

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



Fire This Time!

Canada's Imperialist Ambitions

Cartoon by: Tom Poktinko



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Art by: Zekhar Krylov

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WHY WE MUST OPPOSE CANADA'S IMPERIALIST AMBITIONS AND BUILD A BROAD ANTI-WAR, ANTI-OCCUPATION MOVEMENT



By *Nita Palmer*

Sixteen years have now passed since the 'war on terror' began with the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan. The decade and a half which has passed since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre has been characterized primarily by a new era of war and occupation around the world – a war drive which has killed and injured millions and forced millions more to flee their countries. Under the vague justification of 'combating terrorism' and 'building democracy', the United States and their allies have bombed, invaded, and occupied countries in the Middle East and throughout the world.

The beginning of this new era of war and occupation also marked a significant increase in Canada's war drive and combat missions abroad. Canadian Forces deployed to Afghanistan in 2001, playing a major role in occupation of that country. The Liberal government released a White Paper on Defense in 2005 calling for Canada to make its mark in the world diplomatically, economically, and militarily, noting that Canada had to "break through the glass ceiling of its middle-power status" and "compete in a world of rising giants".

In 2008 the Conservative government followed with their own Canada First Defense Strategy, a \$490 billion plan to increase Canada's military over the next 20 years.

For the first time since the Korean War, scores of Canadian soldiers began returning home in coffins. Military recruitment ads popped up everywhere, urging young people to "Fight Fear. Fight Boredom." Parks and even city streets have occasionally become military training grounds.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan became the longest war in Canada's history, with as many as 2,500 troops there for 12 years. Canadian Forces played a leading role in the NATO combat mission in Kandahar province, one of the most heated battle zones in the country and a hub of Afghan resistance to the US/NATO occupation. One hundred fifty-eight Canadian soldiers were killed in Afghanistan; an additional 54 took their own lives after returning home from the battlefield.

Today, Afghanistan remains in shambles. For all the talk of ending terrorism and bringing democracy and human rights to the country, little, if any, has been achieved. Terrorism, both within Afghanistan

and around the world, has increased exponentially since 2001. ISIS/Daesh, one of the most brutal terrorist organizations in the world, has gained a foothold in Afghanistan. The official government has little influence beyond Kabul. Much of the country remains under the control of the Taliban, or worse, the corrupt and bloodthirsty warlords often supported directly or indirectly by the US and NATO.

Tens of thousands of Afghans have died in this war, although there is no official count. Each year has brought an increase in civilian casualties. Sixteen hundred civilians were killed in the first half of 2016 alone. Nearly all were children.

Nearly a million people are internally displaced in Afghanistan, and around six million are refugees abroad. The number of people displaced by fighting continues to grow.

For the vast majority of Afghans, nothing has improved since the war began, and in fact they face more insecurity from fighting than before. Taliban rulers have been replaced by corrupt warlords, often flush with cash from NATO reconstruction contracts.

This is the legacy which Canada has left to Afghanistan. Yet the war there is not over

yet – the US currently has 11,000 troops stationed in Afghanistan and over 3000 more are soon to be deployed. Some foreign policy critics suggest that Canada should rejoin the NATO mission there.

Iraq

While Canada did not officially send troops to Iraq in 2003, the government of Canada quietly supported the US/UK invasion and occupation from behind the scenes. Former US Ambassador to Canada Paul Cellucci noted that, “Ironically, the Canadians indirectly provide more support for us in Iraq than most of those 46 countries that are fully supporting us.” This support included \$300 million to help ‘rebuild’ the country and train the new Iraqi police force after the invasion, as well as sending over one hundred soldiers there to serve with US and British troops, and stationing warships in the Persian Gulf.

The war in Iraq has killed over a million people, decimated the country’s infrastructure, and fomented sectarian violence and division along religious lines. The division, instability, and desperate poverty which the war created helped give rise to Daesh, which now extends its reign of terror over large parts of Iraq, Syria, and other areas of the Middle East and North Africa. Former US military advisor David Kilcullen has declared that, “there would be no ISIS if we had not invaded Iraq”.

The rise of ISIS gave renewed justification for the US and their allies to continue war in Iraq, fighting a monster of their own creation. This time, however, Canadian troops are directly involved in the fray. A total of 850 Canadian troops are currently in Iraq, 650 of which are part of the elite Joint Task Force 2 (JTF-2). While the government of Canada claims their mission is solely to “train, advise, and assist” Kurdish forces fighting ISIS, it has become clear that Canadian forces are routinely engaged in direct combat on the front lines – as shown recently when a JTF-2 sniper was celebrated for a kill shot on an ISIS fighter.

In addition, the Canadian Air Force has flown over 3,000 missions, including refuelling missions for bombers and reconnaissance operations.

Libya

aircraft were deployed to the country, along with JTF-2 commandos. The Canadian Air Force dropped 240 bombs on the country and supported other NATO aircraft in bombing operations.

The NATO mission succeeded not only in overthrowing Gaddafi, who they labelled a dictator, but also set the country back decades in terms of development and human rights. The country, which once was the wealthiest in Africa and boasted free education and health care for all, has been fragmented into a society ruled by rival gangs and terrorist organizations – including al-Qaeda, with whom the CIA directly worked with to overthrow Gaddafi.

Far from bringing human rights to the country and increasing regional stability, the NATO mission destroyed one of the wealthiest countries in Africa, dramatically increased the refugee crisis, and created yet another haven for terrorist organizations in the region. This is Canada’s legacy in Libya.

Haiti

In February 2004, Canada’s JTF-2 forces participated in the invasion of Haiti along with forces from the US and France, overthrowing the democratically elected president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The United Nations Stabilization Mission that followed did nothing to stabilize the country. In fact, the UN forces were documented on several occasions committing terrible human rights abuses such as widespread rape and mass murder. Today, Haitians remain in desperate living conditions, with nearly 60% of the country living in poverty (UN Development Program). The UN-installed government is one of the most corrupt in the world, with Haiti ranked as fifteenth most corrupt country in the world by Transparency International.

Eastern Europe and Beyond

The government of Canada’s involvement in wars abroad does not end at these direct military interventions, however. Canada currently has hundreds of troops stationed in Latvia, leading a NATO battle group



Canadian special forces helicopter on a mission in northern Iraq. February 20, 2011.



Libyan boys walk near the wreckage of a school bombed by NATO/Canada forces in August 2011.

Canada also participated in the military intervention in Libya and the



Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan.

overthrow of President Muhammad Gaddafi. Two naval vessels and over a dozen

there, supposedly to deter the threat of a Russian invasion.

As well, the government of Canada has sold millions of dollars worth of military equipment, including automatic weapons, bombs, and military vehicles to Israel and Saudi Arabia, who are fighting brutal wars against Palestine and Yemen, respectively.

What is Behind Canada's War Drive?

Why has the government of Canada, a country which once preferred to stay behind the scenes of wars abroad, now taking a leading role?

The world we live in today is marked by increasingly frequent capitalist economic crises. As well, new countries have begun to rise as economic powerhouses – such as China and Russia – which threaten the hegemony of the current economic powers like the US. In order to delay these crises and to maintain their status as economic powers, the US and their allies have launched ever more frequent wars to gain control of resources, trade markets, and militarily strategic locations. These wars are not a 'war on terror' – they are a war for military and economic control.

As for Canada's role, there is perhaps no better explanation of the reasons the government of Canada has joined this war drive than the International Policy Statement written in 2005:

"Make no mistake: We are in the midst of a major rebalancing of global power. New nations are rising as military and economic forces. Many established powers are striving to maintain their influence through regional integration and new alliances. In a world of traditional and emerging giants, independent countries like Canada—countries with small populations—risk being swept aside, their influence diminished, their ability to compete hampered. That may sound dramatic, but the stakes are that high. We will have to be smart, focused, agile, creative and dogged in the pursuit of our interests."

The Policy Statement then goes on to explain the need (among other things) for the extension of Canada's influence in the world diplomatically, and the expansion and strengthening of Canada's military and for an increasing



A Canadian soldier stands guard during the 2004 invasion of Haiti.

involvement in military interventions abroad. In short, the government of Canada is not sending troops to fight a 'war on terror', but to ensure that the Canadian state establishes itself in a strong position among global economic competitors.

The Oxford Dictionary defines imperialism as "a policy of extending a country's power and influence through diplomacy or military force". This is essentially the definition of Canada's foreign policy! The wars and interventions by the government of Canada are not about stopping terrorism;

they are pursuing a policy of imperialism.

Why We Need an Anti-War Movement

None of these wars have ever been about stopping terrorism. They have not made the world safer or expanded democracy or human rights – quite the opposite. The only beneficiaries of these wars are members of the wealthy elite – the capitalist class – who are protecting their economic position. Poor and working people in Canada and around the world have nothing to gain and everything to lose from these wars.

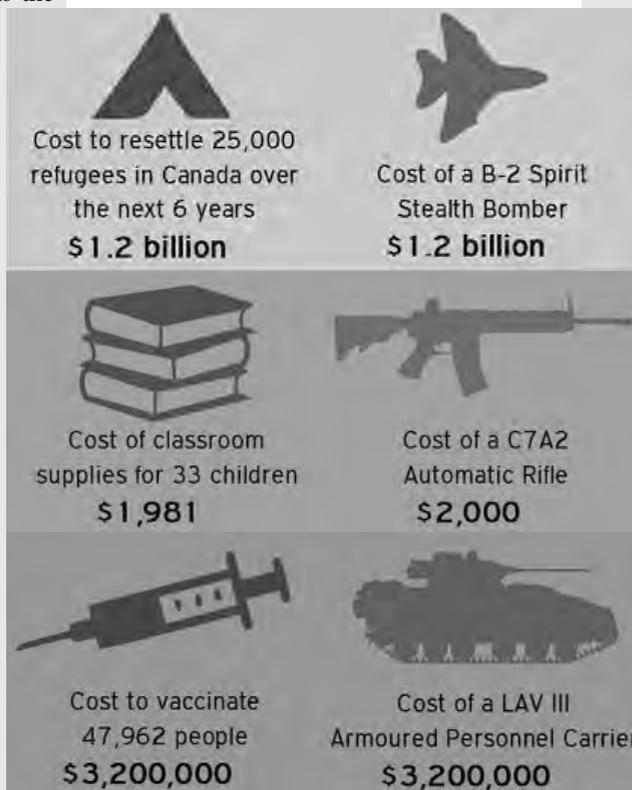
We have a moral and ethical duty to defend our fellow human beings from what amounts to little more than slaughter. The vast majority of casualties in this war drive are not soldiers but innocent men, women, and children. Beyond defending our fellow human beings though, we must stand up for our own rights as well. This war drive has had a deep impact here at home too. Budgets for health care, education, and other vital services are being slashed because there is 'no money' even as the military budget has been expanded exponentially.

At the same time, our basic democratic rights and right to free speech are being eroded through legislation such as the Conservatives' Bill C-51 and the 'modified' version proposed by the Liberals, Bill C-59. This legislation allows detention for up to a week without charge, sharing of Canadian citizens' and residents' personal information among various government agencies without a warrant, and vastly expanded data collection capabilities. Under the guise of 'anti-terrorism', this legislation can and surely already is being used to target anti-war, social justice, and environmental activists, making it easier for the government of Canada to silence voices of dissent against this war drive.

It is vital that we build a strong, united, and effective movement to demand an end to the wars abroad and the war against poor and working people at home. Building an anti-war movement is about more than just opposing bombs being dropped; it is a fight for our own rights, a fight for the very survival of humanity, and the first step toward building a world which is fundamentally based on justice and peace.

Follow Nita Palmer on Twitter: @NGP1z0

At What Cost?



Infographics source: Conscience Canada

“Since 9/11, our disproportionate fear of terrorism has been used to slowly increase the powers of intelligence and security agencies without proof that these powers are necessary to keep us safe, and with always greater risks and impact on our civil liberties. This is called the national security creep. We must not allow C-59 to continue this dangerous and damaging trend.”

– *Tim McSorley, National Coordinator for the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group*

As Parliament reconvened in September, one of the major issues to be dealt with is the Liberal’s Bill C-59, which they put forward as a “fix” to the wholly condemned “Anti-Terrorism Act” Bill C-51. While most groups acknowledge Bill C-59 does soften some of the most flagrant human rights violations, a coalition of 38 organizations and experts recently issued an open letter explaining that overall Bill C-59 does not fix the ills of Bill C-51 and fails to protect human rights.

The concerns of the organizations, which include Amnesty International Canada, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association, include:

- The newly renamed Security of Canada Information Disclosure Act still permits far too much information to flow between too many departments;
- The no-fly list still lacks adequate due process and funding to address complaints;
- The bill fails to reverse the low threshold the Conservative bill set for terrorism peace bonds that can limit a suspect’s freedoms;
- Preventative detention powers introduced in 2001 are still in place and remain deeply problematic;
- the risk for abuse of CSIS disruption powers is reduced, but the government has yet to demonstrate either their necessity or constitutionality;
- Newly created oversight agencies lack the guarantees necessary to ensure their effectiveness;
- The general risk that security activities will contribute to torture remains, and
- The bill legitimizes troubling conduct, including mass surveillance and extensive

REPEAL BILL C-51!

By Thomas Davies

SCRAP BILL C-59!

*Follow Thomas Davies on Twitter:
@thomasdavies59*

data-mining.”

This also comes as Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale issued new directives to the RCMP, CSIS and the Canada Border Services Agency which leaves the door open to the use of information gained through torture, “when necessary to prevent loss of life or significant personal injury.” This is especially troubling because there is an admission that these agencies were already using information gained through torture, and he essentially still leaves future use to their discretion – which is open to massive abuse.

At the same time, a B.C. Supreme Court judge acquitted Othman Hamdan on four terrorism charges related to his Facebook posts. Justice Bruce Butler criticized the RCMP’s method of presenting its evidence, pointing out that because the police only took screenshots of parts of Mr. Hamdan’s Facebook posts, so other content that could have provided context was not preserved. Mr. Hamdan, who represented himself, also pointed out that the translations from Arabic were full of errors.

What does it all mean? Basically the government and police forces keep telling us to “trust them” with new powers to violate human rights - as they continue to show they should absolutely not be trusted. The new open letter is a great step forward in addressing the falsehoods of Bill C-59, and should be followed up with continued education, organization and mobilization to Repeal Bill C-51 and Scrap Bill C-59. The Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 in Vancouver just held its successful 134th weekly action – imagine if these actions were replicated across the country in a consistent and coordinated campaign. We need to make it loud and clear to Justin Trudeau that there is no such thing as partial human rights, and that we are willing to organize together to defend and extend them!

**REPEAL BILL C-51!
SCRAP BILL C-59!
OUR SECURITY LIES IN DEFENDING
THE RIGHTS OF ALL!**



Continuing the petition campaign during 134th weekly action



Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale left the door open to using information derived from torture



Another banner drop before the daylight becomes shorter in October

By Alison Bodine

Today, Venezuela is facing increasing threats, sanctions and foreign intervention. The United States has been the leader of these attacks against Venezuela's sovereignty, especially through illegal sanctions, threats of military intervention, and the funding of violent right-wing counter-revolutionary groups and political parties. Venezuela was even included in the latest version of U.S. President Trump's shameful and inhuman travel ban.

The U.S.-led campaign for "regime change" in Venezuela works hand-in-hand with Venezuela's violent right-wing opposition. These counter-revolutionaries have attempted to overthrow the democratically elected government of President Nicolas Maduro through an economic war of hoarding, price gouging and other sabotage. They have also waged a violent campaign

On September 22, 2017, Chrystia Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs announced that Canada is imposing sanctions against the government of Venezuela under the Special Economic Measures Act. According to Global Affairs Canada the sanctions are "against 40 Venezuelan officials and individuals who have played a key role in undermining the security, stability and integrity of democratic institutions of Venezuela."

