasingly organizing to demand their rights is perhaps the greatest improvement made to the women's situation in the country in the past decade and a half - but it is no thanks to foreign occupation. In fact, many of the country's vocal women's rights activists are also vocal opponents of the occupation. In this

way, Afghan women are in fact carrying on the legacy of one of Afghanistan's most important national heroes, Malalai of Maiwand. Malalai was a seventeen year old woman who rallied Afghan fighters to victory over the British in the 1880 Battle of Maiwand. Malalai herself died in battle, but lives on in the hearts of the Afghan people, and Afghan women in particular.

### Support Women's Rights! End the Occupation!

Afghan women need our support. They need us to stand beside them in the struggle for their rights. What they do not need is foreign occupation. The US and NATO will not solve the problems of women in Afghanistan, especially when they are supporting and legitimizing a government of men who think much like the Taliban.

Of course, the problems of Afghan women will not be solved overnight simply by ending the occupation - it will take much more



**Afghan women chant slogans against NATO and U.S. military forces demanding an end to the occupation after the killing of Afghan civilians by NATO airstrikes. Kabul, 2010.**

work to undo the physical, economic, and psychological damage which decades of war have brought to Afghanistan. The wounds of the nation will need to be healed bit by bit - but this process can only begin when Afghanistan is freed from the meddling of foreign interests.

The most important support we can give Afghan women is to demand an end to the occupation of their country. Given the important role that the government of Canada has played in the US/NATO occupation of their country, this is the least we can do. We must educate, organize and mobilize people in North America and around the world to build a movement for the liberation of Afghanistan - and Afghan women in particular. We must make the US and NATO hear our message loud and clear:

Yes to women's rights!

No to occupation!

*The Newspaper of*  
**FIRE THIS TIME**  
**MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**  
**www.firethistime.net**  
**Volume 10 Issue 2**  
**February 2016**  
**Published Monthly**

#### Political Editor:

Ali Yerevani - editorftt@mail.com @aliyerevani

#### Editorial Board:

Tamara Hansen, Aaron Mercredi, Alison Bodine, Nita Palmer, Janine Solanki, Thomas Davies, Ali Yerevani

#### Layout & Design:

Azza Rojbi, Noah Fine, Tamara Hansen, Ali Yerevani, Max Tennant, Macarena Cataldo, Sarah Alwell, Lien Gange

#### Copy Editors:

Tamara Hansen, Nita Palmer

#### Publicity & Distribution Coordinator:

Thomas Davies

#### Production Manager:

Azza Rojbi

#### Contributors to this Issue:

Macarena Cataldo, Sanam Soltanzadeh, Manuel Yepe Francisco Dominguez, Sam Stime, Noah Fine

#### Contact:

Phone - (778) 938-1557

Email - firethistimecanada@yandex.com

Mail - PO Box 21607 Vancouver BC, V5L 5G3

#### Subscriptions

For a one year subscription outside the lower mainland, make cheques payable to “Nita Palmer” (Canada \$15, USA \$20, International \$30) Send to: PO Box 21607 Vancouver BC, V5L 5G3

#### Distribution

For Fire This Time in your area across BC, Canada, and Internationally contact Publicity and Distribution Coordinator *Thomas Davies*  
 Phone : (778) 889-7664

#### Submissions & Suggestions

We welcome articles, letters, unsolicited submissions, and suggestions. However, we cannot promise publication. Submissions and suggestions can be made by email by contacting [firethistimecanada@yandex.com](mailto:firethistimecanada@yandex.com) fax, or regular mail. Submissions will not be returned.

The opinions expressed in the newspaper are those of the authors, and do not necessarily represent those of Fire This Time.

#### Donations

If you find Fire This Time to be an effective tool in the struggle of oppressed people for justice, more than ever, we need your support. On top of our regular costs of production, we regularly send members of our editorial board on assignment throughout North America, the Caribbean and beyond in order to make Fire This Time a better resource. These efforts have strained our finances.

If you would like to help with a donation, please make cheques payable to “Nita Palmer”.

Fire This Time is an independent newspaper and publishing. Fire This Time could not be possible without the generous contributions from our supporters.

#### Reprint Policy

Reprinting of articles from Fire This Time by progressive media is welcomed, with source credit to the author and Fire This Time Newspaper. All other media or institutions must request permission

#### Advertisement Policy

Fire This Time does not accept commercial ads. Ads in this paper are political ads and Fire This Time makes no profit off of these ads. The presence of ads are solely for political purposes.

Fire This Time Newspaper is written, produced and distributed entirely by volunteer labour

-ISSN-1712-1817-



**Jose' Marti**  
*El ojo del canario*  
 Eye of the Canary

*Cuban Film & Cultural Night*

**FRIDAY**  
**FEBRUARY 12**  
**7 PM**

**JOE'S CAFE**  
 1150 COMMERCIAL DR.



**WCSO** VANCOUVER COMMUNITIES IN SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA  
[VANCUBASOLIDARITY.COM](http://VANCUBASOLIDARITY.COM)

MARKING INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY 2016  
 CELEBRATING THE REVOLUTIONARY

# WOMEN

OF CUBA X VENEZUELA!



**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9 6-30PM**  
**Roundhouse, Community Centre**  
 181 Roundhouse Mews, at Davie and Pacific, Vancouver  
 SKYTRAIN: The Yaletown - Roundhouse



**WCSO** VANCOUVER COMMUNITIES IN SOLIDARITY WITH CUBA  
[VANCUBASOLIDARITY.COM](http://VANCUBASOLIDARITY.COM)