These sanctions are the latest escalation in a series of attacks carried out by the government of Canada in the name of supporting "human rights" and "democracy" in Venezuela; an overplayed and unsubstantiated excuse that has been used by the government of Canada before to justify their violations of Venezuela's sovereignty.

On top of the sanctions, Canada has been a leading voice demanding that the Organization of American States (OAS) to intervene in the internal affairs of Venezuela by implementing the Inter-American Democratic Charter. As well, Canadian Professor Irwin Cotler is a member of a sham panel that is being set-up by the OAS, outside of Venezuela and without the support of the Venezuelan people, to investigate possible "crimes



on the streets of Venezuela that resulted in the deaths of over 100 people in the four months between April and July, some of whom were burnt alive just for being suspected "Chavista" supporters of the Venezuelan government.

Is Canada Really Concerned about "Human Rights" and "Democracy" in Venezuela?

Since the election of Hugo Chavez in 1998, under both Liberal and Conservative governments, all major political parties in Canada have been consistent in their attacks against Venezuela and the Bolivarian Revolutionary process.



against humanity" by the government of Venezuela. Cotler, a former Liberal politician and lawyer, is a good representation of who is participating in this panel. He is hardly unbiased in his views on Venezuela, as an international representative for Leopoldo Lopez, a leader in Venezuela's violent opposition who is currently under house arrest after being convicted for inciting violence.

The government of Canada was also instrumental in the development of the "Lima Declaration," which was released in August, 2017 following meeting in Peru of representatives from Canada and right-wing governments in Latin America. The Lima Declaration includes unsubstantiated allegations of the violation of various "human rights" and "democratic" norms in Venezuela, as well as a declaration that the signatories will not recognize the National Consistent Assembly elected in Venezuela on July 31, 2017.

After all of these threats and rhetoric, the question must be asked, since when has the government of Canada been in a position to condemn other countries for their abuses of "human rights" and "democracy"? As it goes, people in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

This September at the UN General Assembly, Prime Minister Trudeau highlighted the human rights abuses committed by



Demonstration in Caracas, Venezuela against the Organization of American States and the attempt of right-wing Latin American governments, the United States and Canada, to implement the Interamerican Democratic Charter in violation of the sovereignty of Venezuela.

the government of Canada against Indigenous people. “There are, today, children living on reserves in Canada who cannot safely drink, or bathe in, or even play in the water that comes out of their taps....And for far too many Indigenous women, life in Canada includes threats of violence so frequent and severe that Amnesty International has called it ‘a human rights crisis,’” were just some of what he said that day.

Even just reading this alone, how it possible that Canada can claim to be a leading example for human rights around the world? Not only that, following his speech, Trudeau has been widely criticized for crying crocodile tears. Even if he recognizes the atrocities and abuses of the Canadian government, his government continues to take little action towards improving the human rights of Indigenous people in Canada.

Government of Canada is No Friend to the People of Venezuela

In the face of this hypocrisy, the Trudeau’s government continues to carry forward interventionist policies against Venezuela.

In fact, leaders in Venezuela’s violent right-wing opposition have always found a friendly ear with the Canadian government, and have even had the opportunity to speak in Canadian parliamentary hearings. For example, Maria Corina Machado, an opposition leader, has often found an audience within the Canadian government

despite her clearly anti-democratic record. For starters, she participated in the 2002 coup-attempt against Hugo Chavez. She was also the founder of a so-called “election monitoring” organization Súmate, which received at least \$22,000 from the government of Canada. Súmate is in no-way supportive of “free and fair elections in Venezuela.” During a 2004 referendum, they were exposed by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter because they “deliberately distributed this erroneous exit poll data in order to build up, not only the expectation of victory, but also to influence the people still standing in line.”

In order to establish and maintain their close relationship with counter-revolutionaries in Venezuela, the Canadian Embassy in Venezuela also awards a “Human Rights Prize” each year to a member of Venezuela’s violent opposition. This is a shameful insult to the mass majority of the people of Venezuela who support the government of Nicolas Maduro and



Demonstration against escalating foreign intervention in Caracas, Venezuela. The woman’s sign reads “I am an anti-imperialist and a “Maduro-ist” (supporter of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro) - August 14, 2017

the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

Build a Strong Movement in Canada in Defense of Venezuela

As long as the government and revolutionary people in Venezuela continue to take a stand for their sovereignty and self-determination, the government of Canada will continue their attacks. The Bolivarian revolutionary process has made massive improvements in the lives of the majority of people in Venezuela, at the expense of private and international interests, including those of Canadian mining and resource extraction companies.

As people living in Canada, we must build a strong and united movement in the defense of the sovereignty and self-determination of the people of Venezuela. We must fight against the illegal sanctions by the government of Canada. We must also demand that the government of Canada to recognize the legitimacy of Venezuela’s democratically elected government and put an end to their meddling in the internal affairs of Venezuela.

U.S./Canada Hands Off Venezuela!

No more U.S./Canada Sanctions and Threats!

Follow Alison Bodine on Twitter: @Alisoncolette

“FROM THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION TO THE CUBAN REVOLUTION: THE QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP, IMPLEMENTING THE SOCIALIST PROJECT & WHERE WE ARE TODAY!”

OCTOBER 27-29, 2017

RUSSIAN HALL - 600 CAMPBELL AVE. - VANCOUVER, BC, CANADA

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CHE GUEVARA CONFERENCE

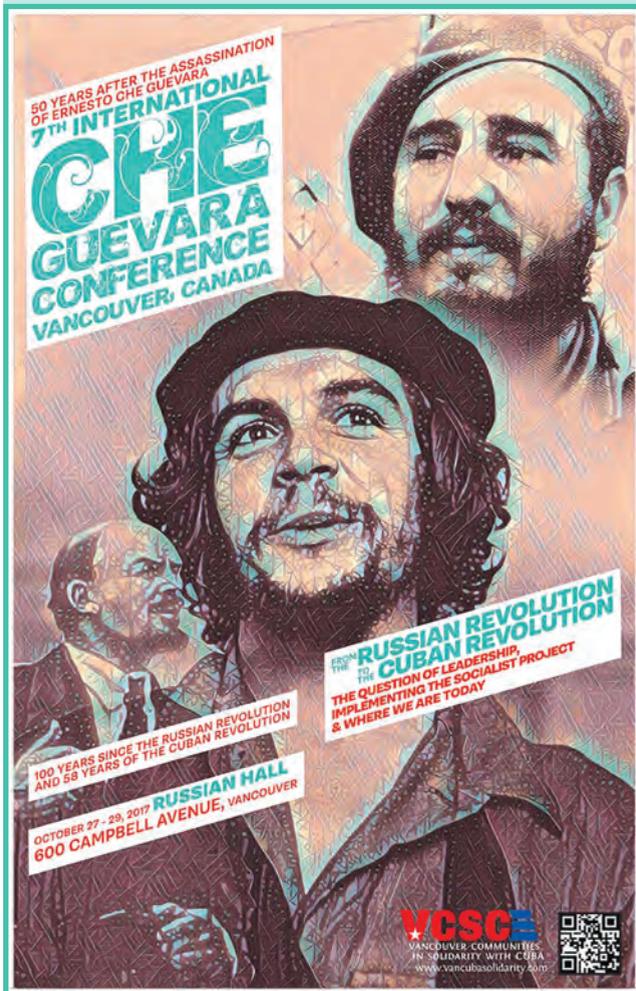
Since the triumph of Cuba’s 1959 revolution to today, the vision and political ideas that shape the Cuban revolution remain a source of inspiration, discussion and debate around the world. Through the ideas of Fidel, Che, the Cuban socialist project, and the dynamics of the mass revolutionary movement, and especially the concept of Revolutionary Internationalism, Cuba has become a country renowned for its achievements in health, education, culture, science and many other aspects of social and human progress. The Cuban socialist project and the Cuban revolutionary leadership, despite 50 years of an inhuman and criminal blockade by consecutive US administrations, have never wavered to imperialist pressure.

The International Che Guevara Conference is an opportunity to discuss and debate the ideas of the Cuban revolution, its dynamism and how it has impacted Latin America and the world.

The First International Che Conference in 2008 was on the theme “Che Guevara, Thinker and Fighter: Are His Ideas Relevant for the 21st Century?” Every Vancouver international Che Guevara Conference since has discussed and debated a wide variety of topics including: “50 Years of Dynamism of the Cuban Revolution,” “Cuba & Revolutionary Internationalism,”

“Cuba Today - The Gains & Challenges,” “Cuba’s Reforms: Capitalism or Socialism,” and “Cuba: a Socialist Project in Progress.” Each conference has featured amazing guest speakers from Cuba, Venezuela, the U.S. and Canada.

In October 2017 the 7th International Che Guevara Conference will take place on two historic anniversaries: 50 years after the assassination of Ernesto Che Guevara and 100 years since the Russian Revolution. The conference will honour these events with the title, “From the Russian Revolution to the Cuban Revolution: the question of leadership, implementing the socialist project & where we are today.” The conference will feature many prominent guests from Cuba, Venezuela, England, the U.S. & Canada.



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*** PROGRAMA DE LA CONFERENCIA EN INGLÉS Y ESPAÑOL ***
CONFERENCE PROGRAM IN ENGLISH & SPANISH

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This event will take place on the traditional and unceded territories of the Tsleil-Waututh (səlilwətaʔ), the Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm), and the Squamish (Skwxwú7mesh) Coast Salish Nations.

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**** Concert & Fundraiser for Reconstruction Efforts in Cuba after the Devastating Hurricane Irma ****

Concert is Free!

Suggested donation of \$10 towards The Canadian Network on Cuba's Hurricane Relief & Reconstruction Fund after the devastating Hurricane Irma.



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Gerardo Alfonso's music is a beautiful mix, rich in influence from many musical genres from across the Caribbean. Gerardo masterfully weaves these sounds with his urban and popular roots, while never abandoning his trova spirit! For this, Gerardo Alfonso has become one of the most unique singers and songwriters in Cuba and Latin America. Don't miss a great chance to see this incredible performer! Join us for an amazing evening! The last two times Gerardo Alfonso has been in Vancouver it was standing room only!

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**** Two days of Speakers, Workshops, Film, Art Displays, Discussion & Revolutionary politics! ****

FEATURING SPEAKERS:



MS. TANIA LÓPEZ LARROQUE

(Havana, Cuba) Chief of Mission, Consul General of the Cuban Consulate in Toronto. She graduated from the University of Havana's School of Foreign Languages and completed her

post-graduate studies at the Institute of Foreign Affairs in Havana. She has been working for Cuba's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINREX) for 17 years, including posts in Mexico, Argentina, and now Canada



MR. WILMER OMAR BARRIENTOS FERNÁNDEZ

(Caracas, Venezuela) His Honourable Mr. Wilmer Omar Barrientos Fernández is the Ambassador of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to

Canada. He studied at the Military Academy and graduated in 1983. On February 4, 1992, he collaborated with Comandante Hugo Chavez in the first coup attempt in Venezuela. He has served as a general of the National Armed Forces of Venezuela, and has occupied diverse positions of government. He also served as Minister for the Office of the Presidency, and Minister of Industry, under Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro.



MR. WILFREDO J. PEREZ BIANCO

(Caracas, Venezuela) Chief of Mission, Consul General of the Venezuelan Consulate in Vancouver. He graduated from the Central University of

Venezuela with a degree in journalism in 1992, and received his doctorate in Information Sciences from the Autonomous University of Barcelona in 1998. He has been working for Foreign Affairs for 7 years in the Venezuelan Ministry of Popular Power, and

held various positions in public administration institutions in Venezuela between 1999 and 2017, such as the Venezuelan Foreign Trade Bank, the Superintendence of Tax Administration and Customs, the Superintendence of Banks, as well as other financial institutions. He joined the student struggle from an early age and stands firmly in the defense of the Bolivarian Revolution.

GERARDO ALFONSO

(Havana, Cuba) Born in Guanabacoa, Cuba on November 1, 1958, Gerardo was musically inclined from a young age, and by his teenage years he was performing his first compositions. In 1980, he joined the

Nueva Trova Cubana Movement, which was made up of young and talented musicians who were especially interested in the development of socially engaged lyrics. He regularly gives talks and workshops on music and its social and political contexts.

HELEN YAFFE

(London, England) An Economic History Fellow at the London School of Economics. Helen is author of "Che Guevara: The Economics of Revolution" (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

She has worked on a variety of newspapers and publications and has presented papers at conferences and seminars around the world. Helen will be joining us via videoconference from London.



ARNOLD AUGUST

(Montreal, Canada) Author of many articles and books including: "Democracy in Cuba and the 1997-98 Elections" (Editorial José Martí, 1999), "Cuba

and Its Neighbours: Democracy in Motion" (Fernwood Publishing/Zed Books, 2013), "Cuba-U.S. Relations: Obama and Beyond" (Fernwood, 2017). An accomplished journalist, he contributes articles in English, Spanish and French to news and research sites in the United States, Canada, Cuba, Latin America and Europe. Since 1997, he has spent extended periods in Cuba pursuing his intensive investigations.

ISAAC SANEY

(Nova Scotia, Canada) Professor at Dalhousie and Saint Mary's Universities. He holds a PhD in history from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.

His dissertation focuses on the intersection of Cuban and southern African history. He is the author of the widely acclaimed book, "Cuba: A Revolution in Motion" (London: Zed Books, 2004). He is also a co-chair of the Canadian Network on Cuba.



WENDY HOLM

(Bowen Island, Canada) Professor of UBC's International Field Studies in Sustainable Agriculture (Cuba), agrologist, economist, author, award winning journalist, and sustainability expert. Wendy is also the organizer of the Canada-Cuba Farmer to Farmer Project.



ALI YEREVANI

(Vancouver, Canada) Political Editor of the Fire This Time Newspaper. Participant in the 1979 Iranian Revolution.



TAMARA HANSEN

(Vancouver, Canada) Coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba. Author of "5 Decades of the Cuban Revolution: The Challenges of an Unwavering Leadership" (Battle of Ideas Press, 2010).



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A Speech by Bolivian President Evo Morales

72nd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

Tuesday, September 19, 2017

Brother Secretary-General of the United Nations, Brother President of the General Assembly; sisters and brothers heads of state and governments, sisters and brothers of the delegations present and international organizations.

On behalf of the people of Bolivia we express our solidarity with the people of Mexico, dismayed by what happened today in the afternoon with the earthquake. We express our strength, with brotherhood to face the problems that were presented in Mexico.

Sisters and brothers, again the leaders of the world meet in the historic hall of the United Nations General Assembly; again meet to express our positions on the great challenges facing our family, the human family. The UN, as the Charter of the United Nations says, was created to preserve the coming generations from war, to promote social progress and to raise the standard of living of all. Unfortunately many of these promises did not become reality, and after more than 70 years we see that in many cases, instead of moving towards those objectives, we have regressed.

As we have affirmed many times, as a result of the abusive practices of imperialism, the savage consumer market that sustains capitalism and the endless colonialist adventures, the world is going through a multiplicity of crises that, instead of being solved, are getting worse. War and violent

conflicts remain the scourge of millions of people; as a result of external aggressions in Iraq up to one million are dead, in Syria almost half a million people have been killed, in Libya tens of thousands have been killed and in Yemen the humanitarian crisis is of great proportions.

History has shown that with the objective of appropriating natural resources and geopolitically controlling the world, military bases are deployed, invasions are organized and governments are brought down to create chaos and benefit from that situation. Many of these invasions have fueled the emergence of terrorist groups that unleash violent confrontation and attacks on civilian populations, further damaging innocent victims. Bolivia condemns terrorism and calls to combat it by resolving the structural causes of its emergence.

Sisters and brothers, to this terrible situation is added the climate crisis, again we warn that this year has been the hottest in the history of the planet. Hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, droughts, air pollution, oceans and the consequent extinction of species are the product of the capitalist model, consumption levels and excessive industrialization. In this situation the countries of the South, those that least contaminate, suffer the most consequences; it is imperative that all countries adhere to the Paris Agreements to jointly assume the enormous challenges to save the planet.

It is unjustifiable and inadmissible that



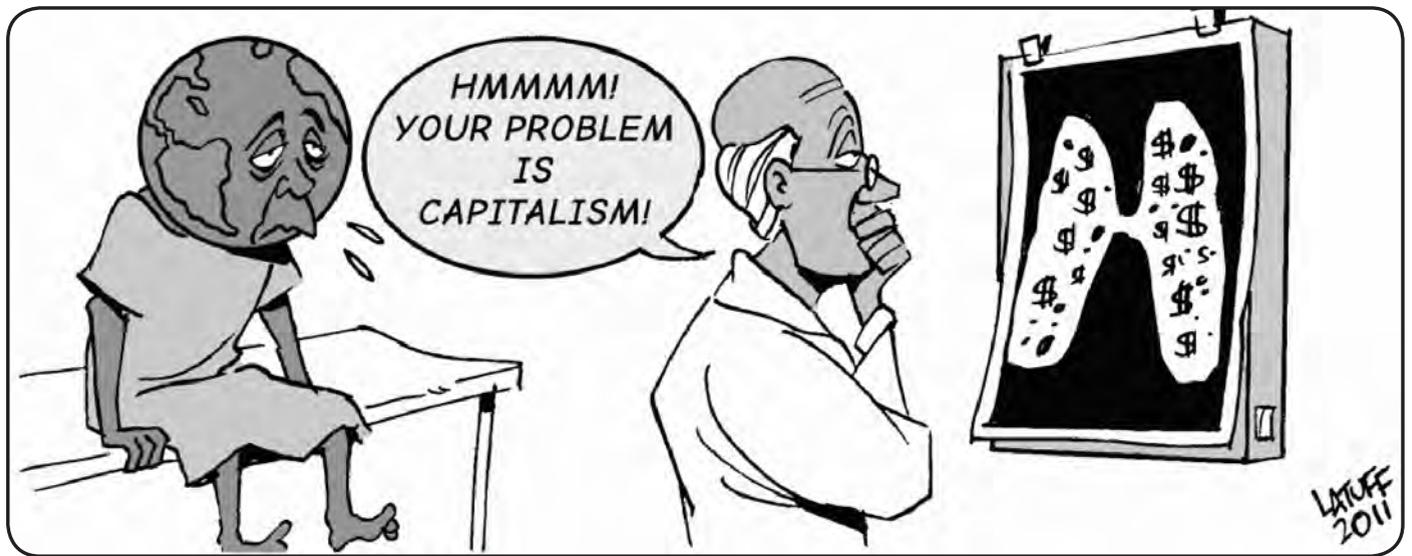
the United States has decided to turn its back on the Paris Agreement. In refusing to join in the global effort, as one of the primary polluters, its government has become a threat against Mother Earth. A unequivocal political will is necessary, we can not expect the market forces to finally convince the leaders of the capitalist world to take action.

We extend our embrace of solidarity to our Caribbean brothers who suffer the consequences of hurricanes, together as a united family we will share what we have, even if little.

Sisters and brothers of the United Nations: our rivers, the seas, our forests, and science give us irrefutable evidence and call us to act. Water is the blood of Mother Earth which feeds rivers, lakes, seas, and oceans which are the source of life and balance, are universal common goods that cover three quarters of our house, and which bathe the coasts of all continents and the islands of the earth. They do it naturally, without distinguishing political boundaries or nationalities, they must be respected, cared for, shared and preserved for future generations. Bolivia has promoted the recognition of water as a human right for the survival of humanity, so our Constitution also prohibits it from being a profit or mercantilism.

The use of water should pave the way for opportunities that promote collaboration, interaction and harmony among peoples, not to create conflicts over their origin, property or use. It is in this spirit, safeguarding Human Rights, the sovereign rights of our natural resources and in search of good-neighborly agreements, that Bolivia hopes to resolve its differences on the waters of

“
It is clear that the main threat to Mother Earth, against multilateralism, against peace and against freedom is the government of the United States.
”



Silala, now filed before the Court of Justice. Water should not be the cause of internal or international conflicts, it should bring together and unite all States, nations, communities, peoples, social movements and individuals. For Bolivia, the hydrographic heart of South America, this concept is very important: "Where water flows, peace must flow."

Sisters and brothers, the world is not only hotter every year; every year is more unfair, more unequal. The gap between those who have most of everything and those who have almost nothing is ever widening. According to Oxfam's most recent report, eight people have the same wealth as 3.6 billion people, or half of the world's population. Inequality is immoral. If 800 million people are hungry, it is not because food is lacking, if millions of children die of an infection, it is not because of a lack of medicines. If 1.1 billion people do not have electricity is not because of lack of energy in the world, if there are illiterates is not because there are missing books, if there are poor in the world is not because of lack of resources. As a product of war, terrorism and other conflicts, we are experiencing the worst humanitarian crisis.

Since the founding of the United Nations, more than 128 million people require humanitarian assistance in 33 countries, more than 65 million people have been forcibly displaced, more than 22 million made refugees. It is the highest number in the whole history of humanity, more than 10 million people have no state, sisters and brothers this strikes us. Bolivia condemns the construction of walls and the laws that pretend to criminalize migration, for

this we propose the creation of a universal citizenship. This social and migratory crisis has its origin in the dominant world order, which in its unbridled voracity for profit and appropriation of the common goods generates violence, promotes inequalities and destroys Mother Earth.

The migrant can not be held responsible for economic-financial crises or insecurity; we must not allow them to be criminalized, no emigrants are illegal. Some governments, far from contributing to the solution of the structural causes of this phenomenon such as wars, the consequences of climate change or economic asymmetries among states, announce greater restrictions on migration policy, massive expulsions and the construction of walls. The walls go against the history of humanity, the walls mutilate science and knowledge, walls enclose the soul, ignite hatred of difference, drown freedom.

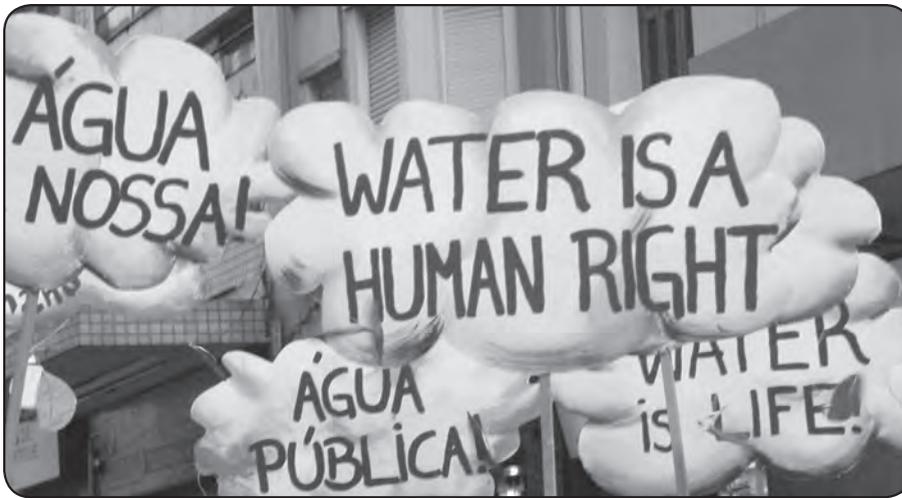
Last June, in Tiquipaya, Bolivia, representatives of social movements from 45 countries of the world met at the World Conference for a World without Walls to Universal Citizenship, in which we elaborated alternative proposals with a humanist vision, to welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants. Brother Francis, in August of this year, dedicated a pastoral document to these four verbs.

We also call upon the governments of the world to jointly combat criminal networks that deal with human beings; declare human trafficking and trafficking a crime against humanity and reflect on the formation of a Global Ombudsman to ensure the observance of human rights as an instance of universal jurisdiction.

Let me call again to build a global pact that will be the bridge to advance in the much desired Universal Citizenship, because there are no categories, there are no differences between nationals and foreigners, because we are all human beings children of Mother Earth.

Sisters and brothers, the United States must unilaterally and unconditionally end the unjust blockade that has caused so much suffering for the Cuban people for almost 60 years. It is an unjust and failed policy and therefore must cease; the new actions announced by President Trump signify a resurgence of the economic and commercial blockade against Cuba and revert the advances achieved in the relations between Cuba and the United States. The United States must not only lift this criminal blockade, but must pay compensation for the damages caused and restore Guantánamo to Cuban sovereignty.

I give my heartfelt homage to the memory of Commander Fidel and Commander Che Guevara, who from this rostrum warned us that in the empire is not to be trusted. Sisters and brothers, we welcome the progress made in the peace process in Colombia, the consolidation of a ceasefire, the delivery of weapons and the incorporation of the FARC into political life. Revolutions are made with vows and the conscience of the people, and not with bullets. Latin America and the Caribbean are consolidated as a region of peace. Bolivia categorically condemns the unilateral sanctions and threats of ambition of the United States government against the Bolivarian Republic from Venezuela. Our region is no one's backyard.



We also reject the conduct of the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, Luis Almagro, who is a spokesman for anti-Latin American interests. We express our solidarity and support for the president, Nicolás Maduro, and the Venezuelan people. We welcome and support the continuity of democratic dialogue.

For Bolivia the Palestinian cause is inalienable; we condemn the criminal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory; condemn the construction of new settlements; we condemn military aggression against the Palestinian people. We demand that the settlement of the two States, with a Palestinian State, with the pre-1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, be put into effect.

We condemn the unilateral and illegal military actions of the United States has deployed to the territory of the Arab Republic of Syria. We salute the efforts of the Secretary-General, Russia, Iran, Turkey and Kazakhstan to achieve a cease-fire and build in the process of peace negotiation, we are convinced that if not for interventionism we would not suffer such a war.

Bolivia condemns the development, manufacture and use of all nuclear or chemical weapons, which constitute a serious threat to peace and security and to life itself. We demand that any military exit to the situation on the Korean peninsula be avoided and that negotiations be resumed as soon as possible to resolve that conflict in a peaceful manner. It is clear that the main threat to Mother Earth, against multilateralism, against peace and against freedom is the government of the United States.

Sisters and brothers, it is my duty to inform the economic and social situation of my country, Bolivia has consolidated an economic model that successfully faces the global crisis of the capitalist system. Bolivia leads the economic growth of our region, we have recovered our country. Bolivia is an area free of illiteracy, a territory free of US military bases, free from the DEA and free from USAID, a territory free of impositions from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. In the last decade we have reduced extreme poverty from 38.2% to 16.8% and by 2025 we will eradicate it. We have reduced inequality. In 2005 the richest 10% had 128 times more wealth than the poorest 10%; now the richest 10% has 46 times more than the poorest 10 percent. Bolivia is the second country in the world with the largest number of women in Parliament. We have a commitment to multilateralism, to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, to the peaceful and negotiated resolution of conflicts. In 2003, Bolivia went before the International Court of Justice in The Hague in search of a peaceful solution to the centenary demand that we have with the Republic of Chile and that allows us to exercise our right to sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean.

We seek a solution that would be as much from the historical and legal antecedents as the vocation of understanding between neighboring peoples and siblings through a timely and effective negotiation in good faith. We have confidence in the decisions of the Court and in a process of dialogue and negotiation that, unlike the invasion we suffered in the past, will contribute to overcoming differences to enhance our complementarity, free, sovereign access to the Pacific Ocean and good

use of shared natural resources. We are grateful for the solidarity of many States, peoples and leaders who have expressed their support for our maritime cause.

And I take this opportunity to ask all the participants of this Assembly of American States to join us in this goal of peace, justice, which is an indispensable challenge for the fraternity of our peoples and the next generations.

Sisters and brothers, every year that passes our challenges deepen, the walls are constantly being built, war continues to destroy peoples and global warming continues to be a growing threat. If we really want to resolve these issues, if we really want to represent the interests of our peoples, it is essential that basic services be recognized as Human Rights, that the rights of Mother Earth be recognized and respected, that a struggle against capitalism, colonialism and imperialism be undertaken.

Only from the success of this struggle will a true world order be born, based on solidarity, equality, social justice and respect for the rights of peoples to peace and development in order to live well. Thank you very much.

Battle of Ideas Press

**CUBA'S HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
WHERE HUMANITY COMES FIRST**

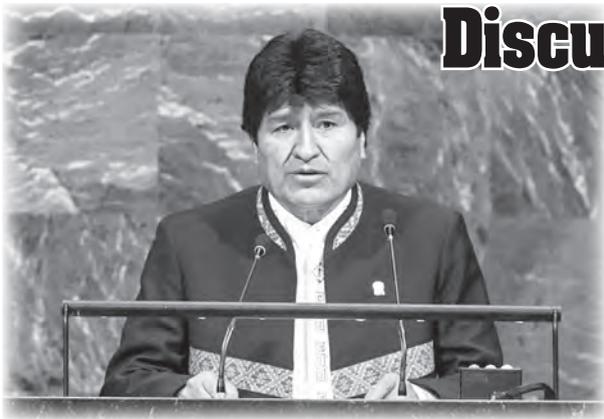
BY ELLEN BERNSTEIN

"The unfailing dedication of Cuban health care professionals has led to dramatic improvements in quality of life, for millions of people who previously had no other hope of receiving decent medical care. IFCO/Pastors for Peace is pleased to honor the diligent health care professionals of the Cuban health care system. We especially pay tribute to Cuba's national leadership, whose vision of universal health care as a right of every citizen sets an example for the world."

Ellen Bernstein has served as Associate Director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) since 2003. She has been a key staff member of IFCO's project Pastors for Peace, and has been deeply and integrally involved in IFCO's historic work with Cuba.

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Discurso del Presidente Boliviano Evo Morales



Está claro que la principal amenaza contra la Madre Tierra, contra el multilateralismo, contra la paz y contra la libertad es el gobierno de EE.UU.



*** EN ESPAÑOL ***

72° Periodo de Sesiones de la Asamblea General de Naciones Unidas
Martes, 19 Septiembre 2017

Hermano Secretario General de las Naciones Unidas, hermano Presidente de la Asamblea General; hermanas y hermanos jefes de Estado y de gobiernos, hermanas y hermanos de las delegaciones presentes y a organismos internacionales.

A nombre del pueblo de Bolivia expresar toda nuestra solidaridad al pueblo de México, consternados por lo sucedido hoy en la tarde con el terremoto. Expresar nuestra fuerza, con hermandad enfrentar los problemas que se presentaron en México.

Hermanas y hermanos, nuevamente los líderes del mundo nos reunimos en el histórico salón de la Asamblea General de Naciones Unidas; nuevamente nos encontramos para expresar nuestras posiciones sobre grandes desafíos que enfrenta nuestra familia, la familia humana. La ONU, como reza la Carta de las Naciones Unidas, fue creada para preservar a las generaciones venideras de la guerra, para promover el progreso social y elevar el nivel de vida de todas y de todos. Lamentablemente muchas de estas promesas no se convirtieron en realidad, y después de más de 70 años vemos que en muchos casos, en lugar de avanzar hacia esos objetivos, hemos retrocedido.

Como lo hemos afirmado en muchas oportunidades, producto de prácticas abusivas del imperialismo, del mercado de consumo salvaje que sostiene al capitalismo y las interminables aventuras colonialistas, el mundo está atravesando una multiplicidad de crisis que, en lugar

de ir resolviéndose, van empeorando. La guerra y los conflictos violentos siguen siendo el flagelo de millones de personas; producto de agresiones externas en Irak se ha provocado hasta ahora más de un millón de muertos, en Siria casi medio millón de personas han perdido la vida, en Libia decenas de miles han sido asesinadas y en Yemen la crisis humanitaria es de grandes proporciones.

La historia ha demostrado que con el objetivo de apropiarse de recursos naturales y de controlar geopolíticamente al mundo se despliegan las bases militares, se organizan invasiones y se provoca la caída de gobiernos para crear caos y beneficiarse de esa situación. Muchas de esas invasiones han alimentado la aparición de grupos terroristas que desatan la confrontación violenta y atentados en poblaciones civiles causando aún más daño a víctimas inocentes. Bolivia condena el terrorismo y llama a combatirlo resolviendo también las causas estructurales de su surgimiento.

Hermanas y hermanos, a esta terrible situación se suma la crisis climática, nuevamente alertamos que este año ha sido el más caliente de la historia del planeta. Huracanes, terremotos, inundaciones, sequías, contaminación del aire, de los océanos y la consecuente extinción de especies son producto del modelo capitalista, de los niveles de consumo y de la industrialización desmedida. En esta situación los países del Sur, los que menos contaminamos, somos los que más sufrimos las consecuencias; es imprescindible que todos los países se adhieran a los Acuerdos de París para asumir conjuntamente los enormes desafíos para salvar el planeta.

Es injustificable e inadmisibile que Estados Unidos haya decidido darle la espalda al Acuerdo de París como uno de los principales contaminadores al rechazar sumarse al esfuerzo global, su gobierno se ha convertido en una amenaza contra la Madre Tierra. Es necesaria una voluntad política unívoca, no podemos esperar que sean las fuerzas del mercado las que finalmente convenzan a los líderes del mundo capitalista y tomar acción.

Hacemos llegar nuestro abrazo de solidaridad a nuestros hermanos del Caribe que sufren las consecuencias del paso de huracanes, juntos todos como familia unida compartiremos lo que tenemos, aunque sea poco.

Hermanas y hermanos de las Naciones Unidas, nuestros ríos, los mares, nuestras selvas, la ciencia nos da pruebas irrefutables y nos convoca a actuar. El agua es la sangre de la Madre Tierra que alimenta de vida a ríos, lagos, mares, océanos son fuente de vida y generan equilibrio, son bienes comunes universales que cubren tres cuartas partes de nuestra casa, baña las costas de todos los continentes y las islas de la tierra. Lo hacen naturalmente, sin distinguir fronteras políticas ni nacionalidades, se debe respetar, cuidar, compartir y preservar para futuras generaciones. Bolivia ha promovido el reconocimiento del agua como un derecho humano para la sobrevivencia de la humanidad, por ello nuestra Constitución también prohíbe que sea objeto de lucro o de mercantilismo.

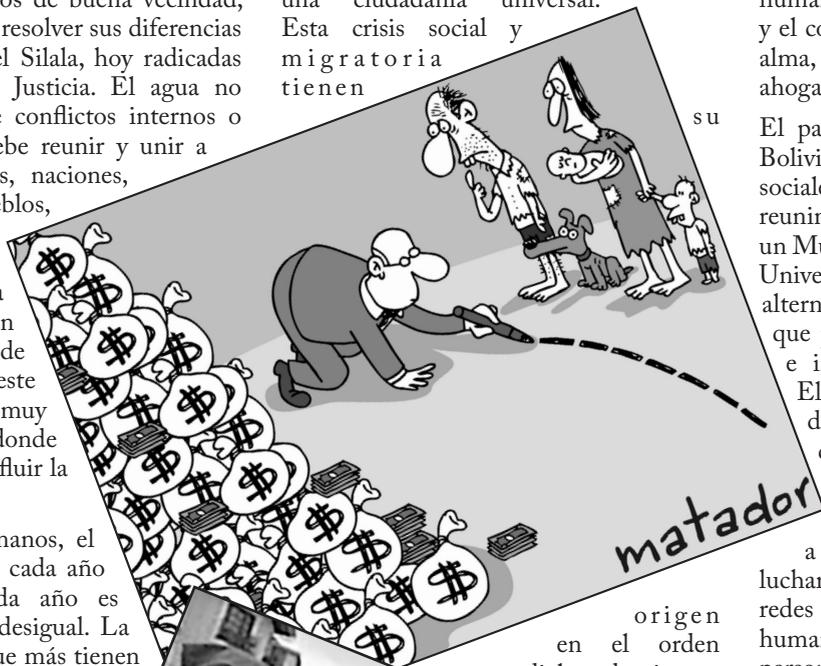
El uso del agua debe allanar el camino para oportunidades que promuevan la colaboración, la interacción y la armonía

entre los pueblos, y no para provocar conflictos sobre su origen, propiedad o uso. Es con ese espíritu, resguardando los Derechos Humanos, derechos soberanos de nuestros recursos naturales y en procura de acuerdos de buena vecindad, que Bolivia espera resolver sus diferencias sobre las aguas del Silala, hoy radicadas ante la Corte de Justicia. El agua no debe ser causa de conflictos internos o internacionales, debe reunir y unir a todos los Estados, naciones, comunidades, pueblos, movimientos sociales e individuos. Para Bolivia, el corazón hidrográfico de Sudamérica este concepto es muy importante: "donde fluye el agua debe fluir la paz".

Hermanas y hermanos, el mundo no sólo es cada año más caliente; cada año es más injusto, más desigual. La brecha entre los que más tienen todo y entre los que no tienen casi nada es cada vez más amplia. Según el informe más reciente de Oxfam ocho personas tienen la misma riqueza que 3.600 millones de personas, es decir, la mitad de la población del planeta. La desigualdad es inmoral, si 800 millones de personas padecen hambre no es porque falta la comida, si millones de niños mueren por una infección no es por falta de medicamentos. Si 1.100 millones de personas no tienen electricidad no es por falta de energía en el mundo, si hay analfabetos no es porque faltan los libros, si hay pobres en el mundo no es por falta de recursos. Producto de las guerras, del terrorismo y de otros conflictos estamos atravesando la peor crisis humanitaria.

Desde la fundación de las Naciones Unidas más de 128 millones de personas requieren asistencia humanitaria en 33 países, más de 65 millones de personas han sido desplazadas forzosamente, más de 22 millones son refugiados. Es el número más alto de toda la historia de la humanidad, más de 10 millones de personas no tienen

Estado, hermanas y hermanos esto nos llama la atención. Bolivia condena la construcción de muros y las leyes que pretenden criminalizar a la migración, para ello proponemos la creación de una ciudadanía universal. Esta crisis social y migratoria tienen



origen en el orden mundial dominante que en su voracidad



desmedida por el lucro y la apropiación de los bienes comunes genera violencia, promueve desigualdades y destruye a la Madre Tierra.

No se puede responsabilizar al migrante por las crisis económico-financieras, o a la inseguridad; no debemos permitir tampoco que se los criminalice, ningún emigrante es ilegal. Algunos gobiernos lejos de aportar a la solución de las causas estructurales que provocan este fenómeno como las guerras, las consecuencias del cambio climático

o las asimetrías económicas entre los estados anuncian mayores restricciones en su política migratoria, expulsiones masivas y la construcción de muros. Los muros van en contra de la historia de la humanidad, los muros mutilan la ciencia y el conocimiento, los muros encierran el alma, encienden el odio a la diferencia, ahogan la libertad.

El pasado mes de junio, en Tiquipaya, Bolivia, representantes de movimientos sociales de 45 países del mundo nos reunimos en la Conferencia Mundial por un Mundo sin Muros hacia la Ciudadanía Universal, en la cual elaboramos propuestas alternativas con una visión humanista, que permita acoger, proteger, promover e integrar a las personas migrantes. El hermano Papa Francisco, el mes de agosto de este año, dedicó un documento pastoral a estos cuatro verbos.

Asimismo, hacemos un llamado a los gobiernos del mundo para luchar de manera conjunta contra las redes criminales que trafican con seres humanos; declarar a la trata y tráfico de personas como delito de lesa humanidad y reflexionar sobre la conformación de una Defensoría Mundial que vele por la observancia de sus Derechos Humanos como una instancia de jurisdicción universal. Me permito convocar nuevamente a construir un pacto mundial que sea el puente para avanzar en la tan anhelada Ciudadanía Universal, porque no hay categorías, no hay diferencias entre nacionales y extranjeros, porque todos somos seres humanos hijos de la Madre Tierra.

Hermanas y hermanos, Estados Unidos debe poner fin de manera unilateral e incondicional al injusto bloqueo que por casi 60 años ha causado tanto sufrimiento al pueblo cubano. Es una política injusta y fracasada y por lo tanto debe cesar; las nuevas acciones anunciadas por el presidente Trump significan un recrudescimiento del bloqueo económico financiero y comercial contra Cuba y revierten los avances logrados en las relaciones entre Cuba y los Estados Unidos. Estados Unidos no solo debe levantar ese bloqueo criminal, sino que debe reparar económicamente por los

daños provocados y restituya Guantánamo a la soberanía cubana.

Rindo mi más sentido homenaje a la memoria del comandante Fidel y al comandante Che Guevara, quienes desde esta tribuna nos advirtieron que en el imperio no se confía. Hermanas y hermanos, saludamos los avances en el proceso de paz en Colombia, la consolidación de cese al fuego, la entrega de armas y la incorporación de las FARC a la vida política. Las revoluciones se hacen con votos y la conciencia de los pueblos, y no con balas. América Latina y El Caribe se consolidan como una región de

paz. Bolivia condena categóricamente las sanciones unilaterales y las amenazas de ambición del gobierno de Estados Unidos en contra de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela. Nuestra región no es patio trasero de nadie.

Rechazamos también la conducta del secretario general de la OEA, Luis Almagro, quien es un portavoz de los intereses anti latinoamericanos. Expresamos nuestra solidaridad y apoyo al presidente, Nicolás Maduro, y al pueblo venezolano. Saludamos y respaldamos la continuidad del diálogo democrático.

Para Bolivia la causa palestina es irrenunciable; condenamos la criminal ocupación israelí sobre territorio palestino; condenamos la construcción de nuevos asentamientos; condenamos las agresiones militares en contra del pueblo palestino. Exigimos que se ponga en efecto la solución de los dos Estados, con un Estado Palestino, con las fronteras previas a 1967 y con Jerusalén Oriental como su capital.

Condenamos las acciones militares unilaterales e ilegales de Estados Unidos ha desplegado al territorio de la república árabe Siria. Saludamos los esfuerzos del secretario General, de Rusia, de Irán, Turquía, Kazajistán por lograr un alto al fuego y construir en el proceso de negociación de paz, estamos convencidos que de no ser por el intervencionismo no

sufriríamos esa guerra.

Bolivia condena el desarrollo, fabricación y el uso de todas las armas nucleares o químicas, constituyen una seria amenaza a la paz y a la seguridad y a la vida misma. Exigimos que se evite cualquier salida militar a la situación en la península



Evo Morales, Fidel Castro y Hugo Chávez

coreana y que se reanuden cuanto antes las negociaciones que permita resolver ese conflicto de manera pacífica. Está claro que la principal amenaza contra la Madre Tierra, contra el multilateralismo, contra la paz y contra la libertad es el gobierno de Estados Unidos.

Hermanas y hermanos es mi deber informar la situación económica y social de mi país, Bolivia ha consolidado un modelo económico que hace frente exitosamente a la crisis mundial del sistema capitalista. Bolivia lidera el crecimiento económico de nuestra región, hemos recuperado la patria, Bolivia es territorio libre de analfabetismo, territorio libre de bases militares norteamericanas, libre de la DEA y libre de USAID, territorio libre de imposiciones del Fondo Monetario Internacional y del Banco Mundial. En la última década hemos reducido la extrema pobreza de 38,2% a 16,8% y para el año 2025 la erradicaremos. Hemos reducido la desigualdad, en 2005 el 10% más rico tenía 128 veces más riqueza que el 10% más pobre; ahora el 10% más rico tiene 46 veces más que el 10 por ciento más pobre.

Bolivia es el segundo país del mundo con el mayor número de mujeres en el Parlamento. Tenemos un compromiso con el multilateralismo, con los principios de la Carta de las Naciones Unidas, con la resolución pacífica y negociada de los conflictos. En 2003 Bolivia acudió ante la Corte Internacional de Justicia de La

Haya en busca de una solución pacífica a la centenaria demanda que mantenemos pendiente con la República de Chile y que nos permita el ejercicio de nuestro derecho a un acceso soberano al océano Pacífico.

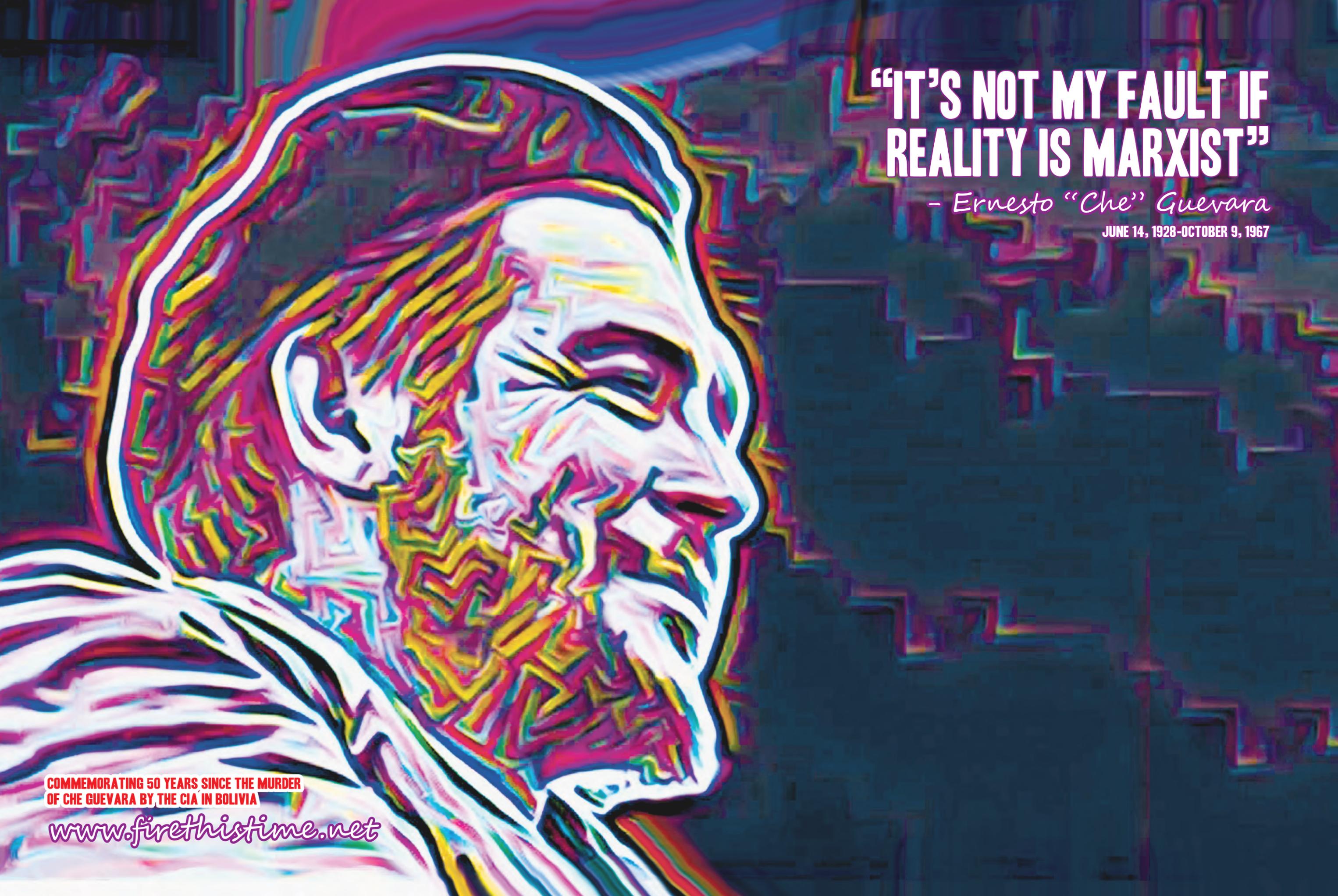
Buscamos una solución que sería tanto de los antecedentes históricos y jurídicos como de la vocación de entendimiento entre pueblos vecinos y hermanos a través de una negociación de buena fe, oportuna y efectiva. Tenemos confianza en las decisiones de la Corte y en un proceso de diálogo y negociación que, a diferencia de la invasión que sufrimos en el pasado, contribuirá a superar diferencias para potenciar nuestra complementariedad, el acceso libre, soberano al

océano Pacífico y el buen uso de los recursos naturales compartidos. Agradecemos la solidaridad de muchos Estados, pueblos y líderes que han expresado su apoyo a nuestra causa marítima.

Y aprovecho para solicitar a todos los participantes de esta Asamblea de Estados americanos nos acompañen en este propósito de paz, justicia, que es un desafío irrenunciable para la confraternidad de nuestros pueblos y de las próximas generaciones.

Hermanas y hermanos, cada año que pasa nuestros desafíos se profundizan, los muros no dejan de construirse, la guerra no deja de destruir pueblos y el calentamiento global sigue siendo una amenaza creciente. Si en verdad queremos resolver estos temas, si en verdad queremos representar los intereses de nuestros pueblos es imprescindible que los servicios básicos sean reconocidos como Derechos Humanos, que se reconozcan y respeten los derechos de la Madre Tierra, que se emprenda una lucha contra el capitalismo, contra el colonialismo y contra el imperialismo.

Solamente del éxito de esta lucha nacerá un auténtico orden mundial basado en la solidaridad, en la igualdad, en la justicia social y en el respeto de los derechos de los pueblos a la paz y al desarrollo para vivir bien. Muchas gracias.



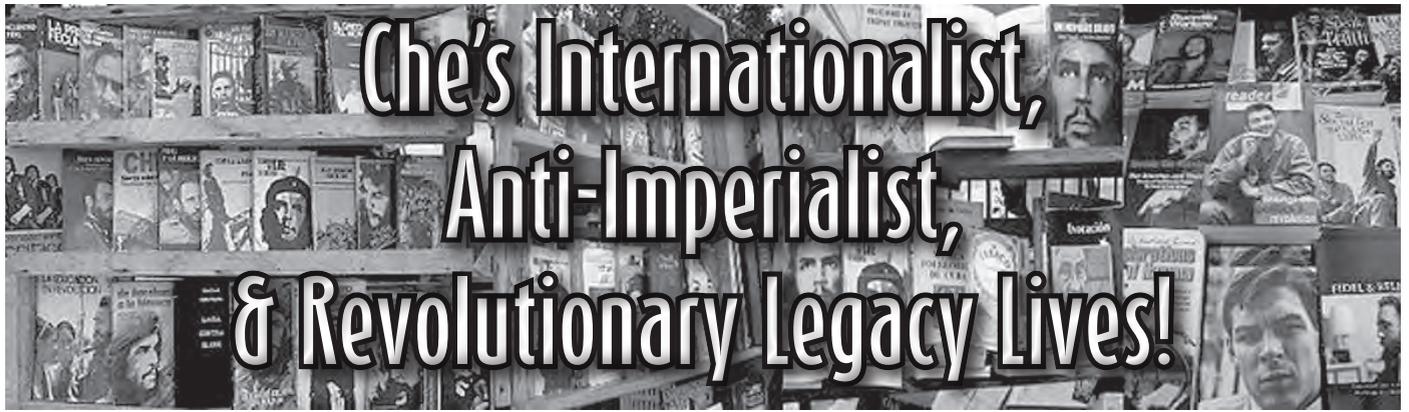
**“IT’S NOT MY FAULT IF
REALITY IS MARXIST”**

- Ernesto “Che” Guevara

JUNE 14, 1928-OCTOBER 9, 1967

COMMEMORATING 50 YEARS SINCE THE MURDER
OF CHE GUEVARA BY THE CIA IN BOLIVIA

www.firethistime.net



By Tamara Hansen

October 8th 2017 marks fifty years since the capture and assassination of one of the great socialist revolutionaries of human history, Ernesto “Che” Guevara de la Serna.

Che Guevara was born in Argentina on June 14, 1928, to a middle-class family. He attended school in Argentina, and earned his degree in 1953, becoming a medical doctor. However from a young age his thoughts and solidarity were not limited to his nationality.

Che Guevara took a famous motorcycle trip across Latin America with his friend, Alberto Granado, highlighted in the collection of his writings, “The Motorcycle Diaries: Notes on a Latin American Journey” (Ocean Press, 2003) and the beautiful feature film “The Motorcycle Diaries” (2004). While many of his political ideas and convictions were still developing at that time, he allowed himself to be educated by the humble workers and peasants that he met along their journey. Through his travels, Che Guevara was deeply touched by the inequality and injustice he saw throughout Latin America, and he decided to take action.

Che Guevara, the Revolutionary Internationalist

In 1955, Che Guevara met Fidel Castro in Mexico. Under an amnesty for Cuban political prisoners, the U.S.-backed Batista regime in Cuba had released Fidel, who was in Mexico assembling the “Movimiento 26 de Julio” or the July 26th movement. Che Guevara later wrote about his first meeting with Fidel, explaining, “I chatted with Fidel all night. And at dawn I was the doctor of his future expedition. In fact, after all of the experiences of my walks throughout Latin America, it did not take much to incite me to enter a revolution against a tyrant, but Fidel impressed me as an extraordinary man. The most impossible things were the ones he faced and solved.”

In November 1956 Che Guevara would board the Granma yacht with Fidel Castro,

Raul Castro, Juan Almeida, and other Cuban revolutionaries as they voyaged from Mexico to the eastern part of Cuba to begin their uprising against the Batista regime in the Sierra Maestra Mountains. Che was sometimes teased for not being Cuban, and was invited as the rebels’ medic, however he would soon prove himself in the battlefield and become a legendary thinker, leader, and fighter in the triumphant Cuban revolution.

From these beginnings, Che Guevara’s commitment to revolutionary internationalism was clear. When Che Guevara landed in Cuba with the Granma on December 2, 1956, he had never even visited Cuba before. However, he was so convinced of the need for revolution that he joined the “Movimiento 26 de Julio” to fight on the side of the oppressed towards liberation.

When the Cuban revolution triumphed and the Cuban dictator Batista was forced to flee the country on January 1, 1959, Che Guevara was in Santa Clara, in the center of the island. There he had just led an important strategic battle against Batista’s forces, which is considered the lynch-pin battle that resulted in the triumph of the Cuban revolution. Che was by this time the Comandante of his column of guerilla fighters, having risen quickly in the ranks because of his bravery, intelligence, leadership, and revolutionary commitment. Arriving soon after in Havana,

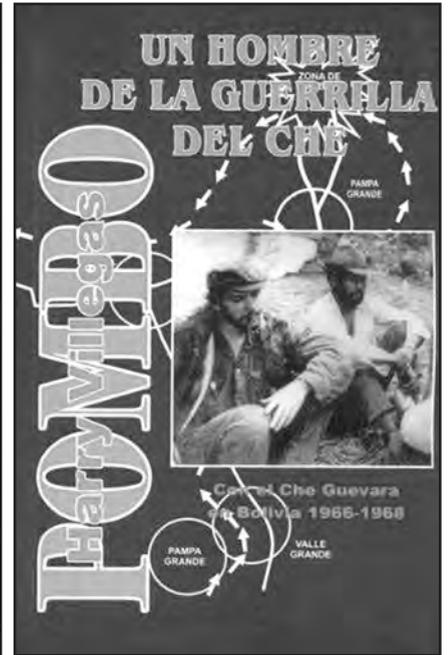
he became military chief of “La Cabaña” fortress and took the lead in training the Rebel Army.

Over the next years Che Guevara built a family in Cuba, became President of the National Bank of Cuba, and later minister of industry. In Cuba, he implemented land redistribution and the nationalisation projects. He led a campaign for strengthening voluntary work, of which he noted, “voluntary work is a school for creating consciousness.” He also represented Cuba’s revolutionary government in delegations around the world, visiting countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

In 1965, Victor Dreke, was Che Guevara’s second in command for Cuba’s internationalist mission in the Congo, as Cuba tried to train and bolster liberation movements in Africa. In July 2016, Dreke explained on Cuba’s Mesa Redonda program, “No one in the Congo imagined that Che was going to go. That is why when we arrived in Tanzania, everyone waiting for us was so shocked and impacted by the fact that it was Che who would be in charge of the mission personally.” This demonstrated



Che & Fidel in the Sierra Maestra Mountains during the Cuban revolution



L to R: Che driving a tractor during his time as Minister of Industry; Che Guevara & Aleida March after their marriage, standing with Harry "Pombo" Villegas; The cover of Pombo's book about his internationalist mission with Che in Bolivia

the importance of this mission to the Cuban government and the Cuban revolution, that they were willing to send one of their best and most talented leaders.

Dreke explained some of the reasons the Cubans were only in the Congo for 7 months, such as the divisions within the Congolese liberation movement, and the Cuban's misunderstandings about their African counter-parts. He explained, "We did not know much about Africa. The books on that continent were written by the capitalists, and gave the impression that they were savages. That's why it was very revealing experience." However, he also explained the importance of Che Guevara's leadership in treating everyone equally, while also being very demanding of himself, the Cubans, and the Congolese fighters. While the mission ended after only 7 months, Dreke explains, "Cuba never abandoned Africa," as Cuban forces later assisted in Guinea Bisseau, Angola, and most recently in 2015 Cuban doctors were recognized worldwide for their role in the fight against Ebola in West Africa.

Despite the difficulties of the internationalist mission in the Congo, Che Guevara was dedicated to building and reinforcing revolutionary movements around the world. In his introduction to the book *Tania: Undercover with Che Guevara in Bolivia* (Ocean Press, 2005), Ulises Estrada, a key organizer of Che Guevara's guerilla mission to Bolivia with Cuba's Ministry of the Interior (MININT) and Tania's fiancée, outlines the political context of the decision to send Cubans to Bolivia. He writes, "Latin American and Caribbean communist

parties did not, generally, develop policies that would lead to the seizure of political power because they believed that a Latin American revolution should be developed in two stages: democratic-bourgeois and then socialist." He continues, "The example of Cuba's victory and resistance encouraged sectors of certain communist parties, particularly the youth, to question whether the tactics of their organizations were appropriate for the circumstances." Estrada explains that Cuba's support for revolutionary organizations independent of the communist parties, such as the New Left or other groups, created tension. Cuba also received "sharp criticism" from Latin American communist parties and the Soviet Union. Estrada continues, "Nonetheless, while still maintaining friendly relations with the communist parties, Cuba, in accordance with its internationalist position, continued to support those Latin American and Caribbean revolutionary organizations that appealed for solidarity." The points made here by Estrada demonstrate how Che Guevara's mission to Bolivia was based on the experience of the Cuban revolution. Che Guevara also demonstrated a sense of urgency in his work, because he knew the talons of American imperialism were gripped tightly into the backs of working and oppressed people in Latin America, and around the world. He felt confident that Cuba's revolutionary internationalism was the most secure way of fighting the ravages of imperialism and establishing socialism.

Che Guevara's decision to go to Bolivia was not political adventurism, this was planned and coordinated with Comandante Fidel Castro and Cuba's MININT at a time when

it seemed guerrilla warfare would be the most reliable way to establish socialism. In 2011, Harry "Pombo" Villegas, who fought alongside Che in the Sierra Maestra, the Congo, and Bolivia, did an interview with *Pravda Online* and was asked about the revolutionaries' goals in Bolivia. He explained, "Our first objective was to continue the revolution. Why? Because the reasons had not died. Che died, but the reasons why we started this fight had not disappeared. They are there, they are the same." Unfortunately the Cuban internationalists in Bolivia were betrayed by members of the Communist Party of Bolivia. When Che Guevara and his fellow revolutionaries were captured on October 8, 1967 by the Bolivian army and members of the CIA, they were told they would be given a hearing and prosecuted under the law. However, the next day the orders changed and Che Guevara and others were tragically assassinated.

In 2012, two American human and civil rights lawyers, Michael Ratner and Michael Steven Smith, co-authors of the book *Who Killed Che? How the CIA Got Away With Murder* (OR Books, 2011), were interviewed by *Democracy Now*. They both made some useful observations on their research into the murder of Che Guevara and his co-fighters in Bolivia. Smith explained, "The line of the [U.S.] government was that: 'The Bolivians did it as we couldn't do anything about it.' That isn't true. This whole operation was organized out of the White House by Walt Whitman Rostow and the CIA." Ratner added, "The U.S. wanted Che dead because that was the way to end revolutionary fervour in Latin America and around the world." Of course, what Ratner says was the hope of the



50 years after his assassination by the CIA, Che Guevara is remembered in Cuba & around the world.

CIA and U.S. imperialists, but they were not successful.

Che Guevara, the Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist

Che Guevara is quoted in many places as having often said, “you cannot be a revolutionary without being anti-imperialist.” Indeed, Che Guevara lost his life in the fight against an imperialist-backed right-wing regime in Bolivia. He died attempting to work with the poor and oppressed of Bolivia to throw off the yoke of imperialism and build a more just and equal society.

One of Che Guevara’s most remembered speeches on the power of the struggle against imperialism was his speech to the Tricontinental or the Organization of the Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America on April 16, 1967. There he spoke of the heroic efforts of the people of Vietnam to throw out the U.S. imperialist invaders. He spoke of their example to the world in leading a dignified fight for their

self-determination. He declared the need for, “two, three or many Vietnams to flourish throughout the world.”

Che Guevara and the revolutionary ‘new human being’

Che Guevara left his mark on the development of guerilla warfare strategy, Marxist economic thought, revolutionary internationalism, the movement against imperialism, and many other aspects of the development of the Cuban and international revolutionary movement. However, one of his most celebrated works is a letter he wrote to Carlos Quijano, head of the Uruguayan publication, *Marcha*, for publication in March 1965. It has come to be known as “Socialism and Man in Cuba.” In this article Che Guevara outlines how the Cuban revolution is not only economic or political, but also a social revolution – which seeks to create a different kind of human being than the one that exists under capitalism. Che Guevara famously says of capitalism, “it is a contest among wolves. One can win only at the cost of the failure of others.”

Che Guevara writes that the next generation in Cuba will bring forth new and larger revolutionary aspirations. “We know that sacrifices lie ahead and that we must pay a price for the heroic fact that we are, as a nation, a vanguard. We, as leaders, know that we must pay a price for the right to say that we are at the head of a people that is at the head of America. Each and every

one of us readily pays his or her quota of sacrifice, conscious of being rewarded with the satisfaction of fulfilling a duty, conscious of advancing with everyone toward the new man and woman glimpsed on the horizon.”

Che Guevara’s Legacy Today

Although Che Guevara was killed 50 years ago in Bolivia, alongside his compañera and many compañeros, their struggle continues today in those who fight for justice and equality all over the world. Harry “Pombo” Villegas said, “Today in Bolivia there has been a change with Evo Morales, which is an evolutionary formative process, and you have to see how it goes. Advances will be in a positive upward line where the humble classes will participate increasingly in government in a direct way, in process direction, where for the first time in history, native peoples have a representation.” This is a powerful reminder of how much has changed since Che’s time, and how much will continue to change, if we join the

struggle to build a better world.

In commemorating the 50th anniversary since Che Guevara’s assassination, Cuba’s Vice President, Miguel Diaz-Canel remarked, “Che has not died as his murderers wanted, his figure continues to grow with time as new generations of Cubans, raised under his legacy and example, discover, recognize and take on his standard as a revolutionary. They make their consistent reminder through their dedication to study, work and their duty. His model as an unselfish man and a conscious revolutionary, transforms into an ideal to follow.”

Of course, this homage by Diaz-Canel echoes the words of the Comandante of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro, when he proclaimed on October 1967, “If we want a model of man, a model of a man who does not belong to this time, a model of man who belongs to the future. I say from my heart that this model, without a single fault in his conduct, without a single fault in his attitude, is Che’s model. If we want to say how we wish for our children to be, we must say it with all the vehemence of revolutionaries: We want them to be like Che!”

¡CHE VIVE! ¡LA LUCHA SIGUE!
Che Guevara Lives! The Struggle Continues!

Follow Tamara Hansen on Twitter:
@THans01

Battle of Ideas Press

5 Decades of the Cuban Revolution The Challenges of an Unwavering Leadership

By Tamara Hansen

“The battles Cuba has fought have not been easy. Some were physical battles, such as the battle against bandits in the Escambray Mountains or the Bay of Pigs invasion. However, most were not battles of physical might, but battles of ideas. But with every twist and turn, every up and down Fidel has been one of the first leaders to say, ‘this way forward’ or ‘we made a wrong turn, we must change course.’”

Tamara Hansen is the coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC). She is also an editorial board member of *The Fire This Time* newspaper. She has travelled to Cuba ten times and has written extensively on Cuban politics since 2003.



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SYSTEM CHANGE NOT CLIMATE CHANGE

By *Thomas Davies*

After a summer of out of control wildfires, flooding and earthquakes – it's clear the growing climate crisis is having devastating effect around the world. Canada included. So the thought of Texas oil giant Kinder Morgan forcing construction of another dirty tar sands pipeline through Alberta and BC is unwelcome to many – to put it mildly. As the corporation threatened to begin construction at the beginning of September, thousands mobilized on the streets of Vancouver to say, "Kinder Morgan, We Still Say No!"

People and Planet Before Pipelines and Profit

The march and rally was organized by the Climate Convergence coalition, and endorsed by over 30 environmental, indigenous, faith, labour, and student organizations. Fire This Time was also an active participant in endorsing and building the demonstration. The urgency of Kinder Morgan's possible September start date brought groups together

and created a sense of urgency which overcame the sometimes slower pace of summer organizing.

Despite a morning of gusting rains, 2000 people came together in front of the steps of the newly renovated Vancouver Art Gallery. Huge banners, homemade signs, and an incredible display of hand painted animals from the Salish Sea showed that many had made the demonstration their own. Led by indigenous elders and drummers, the march was the loudest in recent history as the chanting never stopped from the front all the way to the back.

The rain had eased off and the sky had opened up by the time to march made it to Sunset Beach for the rally and speakers. The unity of the action was best demonstrated by the collaboration between the two rally MCs: Eagle Eyes, a hereditary chief from Sechelt and Gabby Doebeli, a student at the University



of British Columbia and a member of UBC 350.

Marchers were able to connect with ongoing climate justice campaigns through the many tables set up by climate justice organizations. As the speakers came to a close, Judy Wilson from the Union of BC Indian Chiefs called on everyone present to join hands in a massive circle with indigenous drummers in the middle. It was a powerful ending to a powerful day, but only the beginning of massive organizing effort to stop the pipeline.

Kinder Morgan, We Still Say No!
People and Planet Before Pipelines and Profit!
Kinder Morgan, We Still Say No

MARIELA CASTRO'S MARCH: CUBA'S LGBT REVOLUTION

By *Janine Solanki*

Summer in Vancouver is the season of Pride, and Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) was a proud community partner of the 2017 Vancouver Pride events. VCSC took every opportunity to be a part of marches and parades, to setup info tables at events, and talk to people about the important leading role Cuba has taken in the fight for LGBTQ rights and fighting homophobia and transphobia. (To read the report on VCSC's participation in Pride events, see FTT Volume 11 Issue 9, page 24 – 25).

Cuba's advancements for LGBTQ rights and against discrimination came as a surprise to many people who saw VCSC's banners and tables throughout the Pride season, which is why beyond participating in Pride events it was important for VCSC to organize an event specifically to talk about queer issues in Cuba, and to dispel the myths about Cuba spread by mainstream Western media.

On September 14th, VCSC organized an event at the Vancouver Public Library Central Branch, screening the film "Mariela Castro's March: Cuba's LGBT Revolution".

This impactful and beautiful film follows Mariela Castro and LGBTQ supporters throughout Cuba, speaking to members of the LGBTQ community and documenting the work of the Cuban National Center for Sex Education (CENESEX). Mariela Castro is a leading figure in the LGBTQ movement in Cuba, the director of Cenesex, as well as the daughter of the Cuban President Raul Castro. Following the film, a music video from the popular Cuban band Buena Fe was shown, which centers around a lesbian couple, and is a great example of LGBT issues becoming a discussion in Cuba even within music and popular culture.

Next on the program, two members of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba, Azza Rojbi and Janine Solanki, shared their experiences from participating in Cuba's events for the International Days Against Homophobia and Transphobia in 2016. Azza and Janine narrated a slideshow of photos from the events, with many stories and information about LGBTQ rights in Cuba which they learned at the events. This included seeing the



support and participation of Cuba's Central Workers Union as well as government ministers and other government officials at the events, the experience of Cuba's Conga against homophobia and transphobia which dances and marches through the streets of Havana, and learning about Cuba's laws against discrimination of anyone identifying as LGBTQ. And of course, the great experience of meeting Mariela Castro!

The final portion of the evening was a discussion period in which many questions were asked about LGBTQ issues in Cuba, as well as the status of the US blockade against Cuba – which is still ongoing. VCSC considers the LGBTQ movement as an important revolution within the revolution in Cuba, and an aspect of the Cuban revolution that should be supported and learned from here in Canada. For more information on VCSC events, visit www.vancubasolidarity.com, follow on Twitter @VanCuba_VCSC or find VCSC on Facebook.



ACOUSTIC

MANIPULATION Against Cuba

By Manuel Yepe

The largest US association of travel organizers in Cuba, after holding an assembly of its members, issued a statement in which it unanimously disagrees with the decision of the US State Department to withdraw 60% of its Embassy staff from Cuba. Havana and its warning to US citizens to avoid their trips to Cuba.

As a result, the US Consulate in Havana suspended the issuance of visas for travel to the United States indefinitely, although it will continue to provide emergency services to US citizens when they are in Cuba.

The motivation for these actions is that it has been known that 21 US diplomats accredited in Havana have reported hearing problems of unknown origin.

"From the evidence available to date and from the fact that the State Department asserts that no other American citizen has been affected, we believe that such a decision is unjustified and, therefore, we will continue to organize trips to Cuba and encourage others to do so." said Bob Guild, Co-Coordinator of RESPECT (Responsible Ethical Tourism of Cuba), a professional association made up of 150 representatives of travel agents, tour operators and other service providers related to trips to the island founded in December of 2016, on the anniversary of the opening of the Cuban-American dialogue.

Guild emphasized that US law allows citizens and US residents to travel to Cuba and there is no provision from the State Department

that would in any way prohibit US citizens from visiting the island.

At the aforementioned RESPECT meeting, representatives of US commercial airlines traveling to Cuba express their intention to continue to do so.

Gail Reed, founder of the scientific journal MEDICC and deputy coordinator of RESPECT, said categorically in the proposal that "Cuba remains a very safe destination for travelers from the United States."

At the invitation of the Cuban authorities, the FBI was in Havana earlier looking for evidence of what the United States has described as "sonic attacks" causing hearing loss and other symptoms, but its agents found no device or other evidence to explain the mystery.

None of the 500,000 US visitors to Cuba this year 2017 have reported similar health problems and, according to Secretary of State Tillerson's statement last week, "we have no reports from any other US citizen who has been affected ...".

Neither have had detours approximately two million detouristas of other countries that has visited Cuba in what goes of the present year.

Not a single guest has experienced in Cuba problems related to "hearing loss" or other health claims that concern the Trump administration.

Of the many thousands of foreign guests who were in Cubacundo the island was recently whipped from one end to the other by Hurricane "Irma" not one was damaged. Cuba remains one of the safest nations in the world for its guests and there are no drug wars, no terrorism, no arms trafficking, no gang wars, no kidnappings, no tropical pandemics

The president of AFSA, an association representing 15,000 US diplomats around the world, Barbara Stephenson,

has opposed any decision to withdraw diplomats from Cuba. He said that his members are against the reduction of the Embassy staff in Havana and that they are prepared to continue their mission regardless of whether there are real health problems. "We have to stay in the field and play," Stephenson said.

In response to Washington's move to reduce its embassy's diplomatic staff in Cuba, Josefina Vidal, the Director General of US Affairs in the Cuban Foreign Ministry, called the decision a precipitous decision and considered that this will affect bilateral relations and cooperation in areas of interest mutual. Vidal had urged the United States not to politicize the issue and insisted that Cuba needs active cooperation from the US authorities to reach a definitive conclusion.

Obviously, we are in the presence of a new maneuver against Cuba of the sectors of the extreme right terrorist in the foreign policy of the American government. The insistence on the issue by representatives of these sectors of US diplomacy, as Republican Senator Marco Rubio, confirms this hypothesis. October 2, 2017.

Manuel E. Yepe, is a lawyer, economist and journalist. He was 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.

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A CubaNews translation. Edited by Walter

Lippmann.

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“TODOS SOMOS VENEZUELA”, “WE ARE ALL VENEZUELA” VANCOUVER JOINS THE WORLD- WIDE CALL FOR SOLIDARITY WITH VENEZUELA

By Alison Bodine



Today Venezuela and the Bolivarian revolutionary process are facing increasing imperialist attacks and interventions. International solidarity demanding that the U.S.-government and their allies, such as Canada, respect the sovereignty and self-determination of Venezuela is now more important than ever.

This September, in response to the escalating imperialist aggression, the government of Venezuela launched a “We Are All Venezuela” solidarity campaign, which included a solidarity summit in Venezuela, as well as a call for participation in an international social media campaign.

The “We Are All Venezuela: Dialogue for Peace, Sovereignty and Bolivarian Democracy” solidarity summit was held from 16-19 of September, 2017 in Caracas, Venezuela. Over 200 people from 60 countries and 5 continents came together for the dynamic conference, which resulted in an important plan of action for solidarity with Venezuela in the coming months.

Participating in the “Todos Somos Venezuela” summit were activists, artists, politicians and intellectuals from around the world, including Evo Morales, the President of Bolivia, Delcy Rodríguez, President of Venezuela’s National Constituent Assembly (ANC), Jorge Arreaza, the Foreign Minister of Venezuela and Fernando González, one of the Cuban 5 political prisoners freed from U.S. jails, and now President of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP).

Simultaneous with the conference, the government of Venezuela also called for international participation in a social media campaign. The Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice – Venezuela Solidarity Campaign responded to this call by organizing two days of social media actions #TodosSomosVenezuela, which had people in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland expressing their solidarity through photos and short videos.

For complete Action Program endorsed by the conference please visit www.firethistime.net.

Before the “We Are All Venezuela” days of action, the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice – Venezuela Solidarity Campaign also organized a day of action demanding “U.S./Canada Hands Off Venezuela!” on September 8, 2017. Through a protest action at the U.S. Consulate and a petition drive and info tabling at the popular Vancouver Art Gallery plaza, supporters of revolutionary Venezuela in Vancouver took to the streets to demand “No to Regime Change in Venezuela!”

For almost two years, the Fire This Time Movement for Social Justice – Venezuela Solidarity Campaign has been organizing monthly actions for Venezuela, as well as responding to Venezuela’s calls for international solidarity. As people living in Canada, it is our responsibility to demand an end to imperialist threats, sanctions and intervention in Venezuela, while at the same time working to combat a vicious mainstream media campaign that is constantly working to demonize Venezuela’s democratically elected President Nicolás Maduro and Bolivarian Revolutionary process.

We call on all individuals and organizations that support Venezuela in Vancouver, Canada, and around the world to join us in our monthly actions, and in the implementation of the “We Are All Venezuela” summit’s plan of action. Our next monthly picket action and petition drive will be on Friday, October 6, beginning at 4pm at the US Consulate. This action is part of the World Day of street mobilization and solidarity “Todos Somos Venezuela”, included in this action plan.

For more information about the Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign go to www.firethistime.net or follow @FTT_np on Twitter.

OUR HERITAGE



Rosa Luxemburg
Revolutionary Marxist Leader
1871-1919

Excerpt: “Fundamental Significance of the Russian Revolution 1917”

Only a party which knows how to lead, that is, to advance things, wins support in stormy times. The determination with which, at the decisive moment, Lenin and his comrades offered the only solution which could advance things (“all power in the hands of the proletariat and peasantry”), transformed them almost overnight from a persecuted, slandered, outlawed minority whose leader had to hid like Marat in cellars, into the absolute master of the situation.

Moreover, the Bolsheviks immediately set as the aim of this seizure of power a complete, far-reaching revolutionary program; not the safeguarding of bourgeois democracy, but a dictatorship of the proletariat for the purpose of realizing socialism. Thereby they won for themselves the imperishable historic distinction of having for the first time proclaimed the final aim of socialism as the direct program of practical politics.

Whatever a party could offer of courage, revolutionary far-sightedness and consistency in an historic hour, Lenin, Trotsky and all the other comrades have given in good measure. All the revolutionary honor and capacity which western Social-Democracy lacked was represented by the Bolsheviks. Their October uprising was not only the actual salvation of the Russian Revolution; it was also the salvation of the honor of international socialism. (Written in 1918)

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A member of the Canadian Armed Forces displays the Air Task-Force-Iraq crest in this photo taken outside the gate at Camp Patrice Vincent in Kuwait on December 26, 2015.

By Janine Solanki

On September 21, 2017, the Liberal government announced that Canadian Forces in Iraq would be shifting their focus from the offensive in Mosul, to the next offensive in Hawija, on the pretext of fighting Daesh (also known as ISIS). Besides news of Hawija being a “major focus” for the Canadian military, the government of Canada has not given a number for how many Canadian soldiers would be involved. Canada has up to 850 soldiers in Iraq, 200 of which are special forces. What we do know is that a policy of vagueness is in place. Major General Mike Rouleau, head of Canadian Special Operations Forces Command said that the troops “won’t be in the vanguard” but doesn’t specify just where the unknown number of Canadian soldiers in the Hawija offensive will be. Canada’s Defense Minister, Harjit Sajjan, already left ample room for escalating Canada’s war drive in Iraq, with his statements on June 29th, 2017. Sajjan said the military would “deploy capabilities as needed” with the justification that “coalition allies and partners must remain flexible and adapt to changing threats”.

Where is the money going?

Money is one of the few things we can put a number to in Canada’s military intervention

in Iraq. On June 29, 2017 Defense Minister Harjit Sajjan announced that Canada would be extending its military mission in Iraq to March 31, 2019. The price tag for this extension is \$371.4 million over two years. Add to that the \$2 billion over the course of three years (2016-19) to address “security, stabilization, humanitarian and development challenges stemming from the crises in Iraq and Syria.” Again, we don’t know exactly where all this money is going but we can be sure that it is going to war instead of going to housing, healthcare and education needs in Canada!

Who are Canada’s Special Forces and what are they doing in Iraq?

In 2010 the Globe and Mail described the Special Forces Joint Task Force 2 as “a shadowy counterterrorism force about which little concrete can be said” and “Canada’s most elite troops – the faceless soldiers who go to places they won’t name, to complete missions they won’t talk about.” The government of Canada is relying more and more on these “faceless soldiers” for their imperialist interventions, and in July announced plans to add 600 more soldiers to the Special Forces.

The “train and assist” role that we are told the Special Forces are doing in Iraq has convenient “rules of engagement” that allow the soldiers to shoot first if they

detect “hostile intent”. In 2015 a Canadian Forces briefing revealed that about 20% of their “advise and assist” training takes place near or at front lines, where you can imagine using the shoot first policy would be a common occurrence. Note that this 20% statistic is before Canadian troops were focused on the pitched battlegrounds of Mosul and Hawija.

Canadian Air Force still in Iraqi skies

While Justin Trudeau tried to win election promise points by ending Canada’s use of fighter jets in Iraq, that doesn’t mean the Canadian Air Force isn’t still operating in Iraq. Canada’s aerial refueller continues to provide fuel to other coalition aircraft. Two surveillance aircraft continue to “contribute to coalition intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities”. Four tactical CH-146 Griffon helicopters and a tactical airlift detachment are also deployed in Iraq. While Canadian fighter jets may not be dropping bombs in Iraq, Canada’s Air Force is doing the work to ensure the fighter jets of other countries can launch airstrikes!

What about all the other soldiers?

After the 200 Special Forces and the unknown number of troops and personnel with the Air Force, what are all the other

continued on page 31

KAEPERNICK, TRUMP & RACISM IN THE USA



By Thomas Davies

For years now I have heard the word “Wait!” It rings in the ear of every Negro with piercing familiarity. This “Wait” has almost always meant “Never.” We must come to see, with one of our distinguished jurists, that “justice too long delayed is justice denied.”

– Martin Luther King Jr. Letter from a Birmingham Jail, April 1963

It’s been over one year since then San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick decided not to stand for the national anthem during NFL football game. What began as one black man’s response to racial injustice and police brutality has now grown into an ongoing protest phenomenon. Hundreds of players of all levels, sports and races continue

to carry on the national anthem protest despite widespread threats and intimidation. Beyond all of the absurd accusations against these athletes, the reason for the protest is simple: racism, police brutality and injustice continue at absurd crisis levels in the United States. These protests have succeeded in forcing the discussion on this reality literally into the living rooms of millions. This was urgently needed, and we should support them completely.

Justice Denied

From day one, Kaepernick was clear on why he wasn’t standing for the national anthem:

“I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color. To me, this is bigger than

football and it would be selfish on my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave and getting away with murder.”

Kaepernick’s protest came at a time when police killings of unarmed black people were becoming more well known as cell phone cameras and social media allowed for the first time widespread documentation, but did not improve police accountability. Philando Castille was killed by a Minnesota police officer in front of his girlfriend and child as he reached for his wallet. The officer was acquitted. Terence Crutcher’s car stalled on the road and he was shot to death by a police officer in Tulsa as he walked with his hands in the air. The officer was found not guilty. Freddie Gray died from neck injuries in Baltimore after police purposefully drove recklessly as he was handcuffed in the back of their paddy wagon. 3 officers were found not guilty. 3 had their charges dropped. No charges were laid on the officers who choked Eric Garner to death in New York for selling loose cigarettes. The video showed Eric pleading his last words, “I can’t breathe!” 18 year old Micheal Brown was shot 12 times in Ferguson and the police officer didn’t even face a trail. 12 year old Tamir Rice was shot to death almost immediately after an officer pulled up and saw him playing with a toy gun. The officers have yet to be convicted of anything.

continued on page 30



The English version of this article was in our previous issue

*** EN ESPAÑOL ***

Por Alison Bodine

Traducido por Reynaldo Cruz Díaz

El 30 de julio de 2017 el pueblo de Venezuela obtuvo una gran victoria en defensa de su soberanía y autodeterminación. Frente a una violenta oposición contrarrevolucionaria y a una creciente intervención imperialista liderada por Estados Unidos en su país, más de 8 millones de venezolanos acudieron a las urnas y eligieron con éxito una Asamblea Nacional Constituyente.

Desde entonces, el gobierno de Estados Unidos y sus aliados imperialistas han seguido aumentando sus amenazas, sanciones e intervenciones contra el gobierno democráticamente elegido de Venezuela y el proceso revolucionario bolivariano.

El 11 de agosto de 2017, el presidente estadounidense Trump amenazó con una intervención militar contra Venezuela. “Tenemos tropas en todo el mundo en lugares muy lejanos. Venezuela no está muy lejos y la gente está sufriendo y muriendo. Tenemos muchas opciones para Venezuela, incluyendo una posible opción militar, si es necesario”.

Luego, el 25 de agosto, el Presidente Trump emitió una orden ejecutiva imponiendo una quinta ronda de sanciones contra Venezuela, limitando severamente la capacidad del gobierno para recibir dividendos, pagar deudas y adquirir nuevos bonos de cualquier persona u organización que operen en los Estados Unidos.

La Casa Blanca afirma que estas sanciones demuestran que el gobierno de Estados Unidos “no se quedará parado mientras Venezuela se desmorona”. Sin embargo, son tanto el gobierno de Estados Unidos como sus aliados derechistas en Venezuela los que están desmoronándose. Con cada escalada peligrosa, el gobierno de los Estados Unidos está trabajando para derrocar al gobierno del presidente Maduro y revertir los logros alcanzados por los pobres, trabajadores y oprimidos dentro del proceso revolucionario bolivariano.

Por supuesto, la intervención estadounidense en Venezuela no está en los titulares de los principales medios capitalistas. En cambio, los titulares dicen: “Venezuela se quema mientras el dictador Maduro da la espalda al pueblo”, “El hambre se consume en el alma de Venezuela mientras su pueblo lucha para sobrevivir”, “Venezuela se está derrumbando” y “El descenso de Venezuela a la dictadura demuestra que

VENEZUELA: ¿CUÁL EN VERDAD ES LA DISCUSIÓN?

la democracia está perdida”, entre otros.

El gobierno de Estados Unidos y su portavoz de los medios de comunicación han hecho su trabajo dándonos las palabras de moda: colapso económico, dictadura, democracia, fraude electoral, derechos humanos y más. Esta es la narrativa que el imperialismo norteamericano ha escrito, pero ¿es ésta realmente la discusión sobre Venezuela?

Objetivo: Venezuela

El gobierno de Estados Unidos ha estado tratando de derrocar al gobierno elegido democráticamente de Venezuela desde que el presidente Hugo Chávez fue elegido en 1998. Para lograr esto, se han basado tanto en métodos abiertos como encubiertos, mientras trabajan con la oposición violenta venezolana.

Además de las amenazas y sanciones militares contra Venezuela, un componente central de la intervención imperialista ha sido el apoyo financiero directo e indirecto de millones de dólares para los llamados programas y organizaciones de

“construcción de la democracia” y “sociedad civil” en Venezuela.

Gran parte de este dinero se canaliza a través de subvenciones otorgadas por la Fundación



Una acción anti-imperialista en Caracas, Venezuela - 19 de septiembre 2017

Nacional para la Democracia (NED), el Instituto Democrático Nacional (NDI), el Instituto Republicano Internacional (IRI), la Agencia de los Estados Unidos para el Desarrollo Internacional (USAID) e otras instituciones no gubernamentales.

Entre 2014 y 2016, la NED otorgó más de \$ 5.8 millones en donaciones a 110 organizaciones y proyectos de “construcción de democracia” en Venezuela. Estas becas tienen descripciones vagas como “Movilización Ciudadana y Formulación de Políticas Constructivas” (2016 - \$ 200,000), “Fortalecimiento del Liderazgo Femenino en Venezuela” (2016- \$ 50,000) y “Fomento del Emprendimiento en Defensa de la Democracia y los Mercados Libres” (2015 - \$ 160,813) entre otros. Sólo en 2016, el presupuesto de USAID para Venezuela fue de \$ 6.5 millones.

Aunque exactamente cómo se gastan todos los millones de dólares en Venezuela no es información disponible públicamente, se han realizado investigaciones que exponen cómo el gobierno de Estados Unidos apoya directamente a los partidos y organizaciones contra-revolucionarios de Venezuela. Por ejemplo, en 2006,



Cartel de la revista Venezolana Todoas Adentro

el New York Times informó que la USAID había “distribuido alrededor de \$25 millones a varias organizaciones venezolanas en los últimos cinco años, según los funcionarios involucrados en los proyectos”. Más tarde se reveló que algunos de estos fondos estaban conectados al intento de golpe de Estado de abril de 2002 contra el presidente venezolano Hugo Chávez. Según un informe del Consejo de Asuntos Hemisféricos (COHA), una investigación realizada por el propio Departamento de Estado de Estados Unidos determinó que el Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos, el NED y el Departamento de Defensa de los Estados Unidos “proporcionaron capacitación, unos 3,3 millones de dólares a organizaciones e individuos venezolanos, algunos de los cuales se supone que han participado en los acontecimientos del 12 al 14 de abril [en referencia al intento de golpe de Estado]”.

Además del financiamiento de los partidos políticos y de las llamadas organizaciones de la sociedad civil, el gobierno estadounidense también realiza intervenciones en Venezuela a través de medios de comunicación, como la “Voz de América”. Esta red de medios, que ahora incluye internet, radio, y la televisión, promueve “valores norteamericanos” y “Democracia” en todo el mundo, incluyendo a la gente en Venezuela, y tiene un presupuesto anual de más de \$200 millones.

La OEA Como Herramienta para la Intervención Imperialista

En diciembre de 2015 la oposición derechista en Venezuela fue elegida por mayoría en la Asamblea Nacional. Desde entonces, la Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA) ha sido especialmente agresiva en su promoción de la intervención extranjera en Venezuela. El presidente de la OEA, Luis Almagro, ha concentrado la mayoría de su mandato en intentos de invocar la “Carta Democrática Interamericana” contra Venezuela. Su campaña, aunque apoyada por gobiernos de derecha en América Latina, así como por Estados Unidos y Canadá, ha fracasado debido a la oposición de otros Estados miembros que han tomado posición en defensa de la soberanía de Venezuela.

Desde hace mucho tiempo, la OEA ha sido reconocida como una herramienta para la intervención estadounidense en América Latina. No sólo es cabeza de barrio en Washington, DC, también recibe una mayoría de su financiación directamente del Departamento de Estado de los EE.UU. A su vez, la OEA se ha mantenido



al lado del gobierno de los Estados Unidos y ha servido a los intereses imperialistas en América Latina a lo largo de sus 60 años, apoyando e incluso asistiendo durante más de 50 golpes de estado patrocinados por Estados Unidos en América Latina y el Caribe.

De hecho, el gobierno de los Estados Unidos describió a la OEA en sus propias palabras en la justificación del presupuesto del Congreso para el año fiscal 2018: “La Organización de Estados Americanos (OEA) promueve los intereses políticos y económicos estadounidenses en el Hemisferio Occidental en contra de la influencia de los países anti-norteamericanos, como Venezuela”.

A través de la maniobra del gobierno de Estados Unidos y el imperialismo dentro de la OEA, está claro que Venezuela está en su lista de ataque e intervención.

Violencia y Sabotaje de la Derecha



El Presidente de Venezuela, Nicolás Maduro habla en una acción anti-imperialista en Caracas, Venezuela - 14 de agosto 2017

Junto con el aumento de las amenazas y sanciones del gobierno de Estados Unidos, la violenta oposición venezolana ha incrementado su campaña de violencia y sabotaje contra el gobierno del presidente Maduro y la mayoría de los venezolanos que apoyan al gobierno y al proceso

revolucionario bolivariano.

Sus ataques violentos han tomado muchas formas, desde la acumulación de alimentos, el incendio provocado y el bloqueo de edificios gubernamentales, incluyendo hospitales, y un ataque con helicóptero a una base militar venezolana, hasta la quema de personas vivas en las calles. Desde comienzos de abril hasta el 31 de julio de 2017, la violencia y el caos provocados por la oposición derechista de Venezuela han matado a 126 personas y herido a más de mil.

Esta campaña de terror culminó el 31 de julio, día de las elecciones a la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente. La violencia de derecha en las calles de Venezuela continuó en este día mientras 200 puestos de votación estaban rodeados de violentos miembros de la oposición, 21 miembros de la seguridad del estado resultaron heridos con bala y al menos 10 personas murieron.

Mientras tanto, desvergonzadamente, los líderes de la oposición violenta de Venezuela exhiben de manera abierta sus alianzas con el gobierno de Estados Unidos y sus títeres en la Organización de Estados Americanos. Por ejemplo, no sólo los miembros de la oposición venezolana se han reunido numerosas veces con miembros del Congreso de los Estados Unidos, sino que también se han reunido con el propio Presidente Trump. (Por cierto, el presidente Trump se ha negado a hablar con el presidente venezolano, Maduro, por teléfono).

La Intervención Es el Contexto, el Imperialismo Es la Discusión

A medida que activistas solidarios escriben, organizan y se movilizan fuera de Venezuela, es nuestra responsabilidad más importante comprender el contexto de la lucha en Venezuela hoy. Creo que se puede resumir en sólo tres puntos:

- 1) Venezuela es un blanco del imperialismo. 2) Los imperialistas han gastado millones de dólares en su campaña de sabotaje, incluyendo el trabajo con la oposición violenta contrarrevolucionaria para armar una crisis.
- 3) Un gobierno revolucionario y la mayoría masiva de personas que lo apoyan quieren tomar su país en un camino diferente y los países imperialistas están tratando de bloquear este desarrollo. O, lo más generalmente dicho, el contexto actual de Venezuela es la intervención imperialista: nada más y nada menos. El caso se detiene allí. No hay nada más que necesitamos saber sobre el proceso revolucionario bolivariano para ser solidarios con Venezuela y el gobierno del presidente Maduro.

Con este entendimiento, responder preguntas como “¿cómo el movimiento de solidaridad de Venezuela debilita la reacción de la oposición venezolana?” Se vuelve mucho más sencillo. Nos oponemos a la intervención estadounidense ya todos los intentos de derrocar al gobierno democráticamente elegido de Venezuela. Esa es nuestra responsabilidad política y moral.

Venezuela hoy está en medio de una aguda lucha de clases. La clase capitalista de Venezuela controla la mayoría de la producción y distribución de alimentos y bienes básicos en Venezuela. Controlan la mayoría de los medios de comunicación. Cada hora de cada día están trabajando abiertamente y encubiertamente con el gobierno de Estados Unidos y sus aliados para destruir el proceso revolucionario bolivariano. Por lo tanto, para los activistas solidarios fuera de Venezuela, no se trata de cuántos errores comete el gobierno del presidente Maduro. Porque es muy natural que dentro de esta batalla, el Presidente Maduro y el gobierno revolucionario cometan errores tácticos, o tomen medidas que no son efectivas ni eficientes. Puesto que el gobierno es dinámico y el proceso revolucionario bolivariano es dinámico, es imposible que no ocurran errores.

En realidad, la cuestión no es si las personas que afirman ser solidarias con la revolución bolivariana deben expresar opiniones sobre lo que el gobierno o lo que el liderazgo revolucionario en Venezuela está haciendo. En cambio, la pregunta que debemos hacer es ¿cuál es la prioridad para nosotros? ¿Qué discutimos,

qué organizamos y qué escribimos?

No hay reglas para la “corrección política” que dicen que cada error que el gobierno comete tiene que ser expuesto. Debemos recordar que los imperialistas están exponiendo cada minuto el proceso revolucionario bolivariano y el gobierno de Maduro. La gente puede tener sus opiniones, pero es algo totalmente diferente hacer campaña a favor del imperialismo.

Por ejemplo, ¿qué es tan significativo al afirmar que las elecciones de la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente fueron manipuladas a favor del gobierno, mientras que, al mismo tiempo, la propaganda imperialista también afirma que las elecciones fueron manipuladas? De hecho, no importa para nuestra lucha para sacar al imperialismo de Venezuela si las cifras de elecciones anunciadas por el gobierno revolucionario bolivariano son correctas o no, como algunos activistas solidarios han cuestionado abiertamente. Se debe plantear la pregunta, como progresistas y partidarios del proceso

revolucionario bolivariano en Venezuela, ¿a quién servimos con este tipo de “corrección política”? Debemos exponer las mentiras y manipulaciones del imperialismo norteamericano, no convertirnos en sus loros.

Construya un Fuerte y Solidario Movimiento de Solidaridad con Venezuela

La ex secretaria de Estado estadounidense, Madeline Albright, ampliamente conocida por su defensa de las muertes de más de 500.000 niños iraquíes debido a las sanciones estadounidenses, habló recientemente ante el Senado de Estados Unidos para justificar el continuo financiamiento estadounidense para los llamados programas de construcción de la democracia.

En su declaración, describió el contexto en el que estos programas seguirán siendo una herramienta importante para la intervención de los Estados Unidos en todo el mundo. “La crisis financiera y las crecientes brechas entre ricos y pobres han alimentado la ira y profundizado las dudas sobre la capacidad de la democracia para cumplir sus promesas. Los progresos recientes en algunos países y regiones clave han sido eclipsados por el autoritarismo renovado en Rusia, el retroceso democrático en lugares como Turquía, el auge del populismo iliberal en Europa, el colapso del Estado en una Venezuela autoritaria y la ruptura del orden en algunas partes del mundo. Oriente Medio y África del Norte.”

Marcha de las mujeres contra intervención imperialista en Caracas, Venezuela - mayo 2017.

El movimiento de solidaridad opera en el mismo contexto - Venezuela está en los blancos del imperialismo en todas sus formas mortales. Si los Estados Unidos logran derrocar al presidente Maduro y destruir el proceso revolucionario bolivariano, sería una gran derrota no sólo para el pueblo de Venezuela, sino también para los pobres, trabajadores y oprimidos de todo el mundo. Por lo tanto, y ante todo, debemos unirnos para construir un movimiento fuerte en defensa de la soberanía y autodeterminación de Venezuela contra todas las formas de intervención imperialista.



Intervención GRINGA en América Latina y El Caribe

Desde 1823 el imperio gringo considera al continente americano “esfera de influencia” con la *Doctrina Monroe* hasta nuestros días. Estados Unidos no ha descansado en su intento de dominar militar y económicamente nuestra América, encontrando una resistencia heroica



Países Intervinidos por:
Golpe de estado
Guerra convencional
Guerra no convencional
Ocupación
Democraías
Acciones encubiertas
Bases Militares

Operación Cóndor, Cono Sur
(década de los 70 y 80). EEUU promovió y apoyo las dictaduras de Hugo Banzer en *Bolivia* (1971-1975), Ernesto Geisel en *Brasil* (1974-1979), Augusto Pinochet, *Chile* (1973-1990), Alfredo Stroessner en *Paraguay* (1954-1989), Juan María Bordaberry en *Uruguay* (1973-1976) y Jorge Rafael Videla, *Argentina* (1975-1978). La Operación Cóndor, una red clandestina de las dictaduras para intercambiar información y opositores, que luego eran torturados, tenía como lema: “Cada cual se hace cargo de su propia basura”, en referencia a la eliminación de los “subversivos” secuestrados

con el **MOZO DANDO**

Vancouver Demands: US/Saudi Stop Bombing Yemen!

By Janine Solanki

In late September, the United Nations reported that there are nearly 700,000 suspected cases of cholera in Yemen, and over 2,000 people have died from the disease since April 27, 2017. Yemen is facing the world's worst cholera outbreak on record, and one must ask how can this happen? This humanitarian crisis is one of the devastating consequences of the two and a half year-long Saudi Arabia-led, US-backed bombing of Yemen. Saudi Arabia and their allies have also imposed a land, air and sea blockade on Yemen, contributing to the crisis.

With all eyes on the United States and US President Trump's war-mongering rhetoric, his speech at the United Nations on September 19th stepped up the US agenda of wars and occupations. Trump's speech was full of threats and dangerous provocations, especially against North Korea, Venezuela and Iran.

The job of antiwar organizations is to respond to and protest against these imperialist threats and military interventions, and that is what Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO) is doing. This

October, MAWO will mark 14 years of antiwar organizing, educating and organizing. As the new era of war and occupation continues to wreak havoc on the lives of oppressed people around the world, it is up to all antiwar and peace-loving people to stand against war.

On September 22nd, MAWO organized their monthly antiwar rally and petition campaign, with the demands: "US/Saudi Arabia Hands Off Yemen!" "US Out of Afghanistan!" and "US/Canada/NATO: Hands Off Syria, Iraq, Venezuela, North Korea, the Middle East and North Africa!" This action, happening every month for 14 years, is a cornerstone of MAWO's antiwar organizing, and is an important opportunity to raise antiwar demands in public protest, and to reach out to the general public with antiwar information and petitions.

The rally included MAWO chair Alison Bodine who spoke about the humanitarian crisis in Yemen that has been created by the Saudi-led war, and encouraged passers-by to sign the petition against the Saudi-led US-backed war on Yemen. This month, participants got to hear from Estea Elements and Trevor Mills, two talented local Hip



Hop artists whose music reflects social justice struggles. The rally also included poetry read by a local Iraqi poet.

Join MAWO for the next monthly antiwar rally and petition campaign on Saturday October 7, 2pm outside the Vancouver Art Gallery in Downtown Vancouver. The upcoming rally will be part of International Days of Action called by the United National Antiwar Coalition and other antiwar groups in the US, marking 16 years of the US-led war and occupation in Afghanistan. For more info and other MAWO events, visit www.mawovancouver.org, on Twitter @MAWOVan or find MAWO on Facebook.

No to War and Occupation! Yes to Self-Determination!
US/Saudi Stop Bombing Yemen!
US Out of Afghanistan!

A Hurricane called Blockade: Cuba Solidarity Activists Demand end to US Blockade on Cuba!

By Janine Solanki

On September 8th, the extremely powerful and catastrophic Hurricane Irma made landfall in Cuba. The hurricane caused immense destruction throughout Cuba, as well as throughout other countries in the Caribbean and United States. Cuba, despite it's own recovery efforts, immediately sent over 750 health care workers to assist in other Caribbean countries hit by the hurricane. Furthermore, even in mainstream media Cuba was recognized for their exemplary disaster and evacuation preparedness. However Cuba is still suffering the effects of this hurricane, which severely damaged tourist industry infrastructure, homes and agriculture. Rather than practice humanity towards their neighbor in a time of disaster, instead the US government is continuing the over 55 year old US blockade on Cuba, and US President Trump is looking to roll back even the limited gains towards normalized relations that were made under the Obama administration. As Cuba deals with the reconstruction of homes and infrastructure, the US blockade on

Cuba makes this enormous task much more difficult, as it limits Cuba's ability to purchase reconstruction supplies.



Every month, Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade – Vancouver (FCAB-Van) organizes a picket action in front of the US consulate in downtown Vancouver. With picket signs raised high, activists demand an end to the US blockade on Cuba, and demand that the US return Guantanamo back to Cuba. These monthly pickets have expanded and now Ottawa, Montreal and even Kiev,

Ukraine are organizing monthly actions.

The September 17th action in Vancouver started out with a drumming and song from Eagle Eyes, an Indigenous elder and Sechelt hereditary chief. In between rounds of picketing, supporters heard from local speakers as well as heard a greeting via phone message from the picket action in Ottawa, from the organization Ottawa Cuba Connections. The picket action was also wrapped up with a closing song from Eagle Eyes.

Friends of Cuba Against the US Blockade – Vancouver will continue monthly picketing at the US consulate until the blockade is lifted, and until the US returns Guantanamo Bay back to Cuba. Join the next picket on October 17th, 4pm at the US consulate (1075 West Pender at Thurlow) in Downtown Vancouver. You can also visit online at www.vancubavblockade.org, follow on Facebook and on Twitter @NoBloqueoVan

Lift the Blockade on Cuba Now!
Return Guantanamo to Cuba Now!

These are just some of the higher profile cases, and known only mostly because there was bystander video evidence. Beyond this, the statistics paint a terrible picture.

Black males aged 15-34 were nine times more likely than other Americans to be killed by law enforcement officers last year, according to the Guardian newspaper. Blacks make up 13% of the population, yet they represent about 40% of the prison population.

It goes deeper than that as well. Black Americans hold only 2.7 percent of the country's wealth, and the racial wealth gap nearly tripled between 1984 and 2009, according to a Brandeis study. Blacks and Indigenous people have the highest poverty rates, around 28 percent, followed by Hispanics at 26.6 percent and whites at 9.9 percent.

A crippling 45.8 percent of young black children (under age 6) live in poverty, compared to 14.5 percent of white children

It takes a whole lot of racism to justify this state violence and huge wealth disparity as natural or a product of genetics.

So if you're Colin Kaepernick, and you're aware of the past and present of racial injustice in the United States – is it really so strange that you wouldn't want to salute the primary symbol of the country which is responsible for perpetrating and maintaining it?

Who is Disrespecting the Veterans?

The most commonly cited offence of these players is that by kneeling for the national anthem they are somehow "disrespecting veterans". This has been a favourite of President



Muhammad Ali remained a vocal critic of war and racism in the United States.

Trump and other right wing politicians. First of all, NFL players weren't even typically on the field for the national anthem until 2009, when the Department of Defense and the National Guard began paying the NFL millions of dollars for "patriotic displays".

Secondly, who is really disrespecting veterans? 47,725, or about 8% of the US homeless population, are veterans. 45% of them are black or Hispanic. 1.4 million more are at risk of homelessness due to poverty, overcrowding in government housing, and lack of support

networks. Even the Department of Veterans affairs admits that at least 20 veterans kill themselves every day in the United States.

So the government which sends people to war and then doesn't take care of them afterwards accuses the players protesting for fundamental fairness as being disrespectful to the veterans?



Protests in Ferguson against the police killing of Michael Brown

It's disgraceful.

Historical Continuity

When Muhammad Ali passed away in 2016, politicians were falling over themselves to honour the great boxer. We can't forget that he was accused by their predecessors of the same things today's athletes are when he refused to be drafted into the Vietnam War in 1966. He was stripped of his World Heavyweight title and lost four years of his career. He remained defiant throughout:

"I'm not going 10,000 miles from home to help murder and burn another poor nation simply to continue the domination of white slave masters of the darker people the world over. This is the day when such evils must come to an end. I have been warned that to take such a stand would cost me millions of dollars. But I have said it once and I will say it again. The real enemy of my people is here. I will not disgrace my religion, my people or myself by becoming a tool to enslave those who are fighting for their own justice, freedom and equality. If I thought the war was going to bring freedom and equality to 22 million of my people they wouldn't have to draft me, I'd join tomorrow. I have nothing to lose by standing up for my beliefs. So I'll go to jail, so what? We've been in jail for 400 years."

Kaepernick might pay a similar price, as he remains unsigned this season despite many quarterbacks of lesser talents getting NFL contracts. However, his leadership continues to expose America's crisis and give confidence to all of the communities who were already fighting for justice in the United States. Confronting racism is a key part of building unity among poor and working people and confronting the governments and corporations who really benefit from having us oppressed and divided. We need to support Colin Kaepernick, every athlete, and every person standing up to injustice and fighting for a better world.

Follow Thomas on Twitter: @thomasdavies59

"By Any Means Necessary..."



MALCOLM X SPEAKS

Excerpt from Malcolm X speech at Harvard University - March 18, 1964

Whenever one is viewing this political system through the eyes of a victim, he sees something different. But today these twenty-two million black people who are the victims of American democracy, whether you realize it or not, are viewing your democracy with new eyes. Yesterday our people used to look upon the American system as an American dream. But the black people today are beginning to realize that it is an American nightmare. What is a dream to you is a nightmare to us. What is hope to you has long since become hopeless to our people. And as this attitude develops, not so much on Sugar Hill—although it's there too—but in the ghetto, in the alley where the masses of our people live...there you have a new situation on your hands. There's a new political consciousness developing among our people in this country. In the past, we weren't conscious of the political maneuvering that goes on in this country, which exploits our people politically. We knew something was wrong, but we weren't conscious of what it was. Today there's a tendency on the part of this new generation of black people (who have been born and are growing up in this country) to look at the thing not as they wish it were, but as it actually is. And their ability to look at the situation as it is, is what is primarily responsible for the ever-increasing sense of frustration and hopelessness that exists in the so-called Negro community today.

continued from page 24

Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members doing? Not to be overlooked, according to the Canadian Forces Operation IMPACT website, "CAF members serve in key positions in Coalition



Canadian Special Forces

headquarters around the Middle East. They have high-demand skills in planning and carrying out military operations." "The CAF members are experts in areas such as: intelligence operations; targeting; command and control". One example of what this means – since March 2016, Canadian Brigadier-General David Anderson commanded the "Global Coalition's Ministerial Liaison Team" which was involved in the preparation and execution of the military offensive in Mosul and northwestern Iraq. In July 2017, Canadian Brigadier-General Steven Whelan took over this leading role. While Justin Trudeau claims this isn't a combat mission, top Canadian generals are in charge of planning combat operations!

Unanswered questions on exchange soldiers

The question of Canadian troops engaged in combat operations gets even stickier when you consider the 104 Canadian militarily members on exchange programs with other countries. On July 12, 2017, CBC broke a story on the shady details of these exchange programs. Documents show that 66 of the 104 Canadian soldiers are embedded with the US military, and that in 2015 several Canadian fighter pilots engaged in combat against Daesh, while embedded with an unidentified country's military. However Canada's National Defense is refusing to say how many of these soldiers are involved in combat operations, and where they are stationed.

Iraq: Over 14 years of war and occupation

What all of this amounts to is continued war and occupation in Iraq. Whether under the pretext of a "weapons of mass destruction" which never existed, a "war on terror" that is a war OF terror, or the fight against Daesh, Iraq has suffered greatly under 14 years of US-led war and occupation. While "fighting Daesh" might make good war propaganda, one has to ask, how is it that

Daesh only came into existence after the US started funding and arming so-called "moderate rebels" and foreign mercenaries in Syria, and after years of destabilization and sectarianism fueled by the US war and occupation in Iraq. Whether Daesh was directly or indirectly created by the US, the fact is Daesh is a convenient excuse for the US and their imperialist allies to continue waging war in Iraq, as well as in Syria.

Looking at just a few health and education indicators, war has devastated these standards of living in Iraq. The World Health Organization has estimated that 70 percent of Iraqis lack access to clean water and 80 percent lack proper sanitation. Prior to the US-led war, Iraq was well-known for having high attendance in schools, while in 2016 UNICEF reported nearly 3.5 million school-aged children in Iraq attend school irregularly, or not at all. And perhaps the most telling indicator of the effects of war on Iraq is that Iraq refugees are part of what is today the largest refugee crisis humanity has ever seen, simply because war has made their homeland unlivable.

If the shoe fits...

Whatever Justin Trudeau or Harjit Sajjan want to call it, combat or not, Canadian troops do not belong in Iraq, nor do the troops of any foreign imperialist country. It is our tax dollars being spent on war and occupation, and it is the government we live under that is sending military forces to wage war on our brothers and sisters in Iraq. The way forward for Iraq is with self-determination, and it is up to peace-loving people in Canada and around the world to take up our human responsibility to demand self-determination for people of Iraq and an end to war and occupation in Iraq.

Follow Janine Solanki on Twitter:
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